

PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS | SUPPLY CHAIN

How Nobody Denim is sewing supply chain transparency into its clothes



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Nobody Denim has just launched a new capsule collection that is completely traceable, from where the cotton for the garments was grown, to when it was harvested, spun into thread, woven into denim and ultimately turned into jeans, skirts and jackets at the brand's manufacturing facility in Melbourne.

Nearly two years in the making, the collection is the result of a partnership between Nobody Denim and Australian transparency technology startup Fibretrace.

As of today, customers shopping at David Jones, Universal Store, General Pants, The Iconic and Nobody Denim online, can scan a QR code on a swing tag to see the entire supply chain of each garment.

Nobody Denim co-founder and chair John Condilis told *Inside Retail* it was exciting to not only be able to tell customers how their products are made but also to prove it.

"Everyone's talking about transparency, but this actually validates it," he said.

Transparency sewn in

The ability to trace the journey of each garment is made possible by Fibretrace's innovative technology, which involves embedding natural luminescent pigment into a fibre's structure. The pigment isn't noticeable to the wearer, but it allows brands to track the fibre from raw material to finished product.

Nobody Denim is the first in the market to use Fibretrace. The brand's traceable garments cost about \$10 more than its standard jeans and jackets, but Condilis believes consumers will see the value in it.

"When people learn, they get excited, and it creates an emotional attachment," he said.

Since Everlane popularised the concept of 'radical transparency' in the supply chain, sharing photos and videos of its factories on its website, a growing number of fashion brands have started pulling back the curtain on how their products are made.

This has forced some brands using third parties to help manage the overseas production process to finally get a clear picture of their supply chain themselves. But the cost of not doing so has become increasingly clear.

Boohoo's share price has suffered since [reports came out in July](#) of unsafe working conditions and low wages in one of its factories. In addition, countries like Australia are beginning to mandate a certain level of supply chain transparency in an effort to stamp out modern slavery practices.

Making manufacturing sexy

For Condilis, transparency is just one of the highlights of the new collection. Being able to keep more of Nobody Denim's supply chain onshore by using Australian cotton is equally important.

"The Australian denim industry moved away in 2000. That was when the last textile denim mill in Yarraville [Victoria] closed down and moved offshore. There's no longer any spinning [in Australia], the whole process left," Condilis explained. "It's really exciting to bring as much as possible back."

The cotton used in the collection, Good Earth Cotton, is sourced from the world's first carbon-positive cotton farm, located in northern NSW, and uses the least amount of water per bale. The farm is run by the founders of Fibretrace, who created the technology to help brands using their cotton to backup their sustainability claims with consumers.

As a passionate advocate for local manufacturing, Condilis believes the technology and sustainability focus of Fibretrace and Good Earth Cotton could also be a way of getting young Australians interested in the farming and manufacturing side of the garment industry.

“It’s about how we make our industry sexy and inspirational again,” he said.

He pointed to coffee roasting and craft beer as two industries that have done this successfully.

“We’re still making beer in a certain way that’s traditional, but what’s changed is you’ve created your own IP and recipe and made it more fun,” he said.

“That’s been my vision – how do we inspire, evolve and innovate to drive that and paint a different picture? We have to think outside the square.”

John Condilis

Nobody Denim

Transparency

Wearable Tech