

## Quick facts

- Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC) has introduced a new Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology. This seven-month pilot program, which runs from March to October 2014, is a partnership between APTC and the Textile Clothing and Footwear Council of Fiji (TCFC).
- The participants of this new program are 25 employees from eight local garment manufacturing companies, including Mark One Apparel, United Apparel, Intimate Apparel, Classic Apparel, Lyndhurst Limited, PFD Fiji Limited, Ranjit Garments, and Outfitters.
- The fashion industry in Fiji is growing rapidly with events such as Fiji Fashion Week and the support of the Fijian Government, who recently announced a FJ\$10,000 grant (equivalent to approximately AU\$5880) to support developing fashion talent<sup>5</sup>.
- The Fiji Fashion Week - now in its fifth year - is an annual fashion event that was developed by Ellen Whippy-Knight, Fiji Fashion

Week Limited Managing Director, and supported by the Fiji Fashion Council.

- The growth of the manufacturing industry in Fiji, like in many developing countries, is attributed to the establishment of the tax-free zones or export processing zones<sup>6</sup>. Fiji's garment industry gained traction after the establishment of the Kalabu Tax Free Zone (KTFZ) in 1997, which saw the development of many garment factories and job creation<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Fijian Government, [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Center/Press-Releases/GOVERNMENT-INJECTS-\\$10,000-TO-DEVELOP-FIJIAN-FASHI.aspx](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Center/Press-Releases/GOVERNMENT-INJECTS-$10,000-TO-DEVELOP-FIJIAN-FASHI.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> Narayan, P. and Prasad, B., *Fiji's Sugar, Tourism and Garment Industries: A survey of Performance, Problems and Potential*, [www.fama2.us.es:8080/turismo/turismonet1/economia%20del%20turismo/turismo%20zonal/oceania/FIJIS%20SUGAR,%20TOURISM%20AND%20GARMENT%20INDUSTRIES.PDF](http://www.fama2.us.es:8080/turismo/turismonet1/economia%20del%20turismo/turismo%20zonal/oceania/FIJIS%20SUGAR,%20TOURISM%20AND%20GARMENT%20INDUSTRIES.PDF)

<sup>7</sup> *Investment Fiji Annual Report 2010, Regional Offices Kalabu Tax Free Zone*, [www.investmentfiji.org.fj/resources/uploads/embeds/file/2010\\_AnnualReport\\_Final.pdf](http://www.investmentfiji.org.fj/resources/uploads/embeds/file/2010_AnnualReport_Final.pdf)



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

CREATING SKILLS FOR LIFE

IMPACT Case Study

# Investing in Industry Development



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# Developing local industry through workplace training

*An industry-based training partnership between Australia-Pacific Technical College and the local fashion industry in Fiji is developing the skills and talents of employees and helping to build a stronger and more vibrant sector both locally and internationally.*

Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC) has established a significant relationship with Fiji's key stakeholders and employees in the local fashion and garment industries with the introduction of its new Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology.

The seven-month pilot program, which runs from March to October 2014, is a partnership between APTC and the Textile Clothing and Footwear Council of Fiji (TCFC).

The Certificate III involves skills assessment and aims to improve proficiency and workplace safety standards. This opportunity of offering people internationally accredited training will benefit the local fashion and manufacturing industries.

APTC Program Trainer, Jodie Araya, says that the Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology is not just a classroom-based program, but also includes workplace-based training. This training is aimed at improving and developing the skills of people working in the garment factories so they can increase their contribution to the growing local fashion industry in Fiji.

The participants of this new program are 25 employees from eight local garment manufacturing companies, including Mark One Apparel, United Apparel, Classic Apparel, Lyndhurst Limited, PFD Fiji Limited, Ranjit Garments, Intimate Apparel and Outfitters. These companies have offered a high level of support, engagement and commitment to the program.

The pilot program focuses on design, pattern-making, sewing and quality assessment aspects aimed at helping the participants to understand and familiarise themselves with the actual processes involved in designing and manufacturing a garment - from initial design to final product. This training also benefits the employers involved in the program by up-skilling their staff. Students are also provided with all the necessary materials as part of the program.

Mark Hallaby, Managing Director of Mark One Apparel, believes that this program is a wonderful opportunity for fashion manufacturers.

"This is the first time an internationally accredited certificate course has been offered in Fiji," says Mark. "Even though the industry has been here, it has never truly focused on fashion. The establishment of a proper fashion program is the opportunity to work towards structuring feasible fashion courses."

The fashion industry in Fiji is growing rapidly with events such as Fiji Fashion Week and the support of the Fijian Government, who recently announced a FJ\$10,000 grant (equivalent to approximately AU\$5880) to support developing talent in the fashion industry<sup>1</sup>. This support, together with initiatives by the Australian Government to provide fashion design and technology training through APTC, is a welcome boost for the industry." The Fiji Fashion Week - now in its fifth year - is an annual

fashion event that was developed by Ellen Whippy-Knight, Fiji Fashion Week Limited Managing Director, and is supported by the Fiji Fashion Council, which Mark Hallaby also helped to set up.

Each year the Fashion Week showcases an increasing number of regional and international designers. The event is also starting to showcase more local designers, and this new APTC program has the potential to help expand local and regional participation.

Mark believes that Fiji has the talent, but it is only through education that this talent can be encouraged and developed. He also believes the new fashion program at APTC is an opportunity to broaden technical knowledge and advance fashion locally as well as internationally.

Mark supported his employees to participate in the program and has found the training so far to be very rewarding. He says that his staff are "very thrilled to be a part of the program", and have enjoyed what they have learnt in the workplace.

