

## **Poor workers' rights rating tears apart Gorman clothing brand's fans**

The 2016 fashion report by Baptist World Aid Australia graded companies from A to F on their policies to prevent exploitation of workers in overseas factories. Gorman, the Australian company, got an F. A spokeswoman for Gorman said the F grading was because the brand chose not to be “affiliated” with the survey as it did not know Baptist’s “real processes.”

“The F grading was a failure to reply not a failure to comply. Our customers have been misled<sup>1</sup>,” she said. “As a business we continue to address our social and ethical responsibility and take it very seriously.”

Gorman has a social and ethical compliance policy posted on its website that states: “To be a supplier to Gorman, companies must pass through a strict evaluation process including social and ethical compliance audits. We closely monitor the entire supply chain.”

The policy has been mocked<sup>2</sup> by Gorman fans and adds to the sense of betrayal, with one user saying they had been “outright lied to”.

The most ubiquitous Gorman Facebook group, Gorman Buy and Sell, has 6,200 members who have been continuously posting about how let down<sup>3</sup> they feel by the brand and vowing to shop elsewhere.

“I’ll definitely avoid buying new Gorman clothing etc. until they commit to fairer pay and working conditions for their workers,” Susie Godfrey wrote. “It’s too easy to look the other way – it basically means we’re willing and knowing participants in abuses of basic human rights.”

Gorman’s founder, Lisa Gorman said: “In the coming months we will be publishing the company’s social and ethical audits online. It is clear that this is what our customer wants most and we are happy to provide this.”

Adapted from *www.theguardian.com*, April 27, 2016

<sup>1</sup> *misled = made to believe something that is not true*

<sup>2</sup> *it has been mocked = it has been criticized*

<sup>3</sup> *let down = disappointed*