

CANON FASHIONS (AUST.) PTY LTD

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Submission to the TCF Review

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Organisation: Canon Fashions (Australia) Pty Ltd

Type of Organisation: Garment manufacturer and designer of ladies fashions.

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Declaration of Interests: Independent operator in the TCF industry.

Canon Fashions (Aust.) Pty Ltd is a small company engaged in the product development, pattern design, cut make and trim, and production of own design ladies fashions. All manufacturing is carried out in Melbourne. We focus on small volume, high end fashion garments.

I have personally been involved in the garment industry for some 25 years. Over this time I have noticed the change in the industry in Australia.

The key trend has been the reduction in the infrastructure and skill base to support companies like Canon Fashions who have chosen to remain in Australia.

My company has been sufficiently lucky to have recently received a grant under the TCF Small Business Program, which has given me the opportunity to develop my own business, and purchase some more-up-to-date design and manufacturing equipment.

My experience over the years and this TCF Small Business Grant have bought me into contact with many young, enthusiastic designers, fresh out of training who are inspired by Australian designers such as Collette Dinnigan, Sass & Bide, etc, who have made it on the world scene. Their approach to me has usually been for assistance in identifying where they can get their creations made up. As I advise them there are few companies like ours that can help them because the skilled machinists, pressers, cutters, etc, have retired from the industry

in face of factory closures, and new, younger people are not coming into the manufacturing aspect of the industry. As these skills have left the industry, the young hopefuls who have studied design and want a career in the TCF industry, cannot look to a local industry to support them. The option of getting small volume samples made off-shore is not viable.

There is fast developing a complete lack of infrastructure to support a local design and make clothing business in Australia.

When I examine the grants made under the TCF Small Business Program, the main focus is at the individual company level in improving manufacturing efficiency, development of brands, introduction of e-commerce, etc. Whilst this is great, I do have a concern that the infrastructure to support this, and the skill base is fast declining. I do not know how, but consider it critical that this aspect must be addressed by the TCF Review which is currently being conducted. Our industry is fast gaining global recognition and demand for its products particularly Design based goods. Our strength is DESIGN and we need to underpin this with a strong local and professional manufacturing base.

I also believe that efforts should be made to re-train the public understanding of the TCF industry. Major retailers over the past decades have trained customer's to expect goods to be on sale just as the season begins. While this may be easy to support by bringing in cheap imports it seriously undermines the local design industry which is subsequently faced with a very limited sell through timeframe before the sales.

I would like to see a public awareness campaign similar in scope and effectiveness as the NO SWEAT SHOP and FAIRWEAR campaigns. It would be beneficial to this industry if the public was made aware of the input that goes into creating Australian Made and Designed products and could make a more informed choice at point of purchase. Customers spending needs to be more strongly directed to Australian made product which is oftentimes similarly priced to higher end imports anyway. Home-grown locally designed product needs to gain a greater level of respect in the public eye and should be set apart from the mass produced off-shore product. While the fashion houses themselves have a lot of responsibility in how their brand is accepted and perceived I still think help is required to improve that image in the public's eye.

I applaud any efforts that are being made to assist our industry and am willing to offer my support as required.

Yours Faithfully,



Roula Gavalas