

SUSTAINABILITY NEWS

Environment Committee



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New Zealanders are demanding more than green promises. They want authentic, measurable sustainability action. This article explores how we can lead the way through genuine commitment, not just box-ticking.

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Increased extreme weather events test resilience. As climate events grow more frequent and intense, how can businesses manage their risks - environmental, financial, and reputational?

GOOD WRAP'S GOOD NEWS - PAGE 5

A positive news article about how a voluntary industry programme is shrinking waste and closing the loop for construction soft plastics - one of the largest plastic waste streams on construction sites.

RAGS TO RICHES - PAGE 7

New Zealand sends thousands of tonnes of textiles to landfill each year—but a growing number of local businesses are stepping up with innovative solutions.

LEADING BEYOND COMPLIANCE

Kantar's Better Futures Report 2025, released in partnership with the Sustainable Business Council, provides a revealing snapshot of where New Zealanders stand on sustainability—and what they expect from businesses. While economic concerns continue to dominate (cost of living remains the #1 issue), environmental and social expectations haven't dropped off the radar. In fact, consumers are demanding more than ever from the brands they support—and the plastics industry has a real opportunity to step up and lead.

DID YOU KNOW?

89% of kiwis feel businesses need to be responsible for their environmental and social impacts.
([Kantar, 2025](#))

DID YOU KNOW?

74% of New Zealanders say Government is not doing enough to address environmental issues.
([Kantar, 2025](#))

POLICY ISN'T KEEPING PACE - IT'S TIME TO OVERTAKE:

The report highlights a widening gap between Government policy and the scientific targets needed to combat environmental decline. While that might sound like someone else's problem, consumers increasingly expect business to fill the leadership void.

In other words: while regulation may be lagging, consumer expectations are not—and businesses that lead the way are better positioned to earn trust, loyalty, and long-term success.

POLICY ISN'T KEEPING PACE - IT'S TIME TO OVERTAKE:

Kantar's data shows that consumers are no longer distinguishing between environmental and social responsibility—they expect both. And they don't want vague statements; they want authentic action.

Especially among younger consumers (18–29), there's a clear emphasis on ethical treatment of employees, alignment with personal values, and transparency. These groups are your future workforce, collaborators, and customers.

For the plastics industry, that means demonstrating real-world impact—beyond compliance, beyond greenwashing.



'Sustainability' requires balancing economic, environmental, and social

TALK THE TALK? SURE. BUT WALK THE WALK.

The good news? We're already making progress. And there are clear pathways to deepen that impact:

- Join Operation Clean Sweep NZ, or maintain your certification if you're already on board. It's a tangible way to show your commitment to preventing plastic loss into the environment.
- Reduce energy use with EECA's support. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority offers co-funding for eligible projects. Whether it's process heat, lighting upgrades or more efficient systems, there's often funding to help.
- Conduct an environmental analysis. You don't need to solve everything at once. But understanding your footprint and working toward continuous improvement signals to stakeholders that you're serious about sustainable operations.

What matters most is creating a culture of accountability and improvement. Being open about challenges (and your roadmap to address them) often earns more trust than silent perfection.

