MEDIA RELEASE

Ethical Clothing Australia efforts see the return of close to $1 million to workers: 2025-26 Impact report

Australia's textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) workers had $926,166 in pay and entitlements returned to them in the 2025-26 financial year thanks to Ethical Clothing Australia's accreditation program.

The figure was made up of underpaid wages, missing superannuation and entitlements as well as rectifying incorrect skill level classifications and is an increase of $131,764 when compared to the previous year

It was revealed through the release of the National Accreditation Body's 2025-26 Impact Report. Ethical Clothing Australia engaged directly with 2,675 workers during the period, across factories, warehouses and head offices.

They also completed 1,606 compliance audits nationwide, which led to them identifying and resolving 4,446 compliance breaches. On top of this, more than 2,000 workplaces across 280 businesses received a visit from the compliance team. These were both accredited businesses and their local suppliers.

The results were strengthened by the addition of 24 businesses receiving Ethical Clothing Australia accreditation.

This report highlights the critical role Ethical Clothing Australia continues to play in strengthening workplace standards and supporting a more ethical and sustainable Australian TCF industry. Ethical Clothing Australia is a multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together union, business and industry to protect the rights of local TCF workers.

The report comes as the organisation welcomes a new National Manager, Arron Goldman, who brings extensive international experience in labour rights, ethical supply chains and garment industry sustainability.

Prior to joining Ethical Clothing Australia, he worked with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Indonesia and Cambodia on programs that improved working conditions in the textile, clothing and footwear industry.

Arron says the report demonstrates the tangible impact Ethical Clothing Australia continues to have for workers and businesses across the country.

"I'm excited to be joining an organisation that does such meaningful work, and I look forward to working with the team to continue delivering impactful results," he said.

"Dignity and respect at work are core to fostering stronger businesses and supporting and strengthening the workers who make the clothes we wear so they can empower themselves. These are two outcomes that shouldn't be mutually exclusive."

"By supporting workers and helping businesses do the right thing and by recognising best practice in the sector from those who lead by example, I can see the pathway for Ethical Clothing Australia to support, protect and uphold the rights of Australian garment workers."

Despite the positive results, Arron says continued vigilance is needed, with the TCF sector remaining one of Australia's highest-risk industries for worker exploitation.

"The outcomes in this report show the importance of collaboration across the industry. Collaboration is the key to improving compliance, protecting workers' rights and helping to build a stronger future for Australian manufacturing."
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