Perspectives of contemporary sustainability knowledge and practice in the Australian Fashion Industry

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Technology

Grant Emerson
Bachelor of Business
Victoria University

School of Fashion and Textiles
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University

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ABSTRACT

This research determined whether graduates of the RMIT University, School of Fashion & Textiles, Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program have developed sustainability knowledge and whether they are applying this knowledge in the workplace. It also determined the degree to which the Australian Fashion Industry is enhancing or impeding the graduate’s practice of sustainability.

Emerson and Cowlishaw (2012, p.1) noted that “The development of sustainability concepts within tertiary education programs remains an ongoing challenge for educational institutions due to the ‘messy’ nature of sustainability as a discipline and the paucity of knowledge about sustainability within the community”.

Results from the research have indicated that graduates have acquired and maintained their knowledge of sustainable practice in three key areas: social, environmental and business economic productivity. However, the organisations they are employed with are not providing the workplace environment for them to apply their skills and knowledge. Of the graduates who responded to the survey, 69% stated that sustainability is not included as a responsibility in their job description and 66% stated that sustainability is not discussed at team meetings. Supporting these percentages are the responses to interviews conducted with senior management at two of the largest fashion companies in Melbourne, Australia. These interviews confirmed that sustainability as a key performance indicator has not extended to the operational level of employees within their organisation.
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Dedicated to my friend John Henry.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASOS: As seen on screen
CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
DDT: Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
FLA: Fair Labour Association
FTA: Free Trade Agreement
GRI: Global Reporting Initiative
MDG: Millennium Development Goals
MNC: Multi-National Corporations
NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act
NGO: Non-Government Organisation
PBL: Problem Based Learning
TBL: Triple Bottom Line
RMIT: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SDL: Student Directed Learning
TCF: Textiles, Clothing and Footwear
UNCED: UN Conference on Environment and Development
USA: United States of America
WCED: World Commission on Environment and Development
DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgment has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and; ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Grant Emerson

22 August, 2017
Chapter: 1

1.1 Background to the Issue

This research determined whether graduates of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, School of Fashion & Textiles, Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) demonstrate knowledge of sustainability issues. It also explored Australian fashion organisations strategic responses to sustainability related issues.

In addition this study identified and analysed the extent to which graduates practiced resolving industry related sustainability issues within the workplace and evaluated the graduate’s workplace environment to determine whether their practice in sustainability is being impeded or enhanced.

The research does not evaluate existing sustainable practice of businesses within the Australian Fashion Industry, nor does it evaluate the pedagogical or content of the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program.

The focus of this investigation is on graduate knowledge and practice of sustainability issues, industry knowledge and response to sustainability issues, and the degree of industry support for graduates to practice sustainability in the workplace.

Within the context of this research the concept of sustainability needs to be clearly defined.

Sustainability is not a simple term and cannot be expressed in any singular way.

In 1983 the United Nations recognized a need for a worldwide response to the degradation of the environment and diminishing natural resources. Under the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) the Brundtland Commission was formed to develop a united response to sustainable development.

In 1987, the Brundtland Report concluded the commission and was developed to create a “global agenda for change”. The primary goal of this report was to provide long term recommendations and strategies that promote environmentally sustainable development. Within the Brundlundt Report for the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987, p.45) the term sustainability was defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Hethorn & Ulasewicz (2008) referenced the Brundtland Report and expanded on this definition within the context of sustainable fashion design as an opportunity to displace current fashion industry value sets for values that place emphasis upon considerations on how garments are made and what impact the existing fashion system has upon the earth and its people. Implicit in this definition is the fact that sustainable development can relate to many factors including economic, environmental and social considerations.

Costanza and Pattern (1995, p.193), defined sustainability in terms of pure existence, stating “the basic idea of sustainability is quite straightforward: a sustainable system is one which survives or persists".
Peloza et al. (2012) emphasised that for corporate sustainability, the focus is on the balance of three things, society and people, the economy, and the environment.

In considering the above views it can therefore be inferred that sustainable development can relate to many factors, including economic, social and environmental issues.

For a business to remain sustainable it must take into account a range of factors to not only be socially and environmentally responsible in their use of resources but also be efficient in their resource use in order to remain financially viable.

The concept of the triple bottom line has arisen in response to these factors.

Definitions of sustainability vary: however they all consider the three areas of which leaders in their field view as the ‘Triple Bottom Line’, (TBL), comprising of economic, social and environmental factors (Hitchcock and Willard 2009). Therefore we can define TBL as consisting of social justice, environmental quality and economic prosperity (Elkington 1997).

As such, for this research, graduate capability in sustainability means having the skills and knowledge to identify and resolve issues related to a range of, social, environmental and economic factors.

A recent study of sustainable development practices within the Australian Textiles and Clothing and Footwear (TCF) industries conducted by Emerson and Cowlishaw (2012, p.10), concluded:

“The Australian TCF industry, by and large, does not have well defined sustainability strategies in place. However, the industry does appear to recognize the need to respond to sustainability challenges and a number of businesses are making the connection between cost containment and waste reduction as a sustainability response”.

This study indicated a need for employee training in sustainable strategies and practices and for graduate employees to have developed capabilities in sustainability.

RMIT University aims to enhance student sustainability literacy and defines sustainability as comprising of three pillars; society, environment and economics (RMIT University 2016).

This research determines whether graduates are developing graduate knowledge related to sustainability in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program conducted at RMIT University:

This Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program has the following sustainability graduate capability:

“Apply sustainable practices related to fashion and textiles issues”.

As an example, a core course that is delivered with this sustainability capability is Supply Chain Management.

The course learning outcomes that provide context for this capability are:
a) Identify, select and apply basic supply chain management principles within a fashion and textile industrial enterprise.

b) Differentiate the management of people, quality and change, from local, regional and global off shore production perspectives.

Assessment includes a case study approach whereby students need to identify and assess the theoretical framework of sustainable practices to an existing supply chain both on and offshore. **This is a Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach.** PBL is focused on learning that investigates and resolves real life issues. PBL requires topics that are complex and cannot be solved with one simple solution experience (Hmelo-Silver and Barrows 2006). Sustainability in the fashion industry is an issue where multiple resolutions can be explored. Students must explore the issue and critically evaluate solutions. As such, the nature of sustainability issues arising in the Fashion Industry allows for PBL to be an appropriate learning and teaching strategy.

