

## Emerging Small and Medium Business Award

### Kate Sylvester



*Model and Kate Sylvester*

#### **Background:**

Kate Sylvester is a well-known Kiwi fashion designer producing three main clothing lines: Kate Sylvester Womenswear; her naughty little sister, Sylvester and the recently launched Menswear collection. Kate is known for her immaculate tailoring, high concept shows and conceptual collections. With two successful stores in Auckland, the company opened their third store in Wellington's Cuba Mall in February 2006. Kate Sylvester garments are also available from stockists in every major Australian city, as well as in Hong Kong.

In September 2007 Kate debuted her first menswear collection, and six months later opened a dedicated menswear section in her High St store in Auckland. Kate Sylvester also has an eyewear collection that includes sunglasses and optical frames.





**Challenges:**

- Expensive to maintain onshore production
- Competitive market-place
- Emissions measurement and reduction.

**Some responses:**

In the last two years, Kate has embed sustainability throughout the company's activities through 'project green'. This has seen efforts within the office to reduce energy, waste and carbon emissions; and make changes to office supplies and other processes. The company has also developed a sustainability policy that is displayed in the staffroom; in Kate Sylvester stores; and on the website; and is now looking at using Triple Bottom Line principles for all decision making.

Kate Sylvester remains committed to the New Zealand manufacturing industry, with 100 percent of garments made in New Zealand, despite increasing costs. The company's dedication to continuing to design and manufacture all of their products in New Zealand potentially exposes them to some financial risk, and in this extremely competitive market, many competitors are unwilling to "hang in there". However, the company is driven by passion as much as profit, and is prepared to manage and accommodate the challenges posed by imposing higher costs and complexity to their supply chain.

The company is developing a Carbon Transparency project (CTP), and it is their intention to actively monitor corporate carbon emissions and work towards reduction and continuous improvement. Data on corporate emission sources is being collected to develop an emissions profile externally prepared by The Hothouse.

Kate Sylvester provides leadership by example to the fashion industry through interactions with its supply chain and customers, proving that fashion need not be transient or encourage excessive consumerism. An opportunity exists for Kate Sylvester to become recognised for quality, ethically and environmentally sustainable practice and production, and a catalyst for others in the industry.

**Judges comments from the National awards:**

- The Judges were impressed that this is a New Zealand business looking internationally - a great holistic approach
- Impressed by the genuine commitment to the New Zealand industry
- The company has a commitment to only using healthy business models.

**Judges comments from the SBN Northern regional awards:**

- The company remains committed to continuing to design and manufacture all of their products in New Zealand, despite these services being available offshore, often at much lower prices.

