

NEWS

Business born out of concern

Birth of her daughter lead this mum to start a business in fair trade and organic clothes. By *Joseph Barratt*

Having a baby is one of the happiest moments in one's life.

For Hannah Shone, it also inspired a business idea.

Two years ago she was hunting for clothes for her soon-to-be-born daughter Becky.

The environmentally friendly mother living on Waiheke Island wanted organic clothing for her baby.

"I didn't want her wearing stuff with all those chemicals in it."

She also wanted the clothes to have come from "fair trade" agencies, which narrowed the options and sparked the business idea.

She began by launching www.earthlings.co.nz, a website with articles on parenting and an open forum for new parents to discuss

issues. All the while, she was hunting for bulk supplies that fitted in with her beliefs.

It meant she was on the look-out for material that was organic, or chemical-free, and fair trade, in which workers in developing countries who make the products are paid decent wages.

"It was a lot more difficult than you would think," she says.

"The first group said it was fair trade but we couldn't confirm it."

After finding a source in India, Mrs Shone launched the business side of her website. It's only been running for a few months and, for no advertising and in a recession, business is doing okay, she says.

"It's surprising how well it's doing."

So far, orders have been coming in



HANNAH SHONE WANTED CHEMICAL-FREE CLOTHING FOR HER DAUGHTER BECKY

from America, Britain and Australia as well as from around New Zealand.

With no employees, the work keeps her busy making orders up in the afternoon while her own toddler is with her grandparents.

"Even just keeping the social and information side of the website up-to-date is pretty time consuming."

This is Hannah Shone's first foray into business but she's found her niche.

Earthlings is one of the few certified fair trade and organic baby clothing suppliers in New Zealand.

Julia Campbell, of the Fair Trade Association, says it's great to see this side of the market developed.

She says any belief fair trade and organic goods are not the same quality as other goods is a misconception.

"Fair trade goods are generally high-end, good quality products.

"It's great seeing someone like Hannah going out there doing this."

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