

# CONSUMED

NOT COSTING THE EARTH



There are over 7 billion people on Earth. Our ever-increasing thirst for 'stuff' is scarring our landscapes, polluting the air we breathe, affecting biodiversity and pushing our climate ever deeper into crisis.

We currently live in a make-use-throwaway economy, in which the 'stuff' we consume makes up the majority of our carbon footprint and that uses up finite resources at an alarming rate, to the point where some important materials such as copper will run out in our lifetimes.

As we challenge this climate of consumption, champion circular economies and highlight the need to reach net zero (fast!), CONSUMED asks what can we do – both individually and collectively – to reverse this trend. Can we make more responsible choices about the things we 'consume' in order to tread more lightly on planet Earth?

From the food we eat to the clothes we wear and our lifestyle and energy choices, CONSUMED sets out to show how the decisions we make about the things we buy, really matter.

CONSUMED asks you to question what and how you 'consume' and aims to prove that you can help tackle the climate crisis and protect Earth for future generations by consuming less, consuming differently and wasting less, whilst not compromising on taste, quality, lifestyle or choice.



**FOOD**  
Green container



**STUFF**  
Blue container



**FASHION**  
Red container

**LET'S WORK  
TOGETHER FOR  
OUR PLANET!**



## Did you know that some high street fashion brands have up to 52 different collections a year?

This is what is called fast fashion, a technique that encourages consumers to buy cheap clothing regularly, and it creates a lot of waste. The Ellen MacArthur foundation says that 'every second, the equivalent of a rubbish truck of clothes is burnt or buried in landfill.'

That truly astounding figure shows that our current systems are not sustainable. So instead of taking it fast, why not take it slow?

Slow fashion is a way of doing things differently. The clothes are often of a higher quality and more durable, making them better value for money in the long run. The manufacturing process tends to be more environmentally friendly, using less water and natural or recycled fibres, as well as creating better working conditions for employees making the clothes.

### You can interact with the container by:

Looking at the exhibition of preloved and sustainable fashion:

- 📌 Biosunnies are a company that produce sunglasses from wheat straw, a farming waste produce. They are completely biodegradable so will leave nothing behind when they have reached the end of their life.
- 📌 The mannequins are clothed with second-hand items available from various social enterprises around Scotland. Not only do preloved items help the environment, but they help your bank balance too!



**More than half of all fast fashion is disposed of within a year of purchase**



## The most sustainable jumper is the one you already own.

Wearing a garment for just nine months longer, instead of buying new, could reduce its environmental impact by 20-30%. Keeping clothes stored properly (and yes, that includes folding!) and learning to sew on buttons or zips can help you achieve this target.

That said, sometimes you want to switch things up or need to buy a specific item of clothing. In that case you can think about:

- 📌 The possibility of buying second-hand, from an item already in the circular economy
- 📌 Repairing an item of clothing to give it a new lease of life with you or someone else
- 📌 Doing your research on companies that have an environmental mission statement

Some companies have policies that look sustainable on the surface but are actually the equivalent of putting a plaster on a broken leg. This is called greenwashing and can be very hard to spot!

### You can interact with the container by:

- 📌 Repairing one of the holes on our giant shirt. We have provided a wide range of colourful thread so you can have a no-risk attempt at visible mending. Visible mending means that you don't hide your repairs, rather you make the clothes unique through new patterns and textures. We can't wait to see what you come up with!



**Washing clothes less and at lower temperatures makes them last longer**



## Eating for Planet Earth

The way we currently produce food accounts for one quarter of our total global greenhouse gas emissions and takes up one third of the world's land. While we need to feed a growing population, intensive farming practices have led to habitat destruction and damaged soils. On top of that, one third of the food we produce globally doesn't even get eaten, but is spoilt or thrown out someone on the way from farm to dinner table.

One quick way to reduce emissions is to cut down the amount of meat on our dinner tables, as meat (especially beef) and dairy production are generally more carbon intensive than the production of fruit, vegetables and pulses.

