

MEDIA RELEASE

Ethical Clothing Australia
Ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au

Celebrate 25 Years of Impact with a spotlight on Queensland Manufacturing during Ethical Clothing Australia week

The nation's leading accreditation body for the textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) industry is celebrating a quarter century of protecting and advocating for Australian garment workers.

As a cornerstone event for Ethical Clothing Australia Week 2025, **Made in Queensland** will bring together representatives from Ethical Clothing Australia-accredited businesses and the TCF Union to discuss the strengths, capabilities, and ongoing developments within Queensland's textile, clothing, and footwear (TCF) industry.

National Manager Rachel Reilly says the organisation has had a significant impact over its 25-year history because of protections they and the union movement have secured for workers, particularly outworkers.

"We exist to protect and uphold the rights of Australian garment workers. This 25-year milestone has been possible because of significant advocacy efforts, leading to our establishment in the year 2000 and the authorisation of the Homeworker Code of Practice by the ACCC," she says.

"Further advocacy led to securing federal funding to expand our accreditation and compliance program in 2008. We then saw Outworkers classified as employees under the Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Associated Industries Award 2010, creating the legislative framework to protect them."

Reilly says these achievements would not have been possible if it weren't for the unique but necessary collaboration between the TCF Union and the TCF industry to establish Ethical Clothing Australia as a multistakeholder initiative.

"There are now over 100 businesses that have received accreditation, protecting thousands of workers," she says.

"It is critical that we are working collaboratively with businesses so we can prevent exploitation from taking place and ensure the future of the industry."

ECA warns that despite these achievements, the industry remains one of the highest-risk sectors for worker exploitation in Australia, with many workers at risk of violations ranging from minor breaches to instances of modern slavery.

"We know that this vulnerability stems from factors such as complex supply chains, isolated working conditions, limited awareness of rights, and barriers to seeking support," she says

"Our recent YouGov poll showed us that 84% of Australians believe worker exploitation exists in the global textile, clothing and footwear industry while only 45% believe it exists in Australia."

"It is a powerful reminder that we cannot forget about the exploitation happening right here in Australia, and we are committed to continuing to advocate for the lives impacted."

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Made in Queensland will take place on Friday 10 October from 12 – 3pm at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Visit Ethical Clothing Australia's website to find out more about all events taking place during Ethical Clothing Australia Week. <https://ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au/events/>

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About Ethical Clothing Australia:

Ethical Clothing Australia (ECA) is an accreditation body that works collaboratively with businesses to protect the rights of Australian textile, clothing and footwear workers. ECA's voluntary accreditation program maps a business's local supply chain and ensures that Australian TCF workers are being paid appropriately and receiving their legal entitlements.