The overall Bachelor program architecture requires students to investigate a range of sustainability concepts and issues. The context of the learning can be grouped into four key categories related to the fashion and textiles industry. These are marketing, product development, product management and supply chain industry management. Within each of these four key categories, sustainability related to social, environmental and economic issues are identified, explored and resolved.

Over the past four decades the Australian Fashion Industry has come under increasing pressure. Government economic policy shifts resulted in the emergence of intense competition via globalisation both physical and virtual. To remain competitive, businesses must respond and be innovative in their approach to sustainable practices.
1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research was to determine whether graduates at RMIT University, School of Fashion & Textiles, who studied the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program have attained knowledge of sustainability issues from their studies. In addition, the research sought to determine whether the workplace environment is either enhancing or impeding graduates to practice sustainability.

This investigation focused on three key objectives:

Objective 1: To determine current graduate sustainability knowledge and practice within Fashion and Textile organisations.

Objective 2: To identify and analyse the strategies and processes that Australian Fashion and Textiles organisations have implemented in response to sustainability issues.

Objective 3: To evaluate the impact that Australian Fashion and Textiles organisations are having on graduate employee practice in sustainability.
1.3 Research Significance

The research shows that we have much to learn about sustainability. There is also a lack of education in schools around the world. Students are not being educated on the consequences of a high consumption lifestyle (Assadourian 2010). If the population is not educated from an early age, it becomes more difficult to alter an adult’s behaviour toward an environmental orientation when adults make for their lifestyle choices. Education is also required for the implementation of eco-friendly strategies in the current market. If innovations are imposed on people who do not know why they should use less power, water, or fuel, then consumers will simply revert to their old consumptive lifestyles (Newman 2011). Education is an important factor in successfully implementing sustainability as it will affect consumers in their everyday lifestyles. Through education consumers can make informed decisions about their purchases (Edwards 2010). If consumers aren’t educated to understand why they are making these decisions then they are likely to continue their current behaviour.

Many businesses do not know how to approach sustainability. Most companies struggle with sustainability concepts in a competitive business environment ... there are large knowledge gaps regarding sustainability issues and how to tackle them (Steger et.al. 2009). This indicates a lack of education in sustainability; even though businesses may want to become more sustainable, they do not know how to go about it.

Adoption of sustainability by most businesses is still in its early stages. However, there is evidence that it is beginning to take place across a broad number of industries. For the past two years, for example, The Boston Consulting Group in conjunction with the MIT Sloan Management Review, has been annually surveying businesses to determine how organisations are responding to the challenges and opportunities of sustainability. The results are showing that corporate commitments to sustainability-driven management are strengthening (MIT Sloan 2011). This research suggests that businesses are starting to adopt sustainability practices as the benefits become more obvious and the desire for a positive image become apparent. The research also argues that most companies believe sustainability will be necessary to be competitive in the future and so see the need to adopt sustainability-driven management practices (MIT Sloan 2011). Businesses are gaining a better understanding of the opportunities and benefits which sustainability presents.

Other research confirms the argument that sustainability has become established on the strategic business agenda. Hurley (2010, p 591) for example, stated that sustainability “is driven by a company’s desire for corporate social responsibility and accountability, as well as the drive to increase efficiency and decrease costs”. Instead of sustainability being viewed as a cost burden, there is evidence that the cost benefits are in fact substantial. Businesses have the opportunity to create the dual benefit of financial benefits savings through the efficient use of resources, as well as projecting a positive image of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

But how does this translate to the educational environment? Emerson and Cowlishaw (2012, p.1) argued that “The development of sustainability concepts within tertiary education programs remains an ongoing challenge for educational institutions due to the “messy” nature of sustainability as a discipline and the paucity of knowledge about sustainability
within the community”.

The School of Fashion and Textiles at RMIT University embarked upon an exercise in 2007 aimed at establishing sustainability principles within each program delivered by the school. The overall objective was to develop graduates who will be able to effectively influence the development of sustainability strategies within the Fashion and Textile industry.

Whilst the educational program development for a graduate knowledge in sustainability has been established, there is concern that graduates remain ill-informed and have little understanding of sustainability principles and that industry does not support the practice.

This research determines whether graduates employed at RMIT University, School of Fashion & Textiles, Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program have attained knowledge of sustainability issues. In addition the research will identify fashion organisation’s strategic response to the sustainability issues and whether the workplace environment is either enhancing or impeding graduates to practice sustainability.

The findings of this research will inform educationalists and industry in developing strategies to improve sustainability knowledge, skills and practices for the Australian Fashion & Textiles Industry.
1.4 Research Methodology

The research focused on developing an understanding of the degree to which Bachelor of Fashion graduates are demonstrating a capability in applying sustainable practices related to issues in the Australian Fashion and Textiles Industry as well as the influence of the workplace environment on such practice.

The methodology included an electronic questionnaire administered to employed graduates and interviews with selected Australian Fashion & Textile employers. This was considered appropriate given the research objectives were aimed at exploring attitudes in a qualitative sense. Qualitative research is intended to discover the opinions and attitudes of participants through methods such as surveys and interviews which allow the participants to express a response in an unstructured manner. Malhortra et al. (2006, p.30) states that “Qualitative research is unstructured, exploratory in nature, based on small samples, and may utilise popular qualitative techniques. This method provides an in depth understanding of the problem and its underlying factors”. Through the use of open ended questions and a focus on depth not quantity, qualitative research can highlight factors that may arise if participants were asked closed ended questions. The questionnaire also gave participants the opportunity to expand on a question when relevant.

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with Australian Fashion and Textile executive employers. The questions developed for both the questionnaire and interviews were generally open in nature so as to make it easier for respondents to express their opinions and attitudes.
1.5 Structure of the Thesis

In addition to this introductory chapter, this thesis consists of five core chapters:

1. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of sustainability and the impact upon the Australian fashion industry. The purpose of the literature review is to define and identify the need for organisations to employ sustainability practices. External competitive factors faced by the Australian fashion industry are identified and analysed to highlight the need for businesses to be innovative in their approach to sustainability to remain financially viable and socially responsible.

2. Chapter 3 provides a background to the studies undertaken within the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program. As per the TBL sustainability definition, this background demonstrates the key learning outcomes that students learn over the three key sustainability themes being social, environment and economic issues. These three key themes of learning are categorised under four core fields of study, Marketing, Product Development, Product Management and Supply Chain Industry Management and delivered via PBL teaching strategies.

3. Chapter 4 outlines the methodology employed. A graduate electronic questionnaire and industry interviews were utilised. Detailed information of the survey and interview structure is discussed including issues related to research methods, analysis, limitations and ethics.