Sashi Vimlesh Singh, Mark One Apparel CAD Room Manager, who has worked at the company for 12 years and is now participating in the APTC Certificate III pilot, says that the program has not only offered him and his fellow students the chance to upgrade their skills and learn new techniques, but it has also allowed for greater involvement in the fashion industry.

"We are grateful to have an overseas trainer teaching us, and drawing our attention to our own potential, which we can use to compete in the overseas market," says Sashi. "The market here is basically work wear, so this is something new for us."

This investment in education offers the potential for Fiji to achieve higher standards in fashion and presents opportunities for local designers to showcase their talents. This will allow Fiji's garment industry to become more competitive in a global industry that is valued at approximately US\$1.2 trillion<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Fijian Government, [www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Center/Press-Releases/GOVERNMENT-INJECTS-\\$10,000-TO-DEVELOP-FIJIAN-FASHI.aspx](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Center/Press-Releases/GOVERNMENT-INJECTS-$10,000-TO-DEVELOP-FIJIAN-FASHI.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Brain: Fashion Industry Statistics, Annual Global Fashion Industry Revenue, 2013, [www.statisticbrain.com/fashion-industry-statistics/](http://www.statisticbrain.com/fashion-industry-statistics/)



Employees of Mark One Apparel



Employees of Ranjit Garments, Suva, Fiji attending the Fashion Design Course

## Supporting Fijian-made

As part of its Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology, APTC is also providing basic on-site training for students.

The Certificate III program has been designed to help improve the performance of students who are all employees at local garment and fashion manufacturers, in their respective workplace. This focus on industry-based learning - where the students are trained at their workplaces - offers a wider scope for skills development and education for workers<sup>3</sup>.

APTC Fashion Trainer, Jodie Araya, says the program is already doing very well, even though it is only in its early stages. She says there is a good mix of male and female students, all with different roles within their workplaces. Jodie believes that because the students come from diverse backgrounds and have specialised skills, the APTC program is a great opportunity for the students to learn from each other.

Jodie also mentions that the students, all of whom have been employed in the industry for some time, have responded positively to the training, and have indicated that they understand more about the different processes involved in the manufacturing of textiles and garments - from the start to the end of the complex process.

"Fiji has the infrastructure to manufacture, but designing is still in its early stages," says Jodie. "The idea of Fijian Made is brilliant, and Fiji has a wonderful atmosphere for creativity, and this is an opportunity for local garment manufacturers to seize."

The Fijian Made and Buy Fijian project was initiated by the Fijian Government in 2011 to promote "home-grown" products and talents in order to create jobs and encourage growth and development of locally produced products. The initiative was a call to boost the major sectors of the Fijian economy, namely agriculture, tourism, and most importantly, the textile and footwear manufacturing industry. The project was based on the idea that, "local manufacturing companies will grow and this will mean more jobs for our children as they grow. It means our children's job security can be protected by us, with the buying decisions we make now"<sup>4</sup>.

With the project underway, Fiji's garment manufacturing industry has been given a boost, and interested designers, both local and from overseas, have taken this opportunity to make and promote Fijian products (such as tapa - a traditional Fijian woven cloth), by using materials printed with traditional Fijian motifs, as seen in the work of designers Hupfeld Evers Hoerder, Robert Kennedy and Naziah Ali, who all regularly participate in Fiji Fashion Week and also export internationally.

Jodie believes that there is an increased enthusiasm for fashion in Fiji thanks to the recognition of Fiji Fashion Week as a key event in the social scene. Fiji Fashion Week is an annual event that provides a platform to showcase the work of local designers.

APTC has partnered with local employers to deliver the Certificate III and to respond to the demand for improved skills in this industry. It is hoped that this training will contribute to economic, social and community prosperity in the country.

Despite the challenges related to finding the right resources in Fiji, the employers involved in the APTC program have been highly supportive.

<sup>3</sup> Ram, S., *Industry-based learning and variable standards in workplace attachments*, 26 Feb, 2008; [www.apjce.org/files/APJCE\\_09\\_2\\_129\\_139.pdf](http://www.apjce.org/files/APJCE_09_2_129_139.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Fijian Government, [www.fijianmade.gov.fj/](http://www.fijianmade.gov.fj/)

## Boosting employee confidence

Students participating in the Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology program at APTC are responding positively to the training that commenced in March this year.

Fashion production manager, Prakash Kaur, who has worked at Mark One Apparel for 7 years and is participating in the pilot program, says the APTC program has helped her with both professional and personal development.

"When we first heard about the program, we were very excited because we had not previously participated in fashion specifically, just basic training in manufacturing," says Prakash.

"The program is helping enhance our knowledge, especially the need to understand garment design concepts."

Prakash has enjoyed learning about new methods and hopes there will be opportunities for doing more training with APTC in the future.

"Jodie [APTC Fashion Trainer] is a wonderful trainer, and has taught us simple ways of doing things by introducing methods that have been really helpful," says Prakash.

Prakash feels privileged to be one of the participants in the course, and acknowledges Mark Hallaby, Managing Director of Mark One Apparel, and APTC for providing the opportunity to do the training.

She also describes the program as very detailed and more thorough compared to previous training she has experienced.

"Because I do not do patterns as much and work more with the management of the production, the program has allowed me to learn techniques like pattern-making, which has helped me truly understand the basics of creating a garment," says Prakash.

"My colleagues and I have developed personally too. It has boosted our confidence levels, and we have even learnt how to make our own garments."

Prakash has also benefitted from being able to share information about what she is learning with the line managers and supervisors at her work, as well as through regular contact with other colleagues who are participating in the training.

"I think it is a good thing we are doing this fashion program in Fiji, because it will lead to the development of the fashion industry here," she says.