Eating seasonally and locally also tends to be cheaper and healthier for us. In Edinburgh and Dundee, there are a number of local groups encouraging communities to grow their own food in community gardens, allowing people to take ownership of their diets.

### You can interact with the container by:

- 🍴 looking through the kitchen drawers to find examples of local organizations you can work with to grow food and learn new skills
- 🍴 Writing a recipe down in our Zero Waste recipe book
- 🍴 Use the scales to measure how much carbon dioxide it takes to produce different food groups
- 🍴 Check our seasonality board to see when food is in season in Scotland



**1/3**  
of the world's  
land is used for  
food production



## Restorative food systems can help us produce the food we need without it costing the Earth.

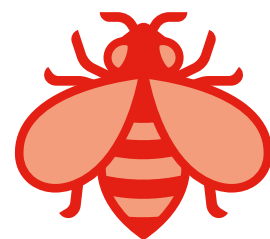
There is a view that farming and environmentalism doesn't work well together but that just isn't true! While some intensive farming systems have degraded our soils and water supplies, there are other ways to produce food.

Regenerative agriculture can result in increased carbon storage by improving damaged soil. Planting diverse crops can help improve food security and vary out diets with seasonal fruits and vegetables and the movement away from monocultures will impact positively on our wildlife.

We can even improve our marine environment by reintroducing oysters that clean the water through filtration and farming seaweed that stores carbon on the sea bed – both of these can be part of a regenerative, sustainable food source!

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**Growing diverse crops helps our pollinators thrive**



## A circular economy is a system that throws out the whole idea of waste.

Our current approach resources is 'extract them, use them, chuck them away'. This linear model means that valuable, finite resources are used only for a short time before ending up in landfill.

A circular economy on the other hand, takes its inspiration from cycles found in nature where resources are constantly being reused and waste is minimal.

When products, new or preloved, are put into the circular economy, they are used as normal. Maintaining the life of the product for as long as possible through repair and reuse is key and avoids unnecessary consumption. For every phone in use in the UK, there are four sitting in drawers unused, partly due to the upgrades we are constantly told to buy.

When reuse isn't possible, products can be refurbished or broken down and their parts recycled for something else. In this way, resources stay somewhere in circular economy and very little ends up being wasted.

### You can interact with the container by:

- ❏ Putting a resource in the circular economy machine and watching the path it takes. Imagine each ball is a resource like wood or metal, or a product like a jumper or a computer.
- ❏ Our staff will let you choose the next step your resource takes.
- ❏ While throwing it away is always an option, why wouldn't you want it to stay in the system forever!?

We use  
**3x**  
our  
share of  
planetary resources



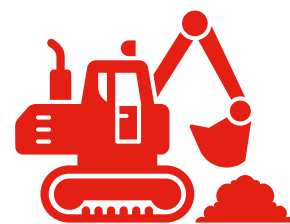
In late 2020, Scotland's Climate Assembly was created to make practical recommendations as to how Scottish society can best tackle the climate emergency. The Assembly was created to be representative of people from varying backgrounds, ethnicities, ages and climate attitudes all over Scotland.

One of the most exciting proposals was that the population have easy access to resource libraries, which provide tools, clothes or toys on loan. Prompted by studies that suggest that tools like drills are only used for an average of 10-15 minutes in their lifetime, the Edinburgh Tool Library opened in 2015. It aims to cut down on unnecessary consumption as well as giving equal access to expensive items. Other communities around Scotland now have similar initiatives, including the Community Toolbox in Dundee.

Using a library instead of owning rarely used products reduces the strain on raw resources, as fewer products need to be built, and fits nicely into the circular economy.

#### You can interact with the container by:

- 📦 Looking in the shed at items that are commonly only used for a few minutes or hours in private homes.
- 📦 Use the tokens to tell us which items you could share with your neighbours and community members.



**92 billion**  
tonnes of  
materials were  
extracted in 2019