



Submission to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

Inquiry into the opportunities for the development of a hemp industry in Australia

Submitted by:

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1. Introduction

sunboli is an Australian climate-focused lifestyle brand pioneering the use of hemp textiles in sustainable shade solutions. Our flagship product is a portable, fashion-forward sun umbrella made entirely from hemp fabric. We combine design innovation with public health advocacy, donating 50% of profits to creating shade in urban heat islands through our foundation.

Our mission is to make hemp a mainstream material of choice beyond food and building, by demonstrating its versatility in consumer goods, textiles, and climate resilience solutions. We advocate for hemp as a cornerstone crop that can drive sustainable industries, protect human health during heatwaves, and reduce dependence on fossil-fuel-based materials such as polyester and plastics.

2. The Role of Hemp Textiles in Climate Action

Carbon storage & low-impact cultivation

- Industrial hemp absorbs CO₂ rapidly during growth. When processed into durable textiles, this carbon remains stored.
- Hemp requires minimal chemical inputs compared to cotton and improves soil quality through deep root systems.

Plastic alternatives

- Most umbrellas and shade textiles are currently made from polyester or nylon — fossil fuel-based materials with high embodied carbon.
- Hemp textiles provide a renewable, biodegradable alternative, reducing microplastic pollution and landfill waste.



Heat adaptation & public health

- Extreme heat is now one of the deadliest climate risks in Australia and globally.
- Shade is a frontline adaptation tool. Hemp textiles' breathability and UV resistance make them ideal for personal and public shade structures, reducing heat stress and associated health risks.

End-of-life sustainability

- Hemp textiles are biodegradable, recyclable, and non-toxic, unlike plastic-based fabrics that persist for centuries.

3. Social and Economic Benefits

Health & wellbeing

- Hemp fabric naturally regulates temperature, creating cooler, breathable shade environments.
- Increased access to shade reduces skin cancer risk (Australia has the world's highest rates of melanoma) and improves community resilience to heatwaves.

Community impact

- Through the sunboli Foundation, 50% of profits are reinvested into shade infrastructure for vulnerable communities — including urban heat islands where low-income groups are most exposed.

Economic opportunity

- Hemp textiles represent a new value chain: cultivation, fibre processing, fabric weaving, and product manufacturing.
- A domestic hemp textile sector would reduce reliance on imported fabrics, create regional jobs, and unlock export potential in sustainable fashion and lifestyle industries.

Tourism & lifestyle

- Hemp sun umbrellas and shade products offer hotels, resorts, and festivals sustainable alternatives to conventional plastic merchandise. This strengthens Australia's eco-tourism brand and creates new business-to-business markets.
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4. Alignment with the Inquiry's Terms of Reference

(a)(i) Australian farming systems

- Hemp for textiles fits into crop rotations, improving soil health and resilience.
- Expanding demand for hemp fibre diversifies revenue streams for regional farmers.

(a)(iv) Australian manufacturing and consumer industries

- At present, hemp fibre processing capacity is limited in Australia, meaning most fabric is imported.
- Investment in local decortication and textile mills would create a new domestic industry, supporting fashion, lifestyle, and health products.
- Hemp textiles can integrate into existing sectors — from apparel to outdoor furniture to shade structures — broadening hemp's market relevance beyond building and food.

(a)(v) Australia's economy

- A hemp textile industry has significant export potential, particularly in Europe and Asia where demand for sustainable, traceable fabrics is growing.
- Hemp-based consumer products also strengthen Australia's climate adaptation response, reducing healthcare costs linked to heat-related illness and skin cancer.

(b) Research and development needs

- UV testing of hemp textiles for formal certification in sun protection (UPF ratings).
- Development of natural coatings to improve fabric durability while maintaining biodegradability.
- Investment in domestic spinning, weaving, and finishing facilities to reduce reliance on imported hemp fabric.

(c) Regulations

- Nationally consistent licensing to streamline hemp farming across state borders.
 - Incentives to expand fibre processing infrastructure.
 - Recognition of hemp textiles in government procurement policies (e.g., uniforms, shade infrastructure, public health campaigns).
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5. Recommendations

1. **Invest in domestic hemp textile processing** — including fibre decortication and weaving capacity — to build a vertically integrated supply chain.
 2. **Fund R&D into hemp textile performance** — especially UV protection, fabric coatings, and lifecycle assessments.
 3. **Support pilot projects** — deploy hemp shade structures in schools, playgrounds, festivals, and regional towns to demonstrate viability.
 4. **Incentivise adoption through procurement** — mandate sustainable fabrics in government-funded shade and uniform contracts.
 5. **Create market incentives** — e.g., carbon credits, green certification, or tax benefits for hemp textile producers.
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6. Expected Outcomes

- **Expanded hemp farming markets** — stronger and more reliable domestic demand for fibre.
 - **Regional job creation** — in farming, fibre processing, textile manufacturing, and product innovation.
 - **Health benefits** — reduced sun-related illness, particularly skin cancer, through greater access to sustainable shade.
 - **Reduced carbon emissions** — displacing fossil fuel-based fabrics and plastics.
 - **Global competitiveness** — positioning Australia as an exporter of hemp textiles and sustainable shade solutions.
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7. Conclusion

Hemp is more than a building material — it is a climate resilience material. As temperatures rise, Australia must urgently expand shade infrastructure and reduce plastic reliance. Hemp textiles are an untapped opportunity to meet both challenges simultaneously.

sunboli demonstrates that hemp can be reimaged into stylish, practical products with social, economic, and environmental impact. With strategic support, Australia can unlock the hemp textile industry and lead the world in sustainable shade solutions.

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Supporting documentation available on request (UV testing reports, fabric certifications, case studies of urban shade projects).
