

“Green is the new black”
by Melinda Oliver

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...de have for a green future? Melinda Oliver finds out

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Exchanging clothes

Kate Pears, a PhD student in sustainable consumption at RMIT, has an idea for how consumers can do their bit to help the environment, while still enjoying their love for fashion and shopping.

Pears is the brains behind My Sister's Wardrobe, an event that allows people to exchange their unwanted clothes for someone else's. Each person can bring six garments, and they are given a button per piece. The garments are checked for quality and hung in a room to look like a shop. Participants fossick through the items and buy a piece of clothing per button.

Pears saw the clothing exchange as a chance to address the conflict between people's desire for new things and the problem of wasted fashion. "I read that the production of trends was accelerating, with new stuff hitting the racks every two weeks, partly due to the global access to fashion," she says.

"All these things are driving consumption. The exchange allows people to consume, potentially in abundance, but through



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second-hand clothes," she says. Pears organised giant exchanges at the last two Melbourne Fashion Festivals. Aware that the clothing exchange is only one step forward in a series of major issues, she hopes it encourages people to think before they make unnecessary purchases.

Visit www.clothingexchange.com.au for more information.