

Action plan

Up to 500 people will gather for a major sustainability conference in Sydney in October. Inside Retailing Magazine looks at the program and the motivations behind the sustainability trend...



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Every year up to 1000 of the world's leading food and grocery manufacturers and retailers are polled on the most important issues on the top of their mind.

Three years ago, corporate responsibility - largely led by sustainability and environmental issues - was 11th on the annual CIES Top of Mind rankings. Last year it had leapt to fifth.

This year it was 'Top of Mind' amongst 800 respondents.

That demonstrates that the surge in awareness of environmental, social and ethical issues is unprecedented - at a time when the global economy is in the doldrums,

price is not the foremost concern of companies and their customers. Nor is food safety (it was number two).

It's corporate responsibility.

In Australia, the rising awareness is driving a well-supported and energetic groundswell of support for a sustainability initiative linking retailers, suppliers and driven by the Point Of Purchase Advertising International group (Popai).

As a core part of that initiative, at least 500 delegates are expected to attend The Future's So Bright Green Sustainability Conference, which is shaping up as the event of the year for retailers, brands

and product suppliers with an interest in sustainability retail.

The conference will be hosted by Popai at Randwick Race Course in Sydney on October 22, with the event actively supported by Inside Retailing as a media partner.

All major related industry associations are supporting the event.

"It is the first time different associations have been prepared to work together to ensure various memberships are aware of best practice as it relates to sustainability at retail," says Mike Farley, founding chair of the Popai Sustainability Committee.

Thirteen top speakers will

cover a wide variety of topics dedicated to sustainability. Organisations they represent include the Australian Retailers Association, Coles, Coca-Cola Amatil, Deloitte Corporate Responsibility Practice, PepsiCo Australia, RMIT School for Design and Telstra Corporation.

Delegates will find out how to develop their own climate change strategies in marketing at retail. They will take away insights and real world strategies and practices being used by retailers and brands leading the way in the world.

Topics include:

Sustainability initiatives that have been successful deployed in Coles and things to expect in the future in environmental concept stores.

Guidelines and things you need to be aware of when you tackle the issue of sustainability.

Using telecommunications solutions to reduce energy intensity and emission footprints while enhancing shareholder value.

Sustainability initiatives being deployed by a leading brand.

Popai's Environmental Commitment: The Plan, The Vision, Review of Deloitte facilitation to enable companies to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future.

Product stewardship, research, international and local case studies.

Introduction to Greenfly, a powerful online tool for designers to integrate environmental considerations into their merchandising displays using eco design strategies and life cycle assessment data.

Sustainability awards to educate students and design professionals, engaging schools and universities and working together with suppliers, designers, retailers and brands to achieve best practice.

Delegates at the conference will also hear from the Popai Sustainability Committee, which was set up in cooperation with the Deloitte Corporate Responsibility Practice.

Popai formed four working sub-committees covering governance,

research, tools development and marketing communications. Each has appointed a group team leader and have begun working on a set of objectives/actions.

The governance committee is headed up by David Evans, MD of SPOS and committee members from Cadbury Schweppes, Coca Cola Amatil, David Jones and Supercheap Auto.

The Research committee is headed up by Paul Hone, operations manager of Adval and committee members from Coles, Visy, 3M, RMIT and L'Oreal.

The Tools Development committee is headed up by David Gittus, managing director of Active Display Group and committee members from Metcash, Lowes, Daltons, Vacform and Lindsay Yates.

The marketing and communications committee is headed up by Debbie Schubert, trade marketing manager Australia & NZ of PepsiCo Australasia and committee members from Nestle, Telstra, Repco and SPOS.

The working groups are holding monthly meetings with their short term (three month) goal to provide an update on their progress to the Sustainability Committee at formal review meetings with Deloitte's in Sydney and Melbourne in late August.

The mid-term (six month) goal is for the work of all sub-committees to be featured at The Future's So Bright Green Conference.

There, Popai Australia & New Zealand will identify successful and cost-effective sustainable practices within the point of purchase (POP) industry in order to expand and improve upon those activities and encourage all members to adopt similar practices.

This initiative will provide industry decision-makers with insight and strategies to improve their sustainability and environmental performance to meet the consumer demand for more environmentally responsible products.

A sustainable point of purchase display will be defined as one that can be produced, distributed, used and recovered with the minimum of

environmental impact.

The committee members selected are from a cross section of influencers from retailers, brands, producer suppliers, educators, green suppliers, media, industry supporter groups and related trade associations.

Committee members' expertise comes from all areas of business to ensure balanced outcomes that can be deliverable. The committee includes environmental and sustainability managers, trade marketing managers, designers to CEOs and General Deloitte Corporate Responsibility Practice in Australia & NZ have partnered with Popai to assist the Popai Sustainability Committees in each county identify the objectives and road map to achieve sustainability outcomes.

The goals are to encourage Popai's members to adopt good environmental practices and identify environmental risk opportunities within the industry and suggest guidelines to reduce pollution.

Others are to:

Promote the responsible use of resources, water and power to minimise the environmental impacts of members' manufacturing and transport processes.

Promote/educate on recycling and the use of sustainable resources wherever feasible within the industry.

Set objectives and implement plans to monitor environmental performance of its members.

Continually strive to improve members' environmental practices through training, educational seminars and gaining access to research.

Initiate a competition within educational institutions for design students to produce the most sustainable point of purchase displays.

Report on environmental performance of its members •

For more information or to join the Popai Australia & New Zealand Sustainability Committee email Karen Spear: karens@popai.com.au or the committee chairman Michael Farley, michaelfarley@popai.com.au