



## Caring For Your Clothes

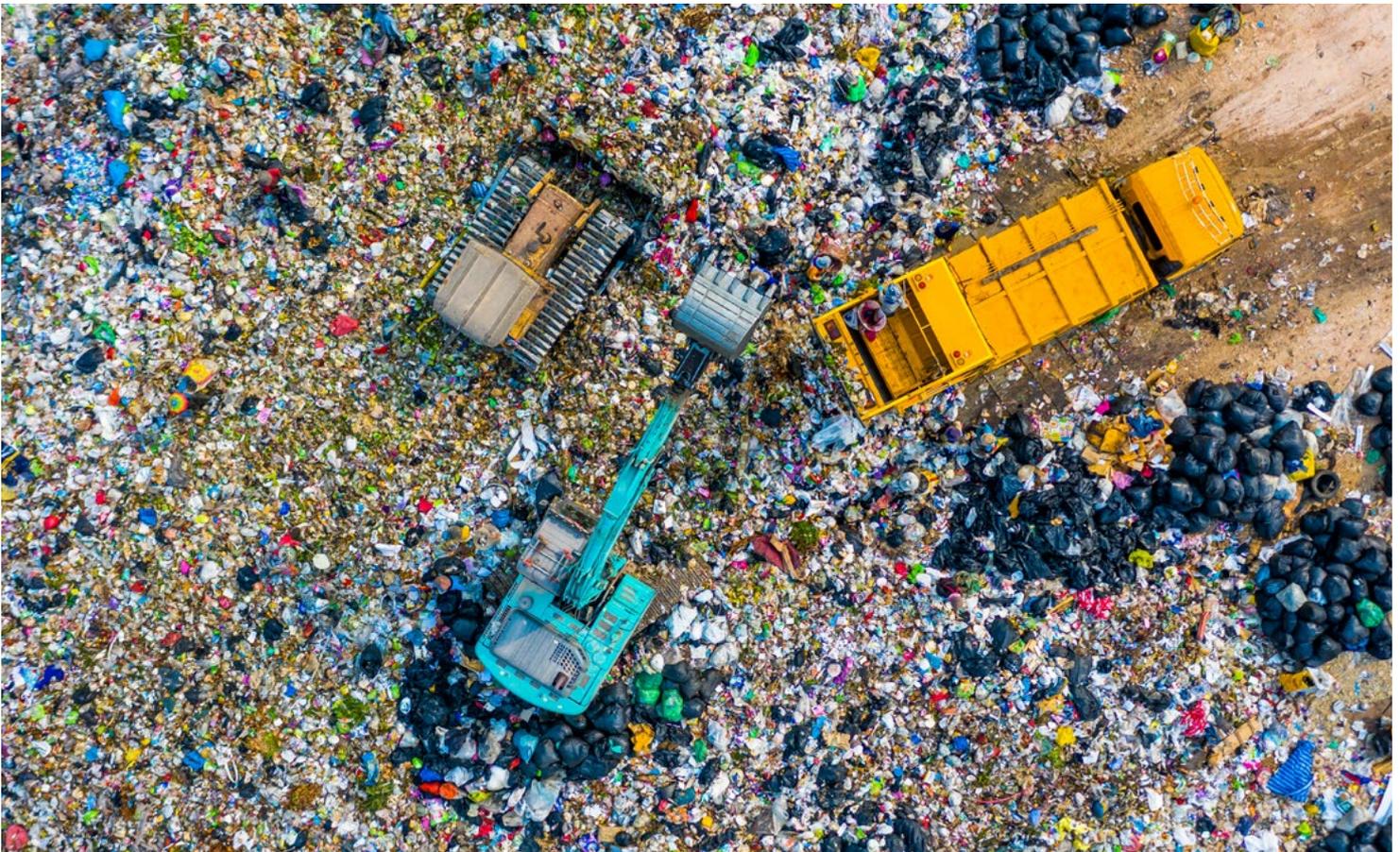
This week we provide ways for teenagers to develop their independence and help protect the environment by caring for their clothes.

### Caring for your Clothes (and the environment) Part 1

Do you belong to the “wear it once, throw it away, buy something else” fast fashion generation, or do you consider the environment when it comes to your clothes? Australians buy an average of 27 kilograms of new textiles each year and then discard about 23 kilograms into landfill – and two-thirds of those discards are manmade synthetic/plastic fibres that may never break down

If you want to know more about this, here are some interesting articles:

- [Australians’ love of fast fashion is not only hitting their hip pocket - but the environment too](#)
- [After a fashion: how to cut down our clothing waste](#)
- [Aussies send 85% of textiles to landfill](#)



<sup>1</sup> “Aussies send 85% of textiles to landfill”, <https://textilebeat.com/aussies-send-85-of-textiles-to-landfill/> accessed 14/07/2020.



