



# Conscious Cotton

*Our Sustainability Journey*

WALLACE COTTON

## Our Journey

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The Wallace Cotton journey began with a duvet cover made as a gift for a friend. That first duvet cover was so well loved it became the inspiration for textile designer Paula Wallace and husband Bill to establish a bed linen business based on beautiful and exclusive textiles. They designed and supplied ranges to retailers around Australasia for a number of years, then in 2005 the first Wallace Cotton mail order catalogue and website was launched. Wallace Cotton's beautiful bed linen is now loved by thousands of passionate customers around the globe.

Wallace Cotton continues as a family run business, with an incredibly passionate team. The brand has evolved over the last 10 years, but our philosophy remains clear and simple; to deliver beautiful designs and outstanding quality with minimal impact. Our seasonal ranges are designed in New Zealand and are made exclusively for Wallace Cotton by talented suppliers.

Our collections combine co-ordinating ranges so our customers can keep adding to their linen collections each season. We are constantly developing new ways to create beautiful quality linen with a strong sustainable focus.

Cotton is in our name because we believe in using natural fabrics that come from renewable sources. Our free laundry bags were initially made from printed fabric off-cuts and are well-loved by customers who collect and re-use them for many purposes.

The global textile industry produces a lot of wastage by over-ordering and over-production to meet competitive price points. We feel it is our duty as producers to minimise our wastage in all areas of the business, and we focus on designing exclusive ranges in smaller quantities that become more special to our customers.

As our journey continues, so does our commitment to developing more environmental solutions. We aim to use natural resources as efficiently as possible, and to work with our innovative partners to reduce our environmental impact and our carbon emissions.

***“Growing up our clothes were mended, re-purposed or handed down. It hurts to see mountains of things being made, thrown onto the sale table and then sent to landfill. It also hurts to see the damage poorly managed textile regions create for local workers and environments... it's been clear to us from the beginning that we have a responsibility to choose our fabrics and suppliers carefully.”***

**- Paula Wallace**



## Partners in Production

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At Wallace Cotton, we select our partners for their ethical business practices and exceptional craftsmanship. We work closely with specialist manufacturers in some of the oldest textile cities in the world, and over the years we have built strong relationships with some outstanding textile producers. Our carefully chosen suppliers are all passionate about Wallace Cotton and understand our exceptional style and quality standards. Our priority is always quality not quantity – to produce fewer, more beautiful items with less environmental impact.

We endeavour to support our suppliers whose practices align with our own ethics and who are committed to acting responsibly towards the environment and their local communities. We regularly visit our suppliers to see first-hand where our products are manufactured and how our suppliers manage their waste and the wellbeing of their people. Our supplier partnerships are based on trust and open communication.

We have a long working relationship with an environmentally responsible textile mill in South India because they are passionate about their textiles, as well as their people and the environment. They go to great lengths to recycle their manufacturing water. They purify 99% of their water and harvest rainwater with capacity to store more than 5 million litres each year. They have built a school on-site so families of spinners, weavers, dyers and seamstresses can live and work in the same village. A visit to this OEKO-TEX®\* certified mill is an insight into sustainable textile production and we are proud to work with them on our beautiful organic bed linen, as well as other luxurious fine bed linen ranges.



**“We work hard to develop long-term relationships with suppliers who’ve shown us that we can trust their standards and processes - so we can pass this trust on to our customers.”**

**– Bill Wallace**

Wherever possible we source our textiles from suppliers with STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX certification. Suppliers who carry this certification have proven their production methods minimise the impact of textile manufacturing on the environment. OEKO-TEX is a consistent, independent worldwide certification system for the textile industry. To gain certification, manufacturers must adhere to environmentally-friendly production methods, without the use of banned colourants or harmful chemicals, and must demonstrate consideration for the recycling and thoughtful dispersal of water.

OEKO-TEX® certification parameters includes more than just visual inspection. This certification uses laboratory testing in OEKO-TEX® facilities to show that textiles are free from unwanted, harmful substances that are in use in some parts of the textile industry. This system tests textile products at all processing levels, from raw textiles to finished products.