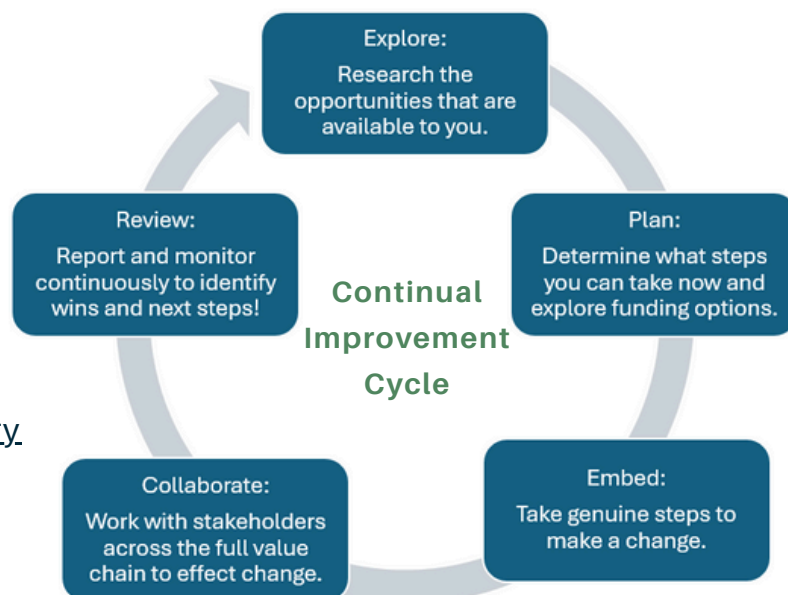
FINAL THOUGHTS

Plastics is an industry that has faced tough public scrutiny. But with scrutiny comes an opportunity to reshape the narrative - through action, transparency, and collaboration.

Let's show the world we don't just respond to expectations - we set them.

USEFUL LINKS FOR GETTING STARTED:

- [Operation Clean Sweep NZ](#)
- [EECA Industry Funding](#)
- [Plastics NZ Environmental Management Systems Guide](#)
- [Plastics NZ Consultants Directory](#)
- [WasteMINZ: Funding Your Sustainability Project](#)



WEATHERING THE STORM

Aotearoa New Zealand has always been prone to wild weather, but recent years have seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of significant weather events—storms, floods, cyclones, and high winds. For the plastics industry, these are more than just bad weather days. They bring very real risks to operations, infrastructure, the environment, and brand reputation.



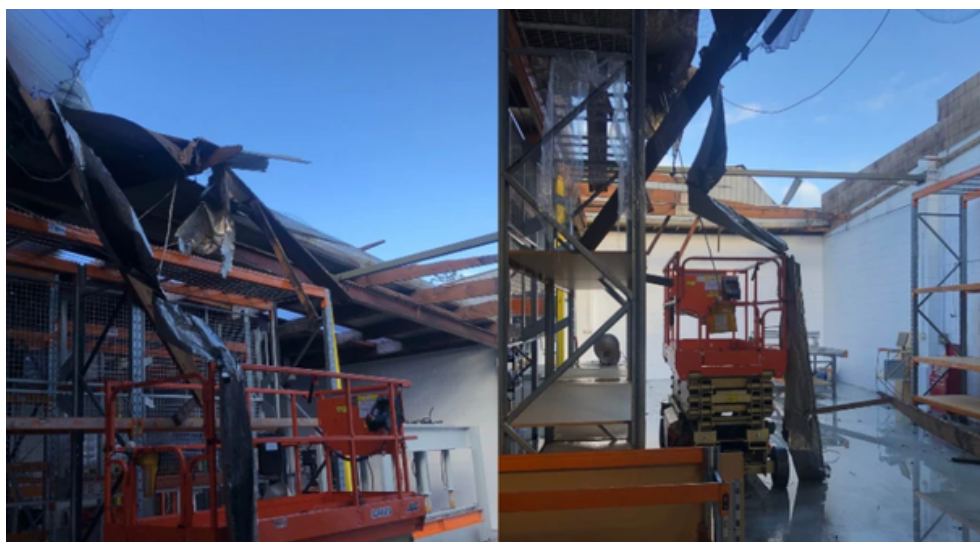
CALL FOR RESILIENCE

Earlier this month, attendees at the Plastics NZ Conference heard firsthand how Critical Design had their roof blown off by the 2021 Papatoetoe tornado, before they had finalised insurance. It was a vivid reminder that climate impacts are no longer theoretical.

On top of site damage, other industry risks include:

- Damage to power and water supplies impacting operations
- Plastic pellets and flake being washed into stormwater systems during floods
- Catchpits and drains blocked by debris, exacerbating flood risks

These events pose not only environmental threats but site repair costs, regulatory scrutiny, clean-up costs, and the risk of reputational damage.