# Week Fourteen

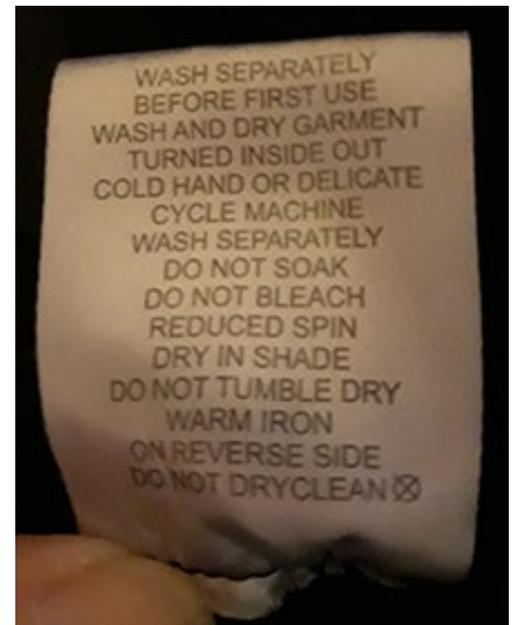


There are lots of ways you can change this and make your own contribution to the environment.

1. **Care** for the clothes you already own – see below
2. **Mend and repair** your clothes when they are damaged – see page 4
3. **Donate and buy pre-loved** clothes at op shops – see Part 2 next week
4. **Make your own** clothes, using natural fibres – see Part 2 next week
5. As a last choice, if you are going to buy new clothing, choose ethical and sustainable brands. Choose timeless pieces that you'll wear 5-30 years from now, and find out about the brand before you buy through [Good on You](#), [Ethical Fashion Fast Finder](#) and [Ethical Clothing Australia](#).

## 1. Care for the clothes you already own

- **Learn how to wash, dry, iron and hang your clothes so they will last longer.** Firstly, don't just screw up your worn clothing and throw it in a laundry hamper – apart from underwear, socks and other small items. Hang the clothing back on a hanger, and put it in a section of your wardrobe where you keep clothes waiting to be washed. They will crease less and stay in shape better.
- **On washing day:**
  - Collect all clothing to be washed, and sort it, separating dark colours from light and delicate fabrics from more durable garments.
  - Read the care instructions on the labels. Work out whether to use cold, warm or hot water. Cold water is cheaper, and better for the environment – no electricity is used to heat the water – so use cold unless there is a specific reason to use warm or hot. Heavily soiled whites or light colors may need warm/hot water.
  - Pre-treat stains. The best way to do this requires pre-planning: on the day before you plan to wash, put the stained clothing to soak in a solution of cold water and a stain remover powder such as Vanish or Sard. If you forget to do that, spray with a stain remover spray, leave for at least one minute, then wash.
  - Use the right wash cycle for the load of clothes: modern washing machines offer you the choice of different wash temperatures, gentle, normal or heavy duty wash action, and adjust how much water they use to the weight of the clothes. Read your machine's manual to get the most out of it.





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- Don't leave the clothes sitting in the machine for hours after the cycle has finished. They will crease less and last longer if you hang them immediately. To reduce the need for ironing, use the "Hold" button or stop your machine before the final spin, and "drip dry" the more delicate garments, hanging them up wet. Hang tops and dresses on plastic clothes hangers in a sheltered position, and hang pants and skirts by the waistline.
- Avoid using the clothes dryer for drying clothes! Yes, I know that sounds silly, but your clothes will last longer if you dry them naturally in the air. Clothes dryers are good for drying towels and sheets when it's too wet to hang them outside, but clean the lint filter before starting the dryer, and you may be shocked by how much fibre the dryer is removing from your washing.
- Knitwear and some other items may benefit from drying laid out flat (read the care labels). This helps to avoid stretching your garments.
- When the clothes are dry, decide if you need to iron any of them. If not, hang them or fold them and put them away. Those that need ironing should be ironed as soon as possible, so that any creases are removed more easily. Make sure the iron is the right temperature for the type of fabric, and use steam where appropriate. Read the iron's manual. After ironing, especially if steam has been used, leave the garments hanging on a garment rack or clothes airer for a few hours before putting away.





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## 2. Mend and repair your clothes when they are damaged.

- If a button comes off, sew it back on. Use a matching thread, and sew through the button's holes or shank at least 3-4 times, and finish the thread securely so it won't come off again. Check the other buttons to see if they need to be sewn on more securely as well. If you have lost the button, think about replacing all the buttons on the garment with a new set – buttons should be cheaper than buying a whole new garment. You can keep the buttons you removed to sew onto another garment.
- If you find a rip or tear, work out if you can mend or patch it. If it is a seam that has come unstitched, turn the garment inside out, and re-sew the seam, using matching thread. If you don't own a sewing machine, you can do this by hand, using backstitch.
- If the tear is on the knee or elbow, try applying patches to both knees or elbows – they can become a design feature! There are guides to applying patches on the internet: try <https://sewguide.com/fix-a-hole-in-jeans/>
- If the hem of your skirt or pants comes undone, remove the thread which has unravelled, and re-hem your garment. For an invisible fix, use matching thread and work from the inside of your garment. Or you can add a decorative touch by sewing a fancy machine or hand embroidery stitch right around the hem, which will both secure the hem, and add a unique touch to your garment.

