



# ROYAL DRYCLEANERS

Three Generations of Experience Since 1972

Since the tariffs were dropped for the fashion industry in Australia in the late eighties almost all the fabric mills and many fashion houses shut down as they could not compete with foreign markets with low manufacturing costs. This is an example how Globalism, although has benefits, destroys local manufacturing across all sectors. Australian industries have health and safety regulations, industry regulation standards, relatively high employment wage standards, superannuation, payroll tax obligations etc... which many developing countries we compete with do not. The advantage of low cost energy for manufacturing has now been removed, with these issues it is very difficult for Australian manufacturing to be competitive in a global market.

My family has been dry-cleaning since 1972, we have had as many as twenty stores and provided valet and linen service to most of the high quality hotels across Perth. As well as knowledge of dry-cleaning my background is in fashion and textiles, I have a Certificate of Apparel Design and Manufacture. I worked as a pattern cutter for a number of designers here in Perth then started my own Made to Order business. I have a knowledge of textiles from a few perspectives over many years and have seen a reduction of the quality of a large sector of fabrics and garments in the fashion industry. Dry-cleaning weeds out badly constructed garments. The poor quality of foreign manufacturing standards means that garments are now made to last one season and not withstand frequent cleaning whilst maintaining shape, colour and structure.

The issues below are a few of what we, as drycleaners are faced with.

1. Fabrics cut off the true grain twist after are dry-cleaned or laundered, causing seams to lay in incorrect positions. A simple example of this is a knitted fabric T-shirt style; the side seams twist and pull around to the front and the back respectively. The customer then assumes we have done something to the garment during the cleaning process to make this happen.
2. Vegetable dyes are being used more as fabric manufacturers endeavour to use less toxic vegetable dyes particularly in linen and hemp fabrics. These fabrics often do not hold their colour during the dry-cleaning or laundering process.
3. Dry-cleaning of suit jackets is a large part of the service we provide. We have found that "bubbling" occurs on suit jacket fronts from the disintegration of the glue used to adhere the interfacing to the fabric when the suits are cheap and of poor quality, again the dry cleaner is blamed.
4. The quality of the thread used to manufacture garments is paramount on how they age and withstand the cleaning process. When none mercerised thread is used it breaks very easily when very little strain is place upon seams. As a dry cleaner we are constantly restitching, seams, hems and buttons become unstitched because of sub standard manufacturing. Dry-cleaning machines are now fitted with "Button Traps" to catch the buttons that come off during cleaning.
5. Incorrect labelling by the manufacturer is an issue we grapple with regularly. We have been in the dry-cleaning industry across three generations and experience has taught us that care labels are often incorrect. I understand a manufacturer is required to attach a care label to instruct how the garment can be cleaned safely. In our experience we find that some care labels are completely wrong. It seems some manufacturers attach a care label with no conscience, little or no testing of how the fabric or the completed garment should be cleaned. If we clean a garment that is incorrectly labelled we the dry cleaner are blamed and left in an impossible position to try to explain to our valued customer that we are not at fault as we followed the care label instructions.

6. Embellishments like beads, sequins, buttons and belts are often added to a garment after the care label is attached. The care label is correct for the fabric the garment is made from but after the embellishments are added the care label is then incorrect. For example is a silk gown is manufactured, a care label attached which states dry-clean only which is correct as silk does not launder well, it goes "crepey". Embellishments are added (post construction) which are often not able to be dry-cleaned as they can melt or loose colour which leaves the dry cleaner between a rock and a hard place. The beads can only be laundered but the silk garment can only be dry-cleaned.

7. We have also noticed the quality of fabrics have diminished over the time we have been dry-cleaning. We believe the thread counts of some fabrics may have been reduced as a way of reducing costs for the fabric mills. Also pilling of fabrics seems more prevalent as the length of the fibres within the yarn to produce the fabric may be of shorter lengths so when the fabric is exposed to friction through daily wear pilling appears.

Some of the problems with the issues I have mentioned above lie with the manufacturer not having to face the customer that purchase their garments when the cleaning process goes horribly wrong. Most of the Australian fashion industry garments and fabrics are manufactured overseas, the tyranny of distance protects these industries along with no or little laws to ensure standards are adhered to. The dry cleaner is then left "holding the baby" which damages the reputation of our industry, the dry cleaner is almost always blamed for dyes running, stretching, garments coming apart, fabrics not cleaning they way they should as recommended by the manufacturer etc etc... Are there any such standards that foreign fabric and garment manufacturers are required to adhere to?

I would like to know what regulations or standards foreign manufactures are expected to adhere to. If not, I would like to see a regulation of manufacturing minimum standards, correct labelling, fabric authentication applied to imported products. This would help Australian manufacturers compete on a level playing field and the dry-cleaning industry identify poor quality products manufactured overseas.

Katrina Gianoli  
0400 950 997

## ROYAL DRYCLEANERS

Processing - North Beach

Shop 4

111 Flora Terrace

North Beach WA 6020

08 9203 8866

## Woodvale Boulevard Shopping Centre

Shop 3

931 Cnr Whitfords Av & Trappers drive

Woodvale WA 6026

0426 191 448

## Lakeside Joondalup Shopping City

Shop E3

Lakeside Drive

Joondalup WA 6027