



26 August 2009

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### **Public Outcry Forces Cotton On to Withdraw**

The Cotton Off Our Kids campaign, launched by the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ), is pleased to announce that the offensive t-shirts have now been removed from the shelves.

“The public outcry reflected the inappropriate nature of the slogans and sent a clear message that the sexualisation of childhood will not be tolerated,” says Elizabeth Bang, NCWNZ National President.

Last week Cotton On apologised to Australian consumers and stated that the company “recognised that certain references are not appropriate, and will sincerely endeavour to not cross these lines again.”

“We are pleased that Cotton On has removed the items, but disappointed that the company has not had the decency to issue a statement of apology to New Zealand consumers,” says Elizabeth Bang. “We have contacted Cotton On asking for confirmation of the withdrawal and a commitment to cease the production of all clothing that sexualises children, but they have not responded.”

The promise by Cotton On to stop the sale and production of the t-shirts in Australia was also accompanied by a commitment to “review the ongoing slogans range to ensure no reference is made to categories pertaining to sexually explicit behaviour, child abuse, drugs and profanity”.

NCWNZ believes these t-shirts should have never been available for sale in the first place.

“Cotton On and other companies who bombard children with sexually explicit material are acting extremely irresponsibly, all in the name of profit.

“The current system of self regulation provides retailers with the freedom to push the boundaries of what is considered socially acceptable, and as Cotton On has shown, only act responsibly when cornered by public pressure,” says Elizabeth Bang.

NCWNZ wants to see the appropriate measures put in place to protect children from ‘corporate paedophilia’, along with an education campaign that informs parents of the potential risks associated with the sexualisation of childhood.

“We will be rebranding the campaign to ‘Boycott the Sexualisation of Childhood’ and will continue to shed light on this issue; an issue which is of significant concern to the Council,” concludes Elizabeth Bang.

Join the campaign <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cotton-Off-Our-Kids/112938007107?ref=share>

Further Information:

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*“Women Influencing Policy”*