4. Chapter 5 provides the findings of the graduate electronic survey and industry interviews. The graduate electronic survey covers the following areas: the working profile of the graduate, graduates attitudes, skills and knowledge of sustainability issues, graduate knowledge of their employer’s response to sustainability issues and the level of employer communication and support to implement and practice sustainability strategies and processes. Conversely the industry interviews were asked for their opinions and attitudes in relation to the organisation’s understanding of the term “sustainability”, the organisation’s strategic approach to sustainability issues and the human resource management approach for employees to practice sustainability within the workplace.

5. Chapter 6 presents an analysis and discussion of the key findings identified in Chapter 5. The graduate response to the questionnaire is compared and contrasted with the findings of the industry interviews. Based upon these findings, conclusions and recommendations are discussed in relation to graduate capability in sustainability, industry response to sustainability issues and the level of support provided by employers for graduates to practice sustainability.

Appendices provide further information and supporting data.
BACKGROUND / LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter: 2

2.1 Historical Perspective – Sustainability

The term sustainability emanates from initial environmental and exploitation of natural resource concerns by the Swiss and Germans related to the forestry and fishery industries (Dixon and Fallon 1989). However, society’s knowledge on sustainability issues began over 50 years ago, with Rachel Carson’s book published in 1962, “Silent Spring”, which strongly influenced the modern environmental movement (Griswold 2012). Carson highlighted nature and the way in which synthetic pesticides, particularly dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), were destroying it (Meyer 2013). Carson argued that these pesticides were not only killing bugs, they were damaging wildlife and marine life, and would even cause harm to humans. Griswold (2012, para.4) believed that Carson held a strong view that “if humankind poisoned nature, nature would in turn poison humankind.” This book put forth ideas to the public that they had not previously been aware of, sparking interest and concern and eventually causing DDT to be banned in the USA in 1972 (Meyer 2013). Carson is considered to be the first author to link the social, economic and environment aspects of sustainability, and this knowledge also motivated the number of environmental initiatives that would soon follow (Meyer 2013).

In 1969, the United States of America (USA) responded to society’s reaction to the environmental safety threats it was now aware of, by implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Creech 2012). This made the USA one of the first countries to establish a national legal policy to protect the environment. According to NEPA (1969, para. 1) this act aimed to “encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; and enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation”. It was noted that a number of additional governmental policies were put into place in the USA throughout the 1970s, including the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, as well as the formation of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Natural Resources Defence Council and the Environment Protection Authority (Meyer 2013).

The United Nations Environment Programme in 2013 stated that in 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, marked the pivotal occasion where sustainable issues were first introduced on a global scale, bringing together members from both developed and developing countries to discuss such matters. 26 principles and an action plan consisting of 109 recommendations were announced at the conference, as well as a number of specific targets to be met over the next 10 years (Drexhage and Murphy 2010). These recommendations and targets resulted in the creation of the UN Environment Programme as well as an additional number of national environmental protection organisations. The recommendations identified were also elaborated upon in 1980, when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature the World Wildlife Fund and UNEP announced the World Conservation Strategy. After collaborating, these organisations decided upon the most significant conservation issues and
devised key policies in order to progress sustainable development (Drexhage and Murphy 2010). It was further highlighted that some of the key issues acknowledged as most damaging to the environment were poverty, population pressure and social inequality (Creech 2012). Also identified was that a number of environmental discoveries were also made in 1985, such as the Antarctic Ozone Hole, and for the first time, climate change was addressed and global warming was predicted, after scientists reported that there was a build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (Creech 2012).

The WCED was assembled in 1983, with members from both developed and developing countries joining, all with the common goal of “accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development.” In 1987, the WCED published a report entitled ‘Our Common Future’, or more commonly referred to as ‘The Brundtland Report’, named after the chairman of the WCED, which offered a straightforward and blunt assessment of the state of the environment. This report was the first to thoroughly connect the social, economic and environmental issues of sustainability and offer global solutions (Creech 2012). As noted by the WCED (1987, p43), the Brundtland Report defined sustainable development as meeting “the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” which has become the most popular and commonly used definition of the many existing on this topic.

The findings from the Bundtland Report led to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, in 1992, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This event was large, with millions of people across the world focusing their attention on the conference and encouraging their national leaders to take part. The Earth Summit marked 20 years since the UN conference held in Stockholm, and the purpose was to help governments rethink economic development and find ways to halt the destruction of irreplaceable natural resources and pollution of the planet. The depth of the issues discussed at the Earth Summit was profound, and resulted in the implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, both containing in depth plans of action and a number of commitments for nations to work towards global sustainable development (Drexhage and Murphy 2010). One of the biggest issues that arose from the conference was that wealthy nations were found responsible for the excessive consumption of the Earth’s resources, severely damaging the environment and perhaps leaving nothing for future generations. Although the Earth Summit captivated the world’s attention and endeavoured to make large steps towards global development, it has been criticised for focusing too much on the environmental facets of sustainability, without much regard for economic or social aspects (Drexhage and Murphy 2010).

In 1997 the Kyoto Conference on Climate change, began to address social concerns. This was represented by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the period 2000–2015. The MDGs focused on poverty, health and discrimination (Drexhage and Murphy 2010),

The World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002, was an opportunity for nations to assess their progress towards the goals and commitments agreed upon 10 years prior in Rio. Frustration arose when it was established that the rate of progress was much slower than anticipated, with improvements in some areas but no activity in others, and none of the goals set in Agenda 21 yet achieved (Creech 2012). A shift in
perception occurred in 2002; from focusing purely on the environment to realising that economic and social development must also be focused upon, which was especially required by developing countries (Drexhage and Murphy 2010).

In June 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20, was held in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, acknowledging 20 years since the Earth Summit in 1992. In attendance at the conference were thousands of world leaders, participants from the private sector, government members, and NGOs.

Reviewing the world’s current progress at achieving the MDGs by the deadline, it was evident that many of the goals have proven to be successful, whilst others are not as achievable as expected. Some of the achievements that have demonstrated promising progress are:

(i) reduction of extreme poverty in developing regions;
(ii) increased access to treatment for people living with HIV;
(iii) decreased number of deaths of children under five years old;
(iv) increased enrolment rates for children in primary schools in Africa; and
(v) decline in malaria deaths globally.

(United Nations, 2012)

The conference reported that a number of the MDGs have already been met; such as halving the global poverty rate, which was achieved in 2010, and also halving the number of people that do not have access to safe drinking water. Many of the goals will not be met by 2015, which has been acknowledged by the UN (United Nations 2012).