There are some product ranges for which no third-party eco-certification standards exist. In these circumstances we are currently working with several suppliers to develop a Code of Conduct that helps us to meet our continued commitment to the welfare of people and the planet. If this is not possible, we seek alternative suppliers.



# Natural Fibres

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## SUSTAINABLE STYLE USING THE FINEST NATURAL FIBRES

Wallace Cotton is committed to minimising its environmental impact, which includes creating products that are made to last rather than throwaway fashions.

Carefully sourced from pure cotton and linen, these beautiful quality fabrics are comfortable, durable and luxurious.

From your first flat to your family home, we all love to surround ourselves with comfortable and beautiful things - little luxuries that improve the quality of our lives.

We've try to keep our collections affordable so you can add to your own collection year after year.

Today we continue to work towards our commitment by sourcing natural fabrics throughout our entire range of bed linen. Each season, we add to our range of cotton bed linen and sleepwear.

***“I can't resist the amazing fabrics, I feel like I'm spoiling myself when I buy from Wallace Cotton. Their pieces are not mass-produced but beautifully made from gorgeous velvet, super soft organic cotton and light and airy linen.”***

**- Rachel, April 2015**

## ORGANIC COTTON

We have sourced soft organic cotton percale to make beautiful bed linen, which is kinder on the planet and on our skin. Organic cotton growing systems replenish and maintain soil fertility and build biologically diverse agriculture. Organic cotton cultivation is free from pesticides, insecticides, herbicides and genetic modification. This makes it better for the people who farm and work with cotton crops, better for wildlife and eco-systems – and for consumers too. The certified yarn is grown on sustainable farms, can be reused and are biodegradable

Since 2013 we have increased our sales of organic cotton bed linen by 34% and we are a working toward increasing our organic cotton collections. Where possible, we create as much of our range as possible from organic materials.

## DOWNTIME DUVET INNERS AND PILLOWS

Alongside the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX 100 mark, we also insist our feather and down based products that have DOWNPASS certification. This means we can be sure that they have been obtained ethically and can be traced back to their original source.



## Natural Fibres continued

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### LINEN

Our pure linen bedding is made from genuine European yarn, manufactured to the global textile STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX®100 mark.

### MODAL

We use Modal (\*Rayon) fabric for some of our sleepwear ranges. Modal is an eco-friendly, biodegradable fabric made by turning wood pulp into a strong yet soft closed loop cellulose fibre. Modal production requires less land area per tonne than cotton and has a water consumption level that is ten to twenty times less than that required to grow cotton.

This fabric is perfect for sleepwear, being beautifully light and soft next to your skin, with a smooth surface which drapes and flows around your body. Modal has natural breathability with 50% more moisture absorption than cotton so you can sleep comfortably. It is not prone to wrinkling, performs well in the laundry, and as our garments are pre-washed, shrinkage should be minimal.

At Wallace Cotton, we love using modal fabric, adding our seasonal prints to make sleepwear which is far too beautiful to hide under the sheets...

\*Rayon is a generic name for closed loop cellulose fabrics.

### SILK

Silk is the ultimate luxury, a soft, timeless, naturally sourced product. The production of raw materials for silk products is inherently sustainable and non-damaging to the environment. Silk is 100% biodegradable and does not contribute significantly to pollution. All our silk products are sourced from an OEKO-tex certified supplier.



# Purposeful Packaging

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At Wallace Cotton, we embraced fabric packaging early. Since 2006 our customers have received an iconic free cotton laundry bag instead of a plastic shopping bag. Our laundry bags are made using our seasonal prints and have been continually reused by our customers, from storing linen, shoes and many other uses. They have become a beloved collector's item, as well as helping to lessen landfill. New Zealand banned single use plastic bags in mid 2019 and this year we replaced our biodegradable plastic sale bags with reusable canvas bags to further align with our values and support the country's waste reduction strategies.

Since 2015, most of our bed linen has been packed in fabric packaging rather than single-use plastic packaging. We continue to reduce plastic where ever possible within the business and aim to eliminate plastic packaging by 2025.