Critical's Factory after the 2021 Papatoetoe Tornado: Damage to the roof resulted in factory flooding and water damage to machinery.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BUSINESS RISK

It's no longer enough to think of sustainability as an external responsibility - it's also a business resilience issue. Managing the risks associated with climate events protects your operations, your staff, and your bottom line.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Here are some proactive steps companies can take to build resilience in the face of climate change:

- Ensure your insurance is up to date and consider climate-related coverage options.
- Engage with suppliers and insurers to understand what risk mitigation measures can reduce premiums or improve cover.
- Review your site stormwater management plan. Are catchpit filters being maintained? Do you have spill response plans in place?
- Secure loose materials like pellets, flake, and packaging, especially when high winds or storms are forecast.

If the last few years have shown us anything, it's that 'business as usual' isn't built for the new normal. By embedding climate risk management into our operations, we don't just protect the environment - we also safeguard our people, facilities, and livelihoods.



GOOD WRAP'S GOOD NEWS

GoodWrap Recycling™ is a standout example of what's possible when industry takes the lead on waste. This voluntary, industry-led initiative was created to tackle the end-of-life challenge of construction shrink wrap, turning it from a hard-to-handle nuisance into a high-quality feedstock for local recycling.

Led by a coalition of shrink wrap suppliers, Mainfreight, the Environmental Innovation Centre (EIC), SARNZ (Scaffolding, Access & Rigging NZ), and Polymer Processing, the programme has a bold goal: recycle 1 million kilograms of shrink wrap by 2028. And they're well on their way—because it's working.






Scaffolding Shrink Wrap



What Makes Good Wrap So... Good?

It's not just about collecting plastic - it's about getting the quality right, keeping logistics lean, and making sure participants feel part of something bigger.

- Free recycling bags are sent out with wrap orders. As the wrap is removed from buildings, it's placed straight into these bags - keeping the material clean and high-quality.
- Drop-off is free and easy, with bags accepted at Mainfreight depots nationwide. Using existing freight networks minimises extra emissions.
- Every kilo is tracked and assessed, and installers earn points toward certification levels based on how much they return:
 -  Gold Seal: Over 90% recycled
 -  Silver Seal: Over 75%
 -  Green Seal: Up to 75%

- Clean wrap = valuable material. The collected plastic is processed domestically into reclaimed resin that closely resembles virgin resin—a high-quality output that's then used to make new products.
- Participants receive detailed reports outlining the amount they've recycled, helping them track progress, prove their impact, and win favour in contract discussions where sustainability matters.

Why It Works

The magic here is in the reward loop. Installers get tangible benefits for doing the right thing—whether it's certification points, sustainability reporting creds, or stronger relationships with environmentally conscious developers. Quality is prioritised, logistics are streamlined, and the recycled output actually feeds back into local production. It's a closed loop with open arms.

Calling Other Industries: Who's Next?

The GoodWrap team is now expanding access to other businesses interested in take-back solutions. If your company handles flexible plastic films—or you've got a clean stream of similar material—there's potential to join a growing movement that turns waste into resource, and responsibility into advantage.

Learn More:

Environmental Innovation Centre - [Shrinking the Shrink Wrap Problem](#)

Good Wrap Recycling - [Do Good with Good Wrap Recycling](#).



RAGS TO RICHES: TEXTILE RECYCLING IN NZ



New Zealand's textile industry is actively exploring circular solutions to address the growing issue of textile waste. Identified as an area of concern by local and central government, and reflected in Waste Minimisation Funding focus, textile waste is a big deal.

