



Since 2002, Stencil has brought a number of new fabric technologies to the Australian corporate wear market, but it's the first – **Stencil Cool Dry®** – which still proves the most popular and versatile.

*Article by Matthew Smith*

Used in polos, t-shirts, singlets and even business shirts and high-visibility workwear, Stencil Cool Dry® is a series of high-tech fabrics made with specially treated yarn and a specialised fabric structure. As the name suggests, it is specially designed to keep the wearer cool, dry and comfortable even in hot, humid weather.

Although there are quite a few 'cool dry' products available on the market, there are major differences in the production techniques used by different manufacturers – and, as a result, quality can vary greatly from brand to brand. Because the majority of 'cool dry' technologies are a treatment, rather than specific fabrics, they can be applied in two different ways: either to whole cloth, prior to cutting and manufacture, or to the raw yarn, before the fabric is even woven.

When finished cloth is treated with a 'cool dry' process, it can lose its characteristics after only a small number of washes, because the treatment is only a coating on the fabric. The resulting garments often look good and wear well for the first few washes, but begin to exhibit the material qualities of the base fabric after a short period of time.

By comparison, the manufacture of Stencil Cool Dry starts with treatment of specially selected high-quality yarn, ensuring that the finished garment's Cool Dry qualities are right at the heart of the fabric. To produce the Cool Dry® fabrics, treated Cool Dry® yarn is combined with other high-quality materials to produce a superior, natural-feeling cloth with a permanent Cool Dry® effect – one that lasts for the life of the garment.



Opposite: The Club Polo – 185g Cool Dry®  
 Above left: The Active Polo – 160g Lightweight Cool Dry®  
 Left: The Woven Shirt – Woven Polyester Cool Dry®  
 Above right: Standard Plus Polo – 210g Cool Dry® poly/cotton pique

Stencil Cool Dry® works by carrying perspiration vapour away from the body and shifting it to the surface of the fabric. Because of the weave of the fabric, moisture is surrounded by natural airflow, creating an ideal environment for evaporation – taking away the unwanted moisture and excess body heat with it. When the fabric is in direct contact with skin, heat passes directly from the body to the Cool Dry® fabric based on the difference in temperature between the body and the garment. The heat that transfers to the fabric is dispersed easily, keeping the wearer cool and fresh. An added benefit of this design is that Cool Dry® garments are very quick-drying, and don't require ironing.

Because Cool Dry®'s effects come from the treated yarn – which is only a portion of the fabric's makeup – there is a great deal of flexibility in the application of Cool Dry® technology. This has allowed Stencil to produce the range of Cool Dry® fabrics which are the core of its range today. There are currently four main Cool Dry® fabrics used by Stencil – Original Cool Dry®, Lightweight Cool Dry®, Cool Dry® Waffle and Woven Cool Dry®.

The Original Cool Dry® is a 185g fabric well suited to casual day wear, equally at home in a work environment or at a weekend barbecue. Used for many of the best-selling shirts produced by Stencil – the Original Cool Dry® Polo, the Club Polo and the Cool Dry® T-shirt and Singlet. It has a soft, silky texture, a pleasant weight, and extra qualities which set it apart from the rest of the Cool Dry® range – Original Cool Dry® is antibacterial, deodorising, static free, and offers significant UV protection.

Lightweight Cool Dry® is, as the name suggests, a lighter version of the Original Cool Dry®. Weighing in at 160g, it's ideal for 'active' wear shirts. Currently used in the Lightweight Cool Dry® Polo, 160g Safety Cool Dry® Polo and the Active Polo, it's lighter thread count also makes it a less expensive option for situations where economy is at a premium.

Cool Dry® Waffle and it's cousin, the Cool Dry Pique, are perhaps the richest and most luxuriant of the Cool Dry® fabrics. At 210g, they have a rich, textured finish and a very pleasing hang. Used in many of Stencil's premium lines – the Standard Plus, Byron Bay and Challenge Polos – they look as good as they feel.

The Cool Dry® Woven fabric has undergone the most recent changes. Designed for use in buttoned shirts and business wear, it has a very natural cotton-feel finish with all the advantages of the other Cool Dry® fabrics. Originally used in both the Woven Shirt and Chambray Shirt, Cool Dry® Woven is now also used in Stencil's Pinpoint Shirt, a yarn-died herringbone pinstripe fabric that looks as sharp as the name suggests.

As Stencil's range of fabrics continues to grow, it's likely that Cool Dry® will remain a solid favourite. With features that virtually defines convenient and a wide range of uses still to be seen, it's likely that we'll be seeing a lot more of it in the future.

*If you are interested in seeing Stencil's range of Cool Dry® garments, please visit [www.stencil.net.au](http://www.stencil.net.au) or contact your local Stencil distributor.*