Most clothing manufacturers ship garments in individual plastic bags which that can't be recycled or composted, however makes them easier to handle during shipping. We felt strongly about reducing this plastic waste, so worked with our garment suppliers for a sustainable solution. We now roll and tie each garment with cotton ribbon, resulting in our products still arriving clean and undamaged without any plastic packaging. This simple change has eliminated a huge amount of our plastic waste and we hope other manufacturers will find inspiration from this initiative.

A large part of our business is ecommerce which requires parcels to be delivered to customers in perfect condition, traditionally in single-use plastic bags. All our online orders are now shipped in corn-starch bags.

## EMISSIONS

As a company we are continually looking for new ways to reduce our carbon footprint. We choose to work with couriers that have set their own objectives to minimise their emissions and reliance on single-use plastics.

Based in an island nation like New Zealand, overseas travel is a requirement of building our business, so when we do fly, we offset our flights. We sea-freight the bulk of our products to ensure our shipping emissions are minimised.

## PAPER

We continue to reduce our use of printed materials throughout the company. Our team use FSC\* certified paper in our offices, and we make efforts to reduce paper in our packaging, and we make efforts to reduce our paper consumption across the company by using digital communication and developing re-usable and recyclable in-store signage. We are also working closely with our local and international printers and stock suppliers to use accredited FSC paper and Environmentally friendly inks.

\*FSC (Forest Stewardship Council,) certified paper is paper that has been harvested in a responsible manner. Although FSC certified paper often contains recycled paper, it does not have to contain it to be certified. The primary requirement for certification is being harvested and produced in a responsible manner.

*“Wallace Cotton has a great selection of classic pieces and more directional styles that are really good quality but still very well priced. I also love the drawstring bags their linen comes in. They're so useful – I've amassed a lovely collection that I use for all kinds of things.”*

**Nicki, April 2017**



## Reduce and Reuse

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We take our responsibility to minimise waste very seriously. It's something we have focussed on since we first began, and we've made some great progress to further reduce waste, particularly surrounding our packaging. We keep our orders small with efficient forecasting and negotiating with suppliers to make less rather than more. This enables us to not overproduce. We continually search for solutions to creatively reduce and repurpose any excess fabric. Our fabric off-cuts are made into eye masks, shower caps, Christmas decorations, plus other items are created as we go along on our textile journey.



## Caring Community

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At Wallace Cotton we pride ourselves at having a strong family culture at our core, where our people feel supported, respected and valued.

### OUR CORPORATE VALUES ARE:

*Caring – we care about our customers, our people and our communities.*

*Original, exclusive designs created to inspire and delight.*

*Teamwork – we are one team, we achieve success through collaboration, support and accountability.*

*Thorough – we have a total commitment to quality and attention to detail.*

*Openness and sharing, we are the Wallace Cotton family, we communicate with honesty and respect.*

*Natural – we focus on products derived from nature, naturally better for people and the planet.*

### STARSHIP CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Over the past ten years we have fostered a close collaboration with cancer survivor Ruby Seeto, who designs tea towels that we manufacture and sell with proceeds going to Auckland's Starship Children's Hospital.

Together we have raised more than \$500,000 and helped contribute to important operational and capital projects that are directly impacting and improving the lives of Starship children and their families.



## Into the Future

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Wallace Cotton continues to work with supply chain partners to improve our environmental performance. With ongoing improvements in production practices, we plan to continue treading lightly on our planet in an industry that has historically been known for significant water and chemical usage. We are committed to making careful choices in our designs, fabrics and in our processes, with a focus on ordering the right quantity of quality product for our customers needs.

As Wallace Cotton continues to grow globally, we are mindful of staying true to our original intention of ensuring our customers receive quality products that surpass their expectations. We are proud of what we have achieved so far but we know there is still more to be done.

This is an ongoing journey, with products that are beautifully designed and manufactured carefully using the best quality natural fabrics.

***“Sustainability for Wallace Cotton is an ongoing journey in which we are trying to improve our products and our processes.”***

