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Cavalier investigates option for New Zealand's first large scale carpet recycling service

New Zealand's leading carpet manufacturer, Cavalier Corporation, has its sights set on opening New Zealand's first large scale, end of life, carpet recycling service.

Cavalier, which specialises in woollen carpets but also offers high quality synthetic flooring, says the increase in purchases of low quality synthetic carpets in the last decade will now likely be resulting in a rise in the amount of carpets going to landfill.

"Given the shorter life span of low quality synthetic flooring vs a good quality wool carpet and its rise in popularity in the last decade, it can safely be assumed that more and more synthetic carpet is now going into landfill as it comes to the end of its life", says Rochelle Flint, the company's Group Product and Marketing Manager.

While Cavalier is focused on wool carpets, it believes consumer choice is important and is therefore also working with innovative synthetic producers to create sustainable synthetic fibre options.

An example of this is the use of Aquafil's Econyl synthetic fibre in Cavalier's Siren carpet. The Econyl fibre is made from 100% recycled synthetics including fishing nets recovered from oceans around the world, fabric scraps from mills and carpet fibre designated for landfill. Cavalier is currently the only carpet manufacturer using the technology in Australasia, which is also widely used by fashion clothing brands.

Late last year, Aquafil opened a 'take back' carpet recycling plant in America. Particular carpets can be recycled, with Aquafil reusing the fibre component and the rest of the carpet going into other things such as roading in the local American market. In the US alone, 13 million tonnes of textile waste ends up in landfills, and carpeting accounts for 2% of all landfill material.

Cavalier has expressed interest in working with Aquafil in Cavalier's local markets (Australia and New Zealand) for large scale wool and synthetic end of life carpet recycling. It is currently in discussions with Aquafil as to how this could work.

Rochelle said: "Sustainability is important to us. After the rush towards synthetic carpets in the last 10 to 15 years, people are now realising the benefits that wool offers and we are seeing consumers turning back to beautiful woollen carpets for colour, innovative style, performance and its natural benefits. Wool is 100% natural, it's grown in NZ, it keeps you warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer and it's naturally stain, soil and fire resistant. Wool really does tick all the boxes."

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