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MADE DIFFERENT: ICEBREAKER CLOTHING LAUNCHES A RADICAL TRANSPARENCY REPORT – CHAMPIONING ITS NATURE BASED SUPPLY CHAIN

Icebreaker, the iconic natural performance outdoor clothing business, today released its inaugural Transparency Report after 22 years in business. Titled: Made Different, the report focuses on people, nature and what it means to be a true sustainable business.

Established in New Zealand by founder Jeremy Moon, Icebreaker pioneered a sustainable approach to outdoor apparel through its nature based proposition.

Icebreaker was founded on the relationship between nature and people. This symbiotic relationship guides every design, development and supply chain decision.

“Sustainability isn’t just a feature of Icebreaker’s products, it’s the values and design of our business. From sheep to finished shirt, we are involved in each step of Icebreaker’s value chain.” says Moon.

In 1997, Icebreaker was the first company in the outdoor industry to establish long-term contracts with merino wool growers based on mutual concern for animal welfare and the environment. In 2008, it became the first company to ban the mulesing of sheep in the industry.

Founder Jeremy Moon says “I founded Icebreaker to offer a natural choice to adventurers and disrupt the outdoor industry towards sustainable solutions. It’s why we exist. We are constantly struck by the irony of the outdoor industry to promote petroleum based synthetic fibers such as polyester. Plastic against your skin? Really? We believe there is a better way and nature has the answers.”

Today over 85% of Icebreaker’s raw material consumption is still based on natural fibers. In an industry based on petrochemical synthetics, this high percentage of natural raw materials remains unheard of and unpublished by any other competitor.

In announcing the launch of the report, Icebreaker’s CEO Greg Smith paid tribute to the founding ethos of the company and reflected that transparency is a focus of continual improvement; “This report is the result of our 22 years of running an ethical and sustainable business. While we’re not perfect, we are proud of what we have achieved.



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In this report we share with you our origins to where we are today. We identify where we can improve and our aspirations for the future.”

The report covers all four areas of Icebreaker’s commitment: To people, animals, the environment and running a sustainable business. “Our question was simple. What if our customers could see everything we do?” Smith commented. “This report sets the benchmark, challenging the industry and inspiring outdoor brands towards natural solutions.”

“The launch of our Transparency Report is about sharing the Icebreaker way, our philosophy and the principals that drive our business daily. Insight on our supply chain, people and how we make our clothes is incredibly important to our customers and for Icebreaker, as leaders in our industry, we want to champion how clothing is made. We are extremely proud of our natural fiber heritage and relationships throughout our supply chain and know transparency provides a catalyst for change and improvement. It’s not about perfection, but it is about being open on how to continuously improve for the future.” said Carla Murphy, Chief Brand and Product Officer.

These relationships started with direct partnerships with merino wool growers with whom Icebreaker has recently signed historic ten-year forward contracts. The historic 10 year contracts secure long term New Zealand merino supply for Icebreaker, economic certainty for farmers and ethical wool to the highest animal welfare standards for consumers. Founding station partner, Richard Subtil from Omarama Station commented “We breed our sheep to specifically produce Icebreaker wool, and we can only do that because we’ve got the confidence that the contracts give us. We’ve signed a 10 year contract that means our kids have certainty for 10 years. Well, that’s unheard of in agriculture.” In an industry first in the report, Icebreaker also shares a detailed contracted grower listing, including an overview of their grower accreditation program and grower audit results.

The approach to building long term relationships extends through Icebreaker’s supply chain - 65% of Icebreaker’s production volume is by partners with who Icebreaker has been working with for 13 years or longer. Today, Icebreaker works with 40 suppliers in 59 factories connecting more than 50,000 workers in 15 countries. Icebreaker outsources all production to expert partners, in state of the art facilities which meet Icebreaker’s high standards around ethics and quality. Icebreaker factories score an impressive 9.2/10 in thorough independent auditing, well above the industry average of 7.6/10*.

These results are far from the norm in the wider apparel industry, who often hide behind invisible supply chains at the expense of people’s human rights. Rob Fyfe, Icebreaker Chairman comments “We are committed to radical transparency and traceability in our supply chain. It is impossible for brands to ensure respect for human rights, sound environmental practices and product quality without knowing where their products are made and under what conditions. The supply chain matrix in our report delivers a real world first in the outdoor industry - we disclose every

partner at every tier of the chain, we disclose the relationships between them and detailed data on each supplier. Despite this opening our business up to risk from competitors, we want to champion full disclosure in the outdoor industry. We have absolute confidence in our supply chain and the ethics with how our clothing is made.”

“Transparency opens us up to the deepest possible feedback on the decisions we make. We need it. This is what will allow Icebreaker, the industry we work in and our entire economic system to evolve and improve. Together with our people, suppliers and customers we want to make a positive difference. To be the natural performance champions and the champions of solutions born straight out of nature.” says Fyfe

ABOUT ICEBREAKER

Founded by Jeremy Moon in 1995 in New Zealand, Icebreaker pioneered the ethical and sustainable production of natural performance apparel.

The apparel collection for men, women and children harnesses the natural performance properties of merino wool sourced directly from the most sustainable and ethical merino farms in New Zealand.

Icebreaker is now sold in 47 countries through wholesale, branded retail and e-commerce platforms. To discover more visit www.icebreaker.com

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