It was also noted that the most prominent issues that have not yet been successful are maternal mortality rates and vulnerable employment rates, which is said to be due to one of the largest underlying issues of all, gender equality and women’s empowerment (United Nations 2012).

The conference concluded that the conference resulted in the renewal of the world’s commitments to sustainable development, identifying the key areas to be focused upon, and committing to achieve the previously agreed upon MDGs by 2015, amongst another 280 initiatives, commitments and goals (United Nations 2012).

In summary, the term ‘sustainability’ had its origins from societal concerns raised about the human impact on the earth’s environment and an identified need to address the use of harmful chemicals and industrial practices. In addition, the exploitation of nature’s limited resources that impact upon future generations. These concerns for the environment led to world leaders developing a coordinated response via the United Nations. Environmental targets were established and nations began to establish and enforce regulation to meet these targets. From concerns related to environmental factors the world forums began to extend the sustainability definition to include other societal concerns. This included the need to address world-wide poverty, disease, gender equality and education issues. Whilst
governments are making inroads in addressing these environmental and social issues, all sectors of the human population needed to be included in the sustainable response. This includes industry and consumers.

To achieve a truly global response the term sustainability needs to be clearly defined. For the purposes of this research the following section identifies the difficulties that industry have in defining sustainability and approaches undertaken in formulating a response.
2.2 Defining Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility

The aim of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of educational strategies employed at RMIT University, School of Fashion & Textiles, Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program in relation to graduates, since 2010, which have developed the knowledge to apply sustainable practices. In addition the research will determine whether the workplace environment is either enhancing or impeding this practice.

It is important to undertake this research as sustainability is a major issue for all businesses including the Fashion & Textile Industry. There are growing calls for business to adopt a wider range of social and environmental responsibilities. Consumer driven demand is driving business to implement better sustainable practices. Business organisations that adopt sustainability strategies as a core aspect of their business operations can increase profitability and can attain a competitive advantage (Crane, Matten and Spence, 2008).

As sustainability is the core aspect of this research it is important to define this term. However the term sustainability is a difficult and complex issue and as such is difficult to define. Indeed there is no single definition for the term sustainability as it is a very broad topic. A definition provided by the WCED (1987, p. 43) defines sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This statement means that we cannot just consider using resources for just the present but we must also consider future generational needs.

In terms of expressing sustainability as a whole, Ruckelshaus (1989, p.167) defines sustainability as;

"sustainability is the emerging doctrine that economic growth and development must take place, and be maintained over time, within the limits set by ecology in the broadest sense - by the interrelations of human beings and their works, the biosphere and the physical and chemical laws that govern it ... It follows that environmental protection and economic development are complementary rather than antagonistic processes."

Ruckelshaus (1989), encompasses both the ecological and economic impacts, commenting that any economic growth must be displayed with the environment at the forefront and that both the economy and ecological development are complimentary to one another and should be treated accordingly instead of with hostility.

Pezzey and Toman (2002, p.167-168) state that sustainability is a difficult theory to define they ultimately define it as; "sustainability involves some concern for intergenerational equity or fairness in the long-term decision-making of a whole society; some recognition of the role of finite environmental resources in long term decision-making; and some recognisable, if perhaps unconventional, use of economic concepts such as instantaneous utility, cost or inter-temporal welfare”. This acknowledges that sustainability embodies both the ideas of the ecological and financial environments. However, in comparison with Ruckelshaus, Pezzey and Toman have strongly identified that there is also an important link between generations. This is in regards to long-term decision-making not only derived from the younger generations making a change but also for the older ones, such as the baby boomers and generation X to support the younger generations and to also set examples for them to follow.
Another definition of sustainability broadens the term to include other themes. Whilst there is not a consensus of defining sustainability there is a common understanding that this includes environmental, economic and social issues (Cowell et al. 1999). Hence besides from considering the use of finite economic resources we should also consider environmental and social impacts as well. RMIT University defines sustainability as comprising of three pillars; society, environment and economics (RMIT University 2016).

Many businesses however, do not know how to approach sustainability, Companies struggle with defining and applying sustainability concepts (Stegar et al. 2009). This indicates a lack of education in sustainability. Even though businesses may want to become more sustainable, they do not know how to go about it.

In 1997, following the many environment-focused initiatives that had taken place, John Elkington’s book entitled ‘Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business’ was published. Elkington (1997, pp. viii) described “sustainable capitalism”, where corporations can achieve the financial objectives of capitalism, whilst adhering to the TBL of sustainability. Elkington (1997) is responsible for the conception of the TBL, which is now the most commonly used concept for defining the topic of sustainability. Elkington (1997, p.2) describes his view of the TBL as including economic prosperity, environmental quality and social justice, and identifies the latter as being “the element which business has tended to overlook.”

The first aspect of the triple bottom line is social responsibility, which refers to the ability to develop processes and structures that not only meet the needs of its current participants but also supports the ability of future generations. For a company, it is about having practices in place that maintain mutually beneficial relationships and support their employees and customers. Social variables refer to social dimensions of a community or region and could include measurements of education, equity and access to social resources, health and well-being, quality of life, and social capital. (Slaper et al. 2011)

The second aspect is environmental sustainability this concerns the operations and practices of the organisation that contribute to the quality of environment on a long-term basis. This leads to company’s focusing on impact of emissions to the environment, contribution to waste and use of natural resources and hazardous substances. Environmental variables should represent measurements of natural resources and reflect potential influences to its viability. It could incorporate air and water quality, energy consumption, natural resources, solid and toxic waste, and land use/land cover. Ideally, having long-range trends available for each of the environmental variables would help organizations identify the impacts a project or policy would have on the area (Slaper et al. 2011).

The third aspect is economic sustainability. This focuses on business efficiency, productivity and profit (Sustainability Skills, 2016). This aspect is about the continuation of functioning profitability over a period of time though the efficient use of assorted assets of the company. These economic variables deal with the bottom line and the flow of money. It could look at income or expenditures, taxes, business climate factors, employment, and business diversity factors (Slaper et al. 2011).
This gave rise to the notion of people, planet and profit in which people address social issues, the planet addresses environmental factors and profit addresses profitability on business issues (Fisk, 2010).

Elkington aimed to teach businesses to integrate the three elements of the TBL, without focusing on one or more emphasis than the others.

