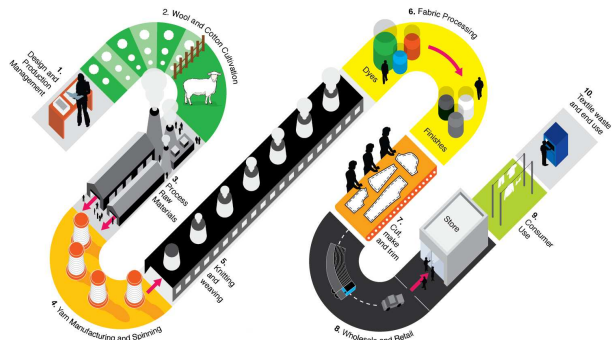


MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN GARMENT INDUSTRY PUTS SUSTAINABILITY HIGH ON THE AGENDA



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

5 February 2010, Sydney, Australia – Friday 29 January 2010 marked an important milestone in the garment industry's journey towards more sustainable practices with St James Ethics Centre and the Council of Textile & Fashion Industries of Australia Limited convening a national sustainability roundtable in Melbourne.

"Sustainability is a journey and for the garment industry to move forward we need to ensure that the compass is set in the right direction. This roundtable presented a positive step forward and is an example of the commitment of the industry in taking the sustainability agenda seriously. I was impressed with the standard of debate and the commitment shown by those in the room," says Phillip Butler, Chair of the Textile Clothing and Footwear Industries Innovation Council.

The event brought together key stakeholders such as Myer, Target, Woolworths, Country Road, Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, CSIRO, Ethical Clothing Australia, Oxfam Australia, RMIT, Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia and industry bodies to discuss sustainability issues that affect the garment sector. The event addressed matters such as local and global procurement, regulation and certification, support for small business, waste and transport and the role of government whilst recognising the complexity present when manufacturing products that can potentially travel the globe many times over before reaching our shelves.

Peter Davies, Vice Chair UK Sustainable Development Commission, Commissioner for Wales commented:

"This was a very impressive display of the commitment of both government and business to improving the sustainability of the garment industry in Australia. It was an example of the way in which product road maps can bring together all the partners in the supply chain to address weaknesses in areas such labour rights or environmental pollution."

Aspects of the garment industry have championed the sustainability agenda for the last decade – particularly in relation to addressing human rights concerns and procurement. This event presented an opportunity for key players to come together and create an action plan containing a range of practical outcomes to improve upon the sustainability performance of the industry.

"We have had great feedback about the roundtable event which is encouraging as the support of industry and retailers is crucial in developing policies and programs which will foster a sustainable industry. Textiles Clothing and Footwear is an important industry because of the role it plays in the everyday lives of ordinary Australians. It is also unique in its reach into other sectors." Jo-Ann Kellock (Executive Director, Council of Textiles & Fashion Industry Australia (TFIA))

The garment industry is a highly competitive sector and issues of sustainability, ethical practice and governance are core to innovation, competitive advantage and responding to consumer demands. The garment industry has a heavy environmental and social footprint and shifting to more sustainable practices would have a positive effect for society.

The garment industry roundtable was the next stage of St James Ethics Centre's Product Roadmap* project which has been a key part of St James Ethics Centre's Treasury funded Responsible Business Practice project. In creating the product roadmaps, St James Ethics Centre and the Brotherhood of St Laurence developed a detailed report on the garment industry and the roundtable is to further discuss the findings and recommendations from "Travelling Textiles: a sustainability roadmap of natural fibre garments"**.

Emer Diviney, one of the authors of the report, who has since been appointed the National Coordinator of Ethical Clothing Australia said "the report highlighted the complexity of the challenges and opportunities presented by ethical production practices".

- ENDS -

Contact Amanda Armstrong (Manager, Communications St James Ethics Centre) for more information or to organise an interview. **Phone:** 02 9299 9566 **Email:** amanda.armstrong@ethics.org.au

* Product roadmaps identify the social and environmental impacts of a specific sector/product throughout the supply chain and then identify areas for improvement, cross-participant opportunities, government responses and tools that can assist to increase responsible business practices.

** "Travelling Textiles: a sustainability roadmap of natural fibre garments" can be found at http://thehub.ethics.org.au/sme/sector_product_roadmaps

A FULL LIST OF ATTENDEES

Council of Textiles & Fashion Industry Australia (TFIA)
UK Sustainable Development Commission
Ethical Clothing Australia
Oxfam Australia
RMIT
Australian Fashion Partners
Textor Technologies
FTAA (Fashion Technicians Association Australia)
Myer
Target
Enterprise Connect
Woolworths Limited
Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Country Road
CSIRO
Cotton Australia Limited
Stafford Group
Kate Kennedy
The Merino Company
Defence Materiel Organisation
Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia
Lonsdale Institute

PHOTO PAGE



Image of the attendees at the National Garment Roundtable



List of the Panelist at the National Garment Roundtable

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