

DESIGN

# This new bedding and sleepwear brand has wellness in mind

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Forget cotton and synthetic, if you ask the creator of Shleep bedding, Australian merino wool is the *only* fabric to be found sleeping in.



If you'll excuse the pun, Australian merino wool is a fabric that's pretty much woven into our national identity. But for Indi Maini, the CEO and founder of wool-based lifestyle company Shleep, it was a move to our fair shores that prompted a newfound appreciation of the natural fibre – not to mention one of those light-bulb-moments turned business-plans.



"I'd always thought of wool in the context of bulky, scratchy crewneck sweaters that keep out the cold, but mess up your hair in winter," she confesses. "So I couldn't believe it when I felt something as smooth as silk, as luxurious as cashmere, as light as gossamer, and my husband said 'that's wool. Australian Merino.' From that moment, the seed for Shleep was planted.



Teaming up with former R.M. Williams executive designer Jonathan Ward to design the range, Maini launched Shleep earlier this year. Boasting a 28-strong range of **bedding**, sleep accessories and sleepwear suitable for everyone from newborns to adults, each product uses Merino wool in a different way.



Used across products like pillow cases, sheet protectors, blankets, doona covers and baby swaddles – Maini and Ward are quick to point out the versatility of Merino – whether it's in wool fleece form or a Merino wool technical fabrics.

“We’re truly excited about how beautiful and unique our range has turned out to be, but even prouder that we did not simply accept the natural benefits of wool as a *fait accompli*,” explains Ward. “For us it was always about innovation and pushing the fibre into new territories for an enhanced softer feel and greater functionality.”



Wool's benefits don't end there. According to Maini, it also does more than just keep us warm. It's breathable, hypoallergenic, thermo-regulating and anti-bacterial, plus it's able to hold 35 per cent of its own weight in moisture, meaning it wicks away perspiration from the skin. And all these factors are important for a better shut-eye, which is imperative to good health and wellbeing. It's a lesson the former "hard-driving executive" finally learnt after 20 years of workaholism and sleep deprivation in America.



"We all now know the truth—that good sleep, and enough of it has such a strong connection to our overall health, our well-being and quality of our waking life," she says. "[And] 30 years of scientific research suggests that sleeping surrounded by wool results in better quality sleep." As someone who's lived to tell the tale, we're taking her word for it.

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