To this end Elkington (1997) introduced the concept of a ‘seven-dimensional world’ for business organisation to operate in order to have a sustainable future, identifying:

1. Markets
   Competition will drive business organisations to become sustainable.

2. Values
   Societal values are evolving and will require business organisations to be environmentally and social responsible.

3. Transparency
   Business organisations will need to be transparent in their operations including benchmarking of activities to ensure sustainable practice.

4. Life-cycle technology
   Business organisations will be required to be fully responsible for the product life-cycle not only through sustainable supply chains but also product disposal.

5. Partnerships
   Organisation will need to work in partnership with environmental and social groups to ensure sustainable activity.

6. Time
   Business organisations need to plan for the long term to ensure a sustainable future.

7. Corporate governance
   Sustainable practice requires responsibility to be within the whole business organisation and structure.

TBL reporting provides a framework for a sustainable business model that is managed economically to achieve socially responsive and environmentally responsible outcomes (Nelson and Wilson 2003).

Elkington’s views are consistent with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) which released a report entitled ‘2002 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines’, this was used to encourage organisations to voluntarily report the “economic, environmental and social dimensions of their activities, products and services”. GRI is an NGO, offering a Sustainability Reporting Framework that is used by organisations globally. The guidelines that GRI provides, allows
these organisations to track and measure their contributions to sustainable development, as well as publish the information for their stakeholders, demonstrating transparency.

In more recent times, corporations have proven to have changed their attitudes towards sustainability, with 78% of 250 leading executives surveyed now believing that sustainability is a fundamental aspect in the future growth of business, and 83% viewing it as an investment instead of an unwanted financial cost (Berthon 2012). Although few are yet to take complete action, it is hopeful to finally see that an increased number of corporations are showing concern on the subject. Many business organisations now view sustainability as a point of difference for a corporation, rather than being considered the expected standard (Kaye 2013).

Consumers’ are driving corporations to create transparent supply chains. Information is being demanded to prove ethical and environmental practice throughout the supply chain. Corporations now understand that to maintain a strong brand reputation and associated financial benefits full disclosure of their supply chain activity is required (Kaye 2013).

This has spurred corporations to participate in voluntary initiatives such as Agenda 21, the UN Global Compact and the GRI, which have been formed to promote the use of sustainable processes and practices (Drexhage and Murphy 2010). Transparency in relation to social, environmental, and economic impacts is a fundamental component of effective stakeholder relationship management; the GRI’s mission being to fulfil the need by providing a credible and trusted framework for sustainability reporting, utilising a multi-stakeholder approach (GRI, 2013).

This has given rise to the term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The term CSR is linked to business ethics, respect for the community and how organisation remain responsible (Coombs, 2011). CSR is a balanced approach for organisations to address economic, social and environmental issues in a way that aims to benefit people, communities and society (Leonard and MacAdam 2003). For organisations environmental responsibilities can involve the reductions of carbon monoxide and the disposal of waste ethically (Flammer 2013). Organisations also need to consider workplace and employee issues including occupational health and safety (Leonard and Macadam 2003). In addition, corporations do have a responsibility to shareholders to maximise profits and adhere to ethical and social considerations (Freeman, 1984).

Hamidu, Haron and Amran (2015, p.1) summarised CSR into six core characteristics:

1. Sustainable development practices
2. Transparency and accountability
3. Maintain good stakeholder relationship management
4. Advocacy on different aspects of human rights, justice and democratic principles
5. Compliance with accepted international standards on CSR
6. Ethical business practice
Summarising existing literature of CSR, Kytel & Ruggie (2005, p.9) noted the following definition from the John F Kennedy School of Management:

“Corporate Social Responsibility encompasses not only what companies do with their profits, but also how they make them. It goes beyond philanthropy and compliance to address the manner in which companies manage their economic, environmental and social impacts and their stakeholder relationship in all their key spheres of influence; the workplace, the marketplace, the supply chain, the community and the public policy realm”.

Although there is evidence demonstrating that businesses have shown concern for society, the concept of (CSR) has become a largely significant issue over the past 50 years, with the first notable formal writings published in the 1950s, originating in the United States of America (USA) (Carroll 1999). Over time, numerous definitions and explanations have been established, and the constant evolution of CSR has proven its complexity, making it difficult to easily define. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility was once known as noblesse oblige – nobility obliges, has been discussed academically, pragmatically, politically, philosophically, biologically, psychologically, sociologically economically and aesthetically (Mintzberg 1983).

Carroll (1991) referred to Bowen’s (1953) book entitled ‘Social Responsibilities of the Businessman’ is thought to be the first of many pieces of contemporary literature on the topic, marking the start of the modern era of CSR, which was more commonly referred to as social responsibility at the time. Bowen’s (1953, p.6) original definition of social responsibility was that it “refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society.” Even in the early 1950s, Bowen recognised that the largest corporations had extreme power in their actions and decision-making, and that the effects of these reached countless stakeholders. Carroll, (1991) noted that his outlook on the subject of CSR caused discourse to continue, as he believed that it was an issue that should guide businesses into the future.

The 1960s was the decade in which an increased number of attempts were made to formally and more accurately define CSR, with Davis (1960, p.70), refers to CSR as “businessmen’s decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm’s direct economic or technical interest.” Regardless of the great effort required, the employment of a socially responsible outlook can provide an organisation with long-term financial gain, and it should therefore undergo the process of adapting to these issues (Davis 1960). This perspective later became commonly accepted during the 1970s and 1980s. Davis (1960, p.71) developed the “Iron Law of Responsibility,” which asserts that the “social responsibilities of businessmen need to commensurate with their social power.” If corporations choose to ignore their social responsibilities, then their social power would also decline (Davis 1960).

Davis (1967, p.46) defined CSR as “The substance of social responsibility arises from concern for the ethical consequences of one’s acts as they might affect the interests of others”. It is essential for corporations to be aware that their actions spread far beyond themselves (Bowen 1953). This changing perception was highlighted by the US Committee for Economic Development’s (CED) in 1971. Nowak and Thomas (2006, p.5), noted the
model of CSR the committee described “related to products, jobs, economic growth, societal expectations, and activities aimed at improving the social environment of the firm”.

Various CSR theories were developed during the 1970’s and 80’s. For corporations Shareholder and Stakeholder theories arose.

