

Be part of the solution not the pollution

As part of her series on sustainability and fashion **Elizabeth Bean** looks at the birth of the Fashion Revolution.

The Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh collapsed six years ago, on 24 April, killing 1,138 garment workers and injuring another 2,500 – mostly young women. Five garment factories were based in the Plaza, making clothes for big global brands. It was the fourth largest industrial disaster in history.

The collapse also led to the birth of an international movement called Fashion Revolution. This international collective – based out of the UK – campaigns for a fashion industry that conserves our environment and gives people, especially women, a voice. This year Fashion Revolution Week starts on the 22nd of April and runs to 28th April.

In New Zealand the Fashion Revolution team is based in Nelson.

Co-ordinators, John Marshall and Melanie Kinloch have teamed up together to help create a new way of thinking.

Mel says, “I wanted to make a difference so I went to Volunteer Nelson, where I met John and Fashion Revolution. As a mother, I am afraid for our children and concerned about pol-



Mel Kinloch, and John Marshall have become the first regional coordinators in the country for the fashion revolution.

BRADEN FASTIER/
STUFF

lution created by our fashion industry. I was inspired by what was going on and want people to think about what a ‘cheap deal’ means in terms of disturbing conditions for overseas factory workers.

“I was greatly moved by a documentary, The True Cost, which asks us to consider who really pays the price for our clothing? When we showed this movie as a fundraiser it opened people’s eyes to the true social and environmental cost of their clothes. Cheap clothes aren’t cheap, someone is paying a price”.

John, who has been talking to

students about sustainability and ethical purchasing at intermediate and secondary schools in Nelson Tasman for many years, was similarly excited by the concept of Fashion Revolution.

John wants people, “to think about where their clothes are made. Ask whether the person who made your gorgeous jacket is paid a fair wage, does she – and it is usually a she – get to see her family, are the working conditions adequate, and what about the environmental consequences?”

“Clothes have morphed from being valuable possessions to

disposable items that we chuck out at the end of the season. This endless cycle of consumption is killing people and the planet.

“Our clothes shouldn’t cost the earth. Our greedy appetite for fashion – a desire to always have the latest item – comes with a huge environmental price tag. Carbon emissions, water use, chemical and plastic pollution are costs we will all eventually pay.”

John and Mel encourage us to shop ethically and buy second hand. So where do I go to do this? Google ‘Fairtrade’ or ‘organic clothing’ and many options will pop up of companies that respect

a worker’s voice on the job, and pay a living wage. Hopefully, if we stop buying cheap, poor quality clothes, then companies will stop making these. You can also take action this Fashion Revolution Week by asking your favourite brands

#WhoMadeMyClothes.

John and Mel are working flat out on their project in the lead-up to a ‘Swap til you Drop’ second hand clothes event at Founders Park on 4 May. They would love to have more volunteers to help. If this sounds like you then please contact them via email info.frnelson@gmail.com

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We will be holding this Information Session at our Stoke village, Summerset in the Sun. This is a great opportunity for you to take a look around an established Summerset village and see for yourself why our residents love the Summerset life.

*Licence to Occupy.

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Information Session

Thursday 2 May
10.30am

Summerset in the Sun
16 Sargeson St,
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Artist Impression