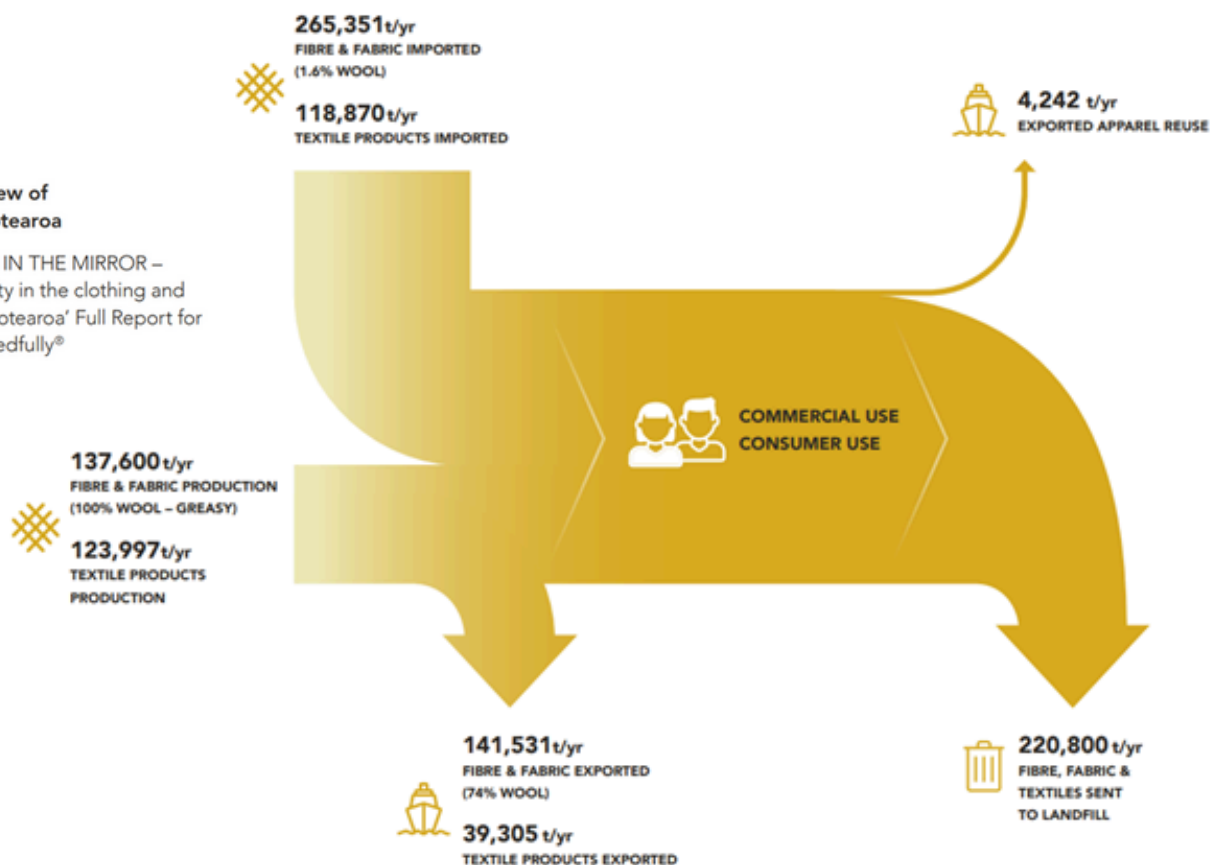
An estimated 220,000 tonnes is sent to Kiwi landfills, annually.

The scale of the Problem

The report "Looking in the Mirror: A Review of Circularity in the Clothing and Textiles Industry in Aotearoa" by Bernadette Casey and Brian Johnston, underscores the challenge and opportunity in textile recycling in the country. It highlights that fashion contributes approximately 10% of total carbon emissions globally, and that New Zealand faces the ever-present tyrannies of distance & scale in approaching a better model for the future.

FIGURE 4: Overview of Textile Flows in Aotearoa

Refer to 'LOOKING IN THE MIRROR – A review of circularity in the clothing and textile industry in Aotearoa' Full Report for further detail. © Usedfully®



But there is plenty of good work underway in Aotearoa. Here's a look at some programs running currently.