The basis of shareholder theory is that there is one and only one social responsibility of corporations – to use its resources to engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game (Friedman 1970). On the other hand stakeholder theory not only relates to shareholder responsibility but also that a company has responsibility to a wider group of stakeholders. Freeman (1984, p.111) described stakeholders as “groups or individuals who can affect, or are affected by, the achievement of an organisation’s mission.” This is consistent with the notion that individuals or groups who are identified through the actual or potential harms and benefits they experience or anticipate experiencing as a result of a firms actions or inactions and as such need to be considered in an organisations decision-making process (Donaldson and Preston 1995). Therefore stakeholder theory is an analytical tool, helping design maps of all relevant stakeholders, assisting in the consideration of which stakeholders will be influential in the achievement of corporation’s goals and analysing how corporations reach goals via successfully managing relationships with stakeholders (Freeman 1984).

Cooper (2010, p.2) stated “the relevance of the rules of the game, which in 1970 referred only to free market principals, is today overshadowed by societies expectations of corporations and their social responsibility.” Davis (1973, p.313) supports Cooper’s proclamation, by stating that social responsibility “begins where the law ends.”

CSR can be defined by a pyramid, consisting of four categories of social responsibilities and obligations, which include economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic (Carroll 1991). The first notion is that economic performance underpins all other categories. Secondly, corporations are expected to obey all laws as this determines what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Thirdly, corporations must be ethical in all operations, which includes doing what is right, just and fair, minimizing or avoiding if possible, harm to stakeholders. Finally, the philanthropic category requires that corporations be good corporate citizens, contributing financial and human resources to the community, which the objective of improving the quality of life (Carroll 1991).

In today’s society, as established by Freeman, (1984) stakeholder theory and Carroll’s (1991) pyramid, corporations have a direct responsibility to the owners to maximising profits and adhere to ethical and social expectations. Cooper (2010, p.3) exemplifies this, believing that corporations “undertaking CSR will enhance reputation, motivate staff, attract customers and therefore as Friedman (1970) requires, increase profits”. As such, it is in the corporation’s interests to address society’s issues of concern (Kapelus 2002).

The evolution of CSR has become increasingly important due to globalisation, as the context in which business operates is changing at an increasingly rapid pace. CSR has risen with unprecedented popularity throughout the global business community during the past decade (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008). Corporations are today addressing their role in society far more coherently, comprehensively, professionally and transparently through policies, practices and programmes, with some corporations such as Nike and Sony publishing CSR
Annual Reports. Dahlsrud (2009, p.6) establishes that “new stakeholders and different national legislations are putting new expectations on corporations and are altering how the social, environmental and economic impacts should be optimally balanced in the decision making process”.

CSR does differ from sector to sector and from country to country. CSR is characterised by unregulated markets for labour and capital, low levels of state welfare provisions and a high sense of individual freedom and responsibility (Garriga and Mele 2004). Other developed economies such as in Europe, Asia and Australia focus upon addressing social issues through governmental policies and collective action (Garriga and Mele 2004). This is a fundamental reason why CSR is not yet as prolific in the Australian TCF Industry as in the USA. However, the United Kingdom introduced Section 172 of the General Duties of Chapter 2 of the Companies Act 2006, which are laws that require Directors to act in a way which is considered in good faith to promote the success of the company, having regard for the impact of the company’s operations on the community and the environment. (National Archives 2013).

As multi-national corporations (MNCs) increase their control in a globalised business environment, CSR is being undermined in developing economies. This is due to cheaper labour and raw materials, and lower standards for environmental protection, working conditions and human rights. Ethical dilemma arises when specific circumstances in operations occur, which would not be considered socially responsible in their parent country (Garriga & Mele 2004).

Concerns have been raised that profit maximising MNCs have very little interest in sustainable economic and social development, and that the evidence of MNCs contributing positively in the developing world is very doubtful (Frynas 2005).

Socially responsible MNCs in the developing world are a serious ethical, social and economic issue, which cannot be left to voluntary discretion, and requires to be addressed by strict regulations in parent countries (Aaronson 2005).

An example of an attempt to improve such issues is the UN Global Compact, which included ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption, presented in 1999 at the World Economic Forum. The overall objective of the Global Compact is that as MNCs are a primary driver of globalization, they can help ensure that markets, commerce, technology and finance advance in ways that benefit economies and societies everywhere (United Nations 2013).
2.3 Fashion Industry Practice in Sustainability

The Fashion Industry is currently facing three forces which may move the sustainability effort quickly forward (Chouinard, Ellison and Ridgeway 2011). Firstly, being socially responsible is no longer considered a cost in business; it is looked at as a way of doing business and a way which can add value to a product. Secondly, members of the fashion industry are creating specific measures which they can use to show their improvement and efforts in sustainability practices. Finally, The Nature Conservancy, among others such as the United Nations and the World Bank, has been working to develop ecosystem evaluation methods in order to place a “price” on that environment (Chouinard, Ellison and Ridgeway 2011).

In July 2012, the Sustainable Apparel Coalition launched the Higg Index, a self-assessment standard designed to measure and promote sustainable supply chains in the apparel and footwear industries. This index gives companies a tool to gauge social and environmental levels and indicate where improvement might be focused. Current members include international brands, manufacturers, retailers, industry affiliates and non-profit or government organizations and international companies such as Nike, PVH, VF Corporation, Primark and H&M.

Implementation of CSR and sustainability involves a Total Responsibility Management (TRM) model framework. It is implied that TRM begins with inspiration, gains strength with integration and stays relevant with constant innovation (Waddock and Bodwell 2007).

TRM involves companies taking responsibility for their supply chain. With the outsourcing of production to low cost countries lengthening supply chains, it has made it difficult for companies to track and control each stage. This lack of transparency within the global supply chains means companies are unable to be accountable for their actions and as a result, there is a lack of support for health, safety as well as also human rights.

This has led to many of the world’s worst factory disasters. The worst recorded happened recently in 2013, the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh collapsed killing 1,134 people and injuring over 2,500 (Business of Fashion 2014). This choice of manufacturing in this building is a prime example of a company’s lack of CSR within the supply chain. The building itself was illegally constructed and according to the committee appointed by Bangladesh government, was built on swampy ground and made out of extremely poor construction materials (The Guardian 2013). Further, with the lack of health and safety legislations, there were huge generators on each of the eight levels that were unfit to be operating in such an unstable building. It was deemed unsafe by an engineer as large cracks appeared in the walls a day before the accident. This was an avoidable situation that was overlooked due to competition and profit. With the tight deadlines to be met for clients, senior managers threatened employees who didn’t work with pay reduction (Hoskins 2015) demonstrating a lack of human rights.

This was not the only disaster involving the production of clothing, in 2012, Ali Enterprises clothing factory caught fire in Pakistan. Two hundred and eighty nine people died. Another fire at the Tazreen Fashion factory in Bangladesh had a death toll of 112 (The True Cost 2015).
Besides from these industrial tragedies the TCF industry is also the second largest polluter of the planet, the fashion industry is one of the most unsustainable industries due to the rapid overconsumption of natural resources and use of chemicals throughout the production. Fast fashion has created a disposal behaviour amongst consumers which has increased waste in landfills, posing a threat to the environment. According to World Wildlife Fund (2013), because of the scope of the industrial sector’s activities, apparel and textiles accounting for 10% of the total carbon emissions. The natural resources used in the production process are vast. Water used for textile dyeing and treatment contributes up to 17-20 per-cent of total industrial water pollution. It is estimated that cotton uses only 3% of the world farmlands but about 25% of the world’s pesticides (Chen and Burns 2006).

Environmental issues have also been created through the vast amount of textile waste. It is estimated that 40% landfills are made up of old textiles used for clothing (Trepanier 2015). The lack of infrastructure and regulations in place and the consumer’s throwaway attitude towards fashion has contributed to the large increase in textile waste generated worldwide (Redress 2016). Each year Australians send $500 million worth of clothing to the tip (Press, 2016). In the UK, 9513 garments are thrown into British landfills every five minutes. (Press, 2016) According to the China Association of Resource Comprehensive Utilization in 2013, in China, the total annual production of textile waste is estimated to be over 20 million tonnes. (Sourcing textile waste 2013).

Textiles are considered to be almost 100% reusable or recyclable, but textile recovery rates remain relatively low. As stated in the H&M conscious Actions Sustainability Report 2012, 5% of wastes in the USA landfill are textile and 95% of them are actually recyclable (H&M 2012). The consumer’s disposal behaviour is also an important issue. For each item disposed, all the negative outputs of a garment which include the use of natural resources, energy and chemicals would be wasted. More over synthetic products will not decompose, so once the garment is thrown away in the landfill, it will stay there for centuries and contribute to global warming.

Reducing textile waste is becoming an increased focus around the world as waste management systems and limited landfill space become a global environmental concern (Redress 2016). Instead of disposal, consumers can donate clothes but only 10% of the clothes people donate to charity or thrift stores get sold. The rest end up in landfills or flooding markets in developing countries like Haiti where they are bought by the box and kill the local industry (The True Cost 2015).

Fashion brands are slowly addressing these pressing issues. According to a survey of 4000 managers from 113 countries, 70% of companies have placed environmental sustainability permanently on their management agendas with two thirds of the managers noting this is as a necessity to be competitive (Haanaes et al. 2012).

This has seen some large companies such as H&M and Uniqlo start to collect used garments for recycling and other processing (H&M Conscious Actions Sustainability Report 2012). This act of ‘Closing the loop’ will help in many ways as the current amount of waste is imposing a risk to the environment and ultimately people. Other acts of sustainability include designing with a zero waste technique, as approximately 15% of textiles intended for clothing ends up on the cutting room floor (Redress 2016).
Change in consumer consumption is evident with the world consuming 80 billion pieces of clothing each year. This is up 400% from two decades ago (The true cost 2015). Garments are cheaper than before therefore consumers purchasing habits have drastically changed. Fashion trends, which once lasted for years if not centuries, are now replaced several times per season. This trend is known as fast fashion. Fast fashion retailers vast growth can be attributed to an increase in sourcing from low cost developing countries (Childs 2014). Fast fashion has also imposed a threat for the environment. Products no longer may be made to last but rather, to be replaced by the next trend (Choi et al. 2015). A 2013 report published by Landor Associates Romero and Braun (2013, p.1) states that “U.S. consumers appreciate corporate efforts to be green, but it is not a key driver in their purchasing decisions” This confirms consumers lack of factoring in sustainability into their decision making process (Choi et al. 2015). Although in another research undertaken, it was reported that 71% of Americans consider the environment when they shop and 45% of consumers actively seek out environmental information about products they buy (Cone Communications 2013). So there is a rise in consumer awareness of sustainability issues.

Notwithstanding the above environmental impacts, consumer demand and industrial tragedies, CSR in the Fashion Industry has been present for years in small pockets at companies such as NIKE, Interface and Patagonia. Organizations have developed through necessity or have been founded to promote sustainability. The Council of Textile and Fashion Industries of Australia has a sustainability initiative section and supports efforts by partnering with Sustainable Fashion Australia and Ethical Clothing Australia to educate the industry on sustainability. The American Apparel and Footwear Association have separate committees on social responsibilities and the environment. National Association of Sustainable Fashion Designers is a non-profit organization which educates industry on sustainability and sustainable practices.

Some companies are taking action, with an increase in ethical brands, thus ensuring their business model factors in ethics and sustainability. The following three fashion organisations provide and insight on how they have factored CSR into their business model:

1. **NIKE**

Nike is one of the world’s largest and most recognisable sportswear apparel and footwear companies, first established in the 1960s by Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman in Oregon, USA. (Nike Inc. 2013) The brand prides itself on its positive reputation, with its mission to be the “world’s leading innovator in athletic footwear, apparel, equipment and accessories.” (Nike, Inc., 2013) However, this image became severely damaged in the 1990s, when activists rallied against Nike’s association with sweat shops and its unethical labour conditions throughout its global supply chain (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008).

The situation was heightened in 1997, when reports were released by the New York Times, claiming that an inspection report revealed that workers in Nike’s footwear factories in Vietnam were being exposed to carcinogens over 177 times the Vietnamese legal standards, and that 77% of these employees were suffering from respiratory issues (Greenhouse 1997). Workers in this particular factory were also being forced to work up to 65 hours a week for only $10, in excessively hot, noisy and polluted conditions, and those
working with hazardous chemicals were not given protective masks or gloves to wear (Greenhouse 1997).

Although the aim of Nike’s business model – to manufacture high-end consumer goods for a cost-efficient price – is the same as that of any organisation, Nike was held to higher expectations because of its high profile and tremendous success. Nike’s profits were $800 million in 1996, with sales of $9.2 billion, and spent millions on celebrity endorsements (Greenhouse 1997). It was therefore believed that the company was able to do more about ensuring the fair treatment of workers, and experienced severe scrutiny in the media.