Current Textile Recycling

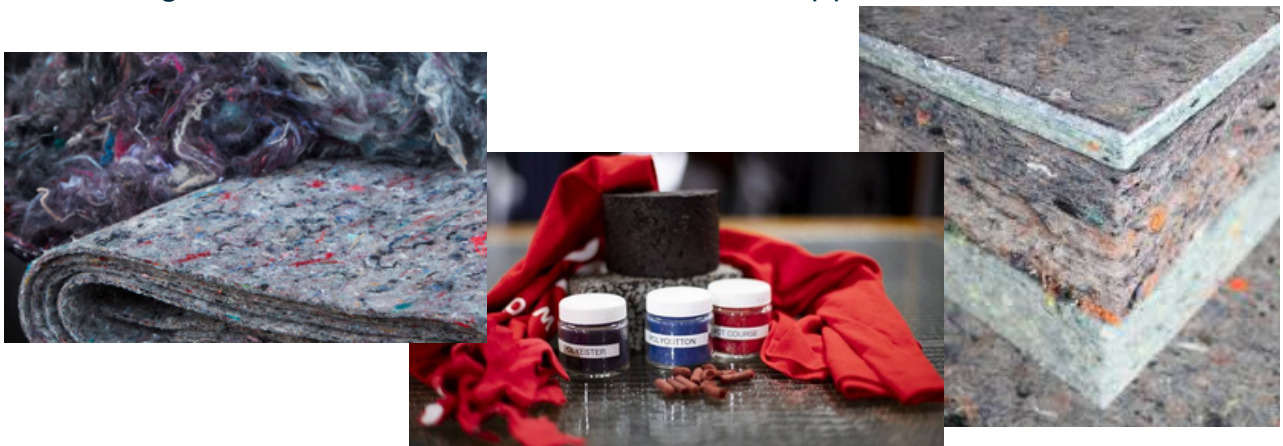
Several organizations are pioneering textile recycling efforts across New Zealand, each with unique approaches to divert textiles from landfills. Some take post-consumer, some post-commercial. Some are private arrangements and some are open. There are even retailers accepting textiles back in-store (e.g. H&M).

There are several programs taking and diverting textiles for those who are in need, like All Heart NZ, Dress for Success and Ripple Movement.

But what are we reprocessing on-shore?

These are some key organisations that are doing the mahi in reprocessing and producing:

- **UsedFULLY:** A Textile Cleantech company creating high value industrial products from post-commercial textile waste using a proprietary solvent free process. UsedFULLY is currently scaling in New Zealand and Australia and licence their technology in Europe and other regions.
- **ImpacTex:** Operating nationwide, ImpacTex focuses on converting end-of-life textiles into 100% recycled and recyclable panels used for packaging, signage, and acoustic applications. They also donate wearable items to social enterprises and charities.
- **Textile Products Ltd:** As one of New Zealand's largest textile waste processors, they handle approximately 5,000 kg of textile waste daily, converting it into non-woven textiles for various applications.



Challenges Facing Textile Recycling

Despite these and many other creative initiatives and organisations, there are significant challenges to the scalability and efficiency of textile recycling in Aotearoa:

- **Complex Material Composition:** Many garments are made from blended fabrics, making separation and recycling difficult. For example, recycling shoes is challenging due to their mixed materials and construction.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** The country lacks large-scale facilities capable of processing diverse textile waste streams and faces challenges in collecting materials.
- **Economic Viability:** The cost of collecting, sorting, and processing textile waste can be high, and the market for recycled textile products is still developing, affecting profitability.
- **Support for Solution Providers:** The support of retailers and suppliers of textiles is needed, to create pathways for unwanted textiles.

Opportunities and Future Outlook

Despite the challenges, kiwi innovation and committed advocates are driving change and diverting waste textiles from landfill. There are outlets for textiles from the home, workplace and industry.

It's a waste stream that is getting attention, and with that will surely come further innovation and advancement. New opportunities could develop in line with future technological advancements, policy support, partnerships and consumer engagement.

Textiles feature in every aspect of our lives. It's something for each of us to think about. Where are your textiles going when they leave you?