Nike first responded to these allegations with anger, panic and denial (Bloomberg 2004). The company then employed ex UN representative, Andrew Young, to inspect its overseas factories and report on labour conditions (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008). However, this inspection report did not address many of the most prevalent issues, such as low wages, and it became apparent that Nike employees attended the inspections with Young, and Nike were used as interpreters to translate for foreign workers (Nisen 2013). Young stated in the report that everything was operating as it should be within Nike’s supply chain, and because of this, the report was heavily criticised, as it was believed that it was suspicious, too simple and written in favour of Nike, causing even more outrage and protests (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008).

A year later, after experiencing a dramatic loss in sales and being forced to make a number of employees redundant, Phil Knight, Nike’s CEO at the time, made a speech announcing that the company would be turning its negative connotations into a positive, by increasing the minimum age of its overseas workers, undertaking significantly stronger monitoring, and adopting USA OSHA clean air standards in all factories (Nisen 2013). Knight claimed that the American consumer doesn’t want to buy products made under abusive conditions (Nisen 2013). This shift of attitude marked the beginning of Nike’s transformation in relation to sustainability and CSR, and is the reason why it is now one of the world’s most renowned organisations in successfully tackling such issues and has become the industry benchmark.

Although Nike made a genuine attempt to address labour standards and make changes to its operations, the company soon realised that the issues were actually beginning with its own business practices, and needed to focus its efforts here rather than purely on the treatment of workers by factory management. (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008) For example, when forecasting errors were made and inventory was short, Nike required more goods to satisfy market demand, forcing suppliers to cut corners and work its staff overtime to meet delivery lead times (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008). This is exactly what Nike’s labour efforts were trying to prevent.

It was then that Nike realised that CSR had to be managed as a core business function, and in order to successfully resolve these issues whilst also achieving its bottom line, its competitors and suppliers would also have to get involved (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008). Nike, as well as several stakeholders, joined a number of labour initiatives that were formed such as the Fair Labour Association (FLA) and the SA8000, which all focused on the need to develop a legitimate method of compliance with UN Labour Standards (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008). Crane, Matten and Spence (2008, p. 508) noted that in 2000, CEO Phil Knight attended the UN’s launch of its Global Compact, where he announced that
Nike “supports mandatory global standards for social auditing,” and that “every company should have to report on their performance.” Knight believed that this would assist in the brand’s future success, as if its competitors were forced to publish information about workers’ conditions in their supply chains, it would be exposed that Nike is clearly an industry leader.

In 2005, Nike took a huge step by disclosing its supply chain, and now publishes an annual CSR and sustainability report, and dedicates an entire website to its reporting responsibilities, covering areas such as chemistry, community, energy and climate, labour, people and culture, public policy, waste and water. Nike currently provides access to almost 100 reports, graphs, articles and audits on its reporting website, as well as publishing a complete and detailed list of 774 of its factories worldwide. This includes information such as the factories’ addresses, contact names, telephone numbers, email addresses, number of line workers and number of total workers and percentage of female and migrant workers (Nike Inc. 2013). This demonstrates a high level of transparency and a genuine effort to be sustainable and socially responsible in all of its operations.

Although Nike is essentially an organisation with profit as its main objective, it claims to have moved from viewing corporate responsibility as a necessity for managing risk to seeing it as an opportunity to create value for our business and innovate for a better world (Nike Inc. 2013). Nike has a set of aims and commitments in place that it wishes to achieve in the area of sustainability and CSR, and the company’s reporting is a way of making this public. This gives stakeholders the ability to measure and track Nike’s progress towards these aims and commitments. Nike introduced a new department to their business in 2009 called Sustainable Business and Innovation, where close to 120 Nike employees’ jobs revolve around CSR issues (Nike Inc. 2013). The company has also developed a code of ethics in regards to CSR, which defines the standards of conduct by which all of its employees are expected to behave. This includes Nike’s overseas suppliers, who are also expected to operate by these standards, behaving legally and ethically at all times, providing their employees with a safe and healthy work environment and respecting their rights (Nike Inc. 2013).

In a situation that began as the potential demise of one of the world’s most iconic and recognised brands, Nike is a perfect example of how although challenging, CSR can be used as a strategic business tool and can also lead to financial success. Nike’s attitude led it to become part of the solution and not the problem, by adopting codes of labour conduct, forging alliances with labour and civil society organisations, developing nonfinancial metrics for compliance that are linked to the company’s management and its overall governance, and engaging in the international debate about the role of business in society and in public policy (Crane, Matten and Spence 2008.)

2. Interface

Business owner of Interface Ray Anderson mentioned Paul Hawken’s book, ‘The Ecology of Commerce’ in which Hawken claims businesses to be one of the major culprits in causing degradation to the environment and that businesses are the only institution that has the ability to correct this problem (Anderson 2009). Anderson, has a strong vision and determination for sustainable commerce, is responsible for increasing sales and doubling
profits for his company by reconstructing the take/make/waste industrial system which causes significant harm to future generations by exploiting earth’s natural resources usually for economic benefits and soon converts it to waste in landfills or incinerators – natural resources to pollution (Anderson 2009).

In response Interface developed the following seven protocols which underpinned their business model:

1. Eliminate Waste – Eliminate all forms of waste in every area of business. The result was that Interface has reduced about 77% of their landfill waste (Interface 2008).

2. Benign Emissions – Eliminate toxic substances from products, vehicles and facilities. The result was Interface has reduced 44% of their greenhouse gases (Interface 2008).


4. Closing the Loop – Redesign processes and products to close the technical loop using recovered and bio-based materials. As a result approximately 36% of the materials used for producing the carpet tiles are recycled or reused bio based raw materials (Interface 2008).

5. Resource-Efficient Transportation – Transport people and products efficiently to eliminate waste and emissions. Interface has reduced energy use per unit by 43% and reduced water use by 80% (Interface 2008).

6. Sensitizing Stakeholders – Create a culture that uses sustainability principles to improve the lives and livelihoods of all of our stakeholders – employees, partners, suppliers, customers, investors and communities. (Interface 2008)

7. Redesign Commerce – Create a new business model that demonstrates and supports the value of sustainability-based commerce. (Interface 2008)

Interface has addressed the three key components that define CSR:

1. Social

Protocol 6 in relation to how they interrelate with their key stakeholders

2. Environmental

Protocols 1 – 5, that is reducing waste, carbon emissions, utilising renewable energy, and utilisation of recycled material in product design.

3. Economic

This relates to protocol 7 that recognises the economic benefit of incorporating social and environmental protocols into their business model.
3. Patagonia

Patagonia envisioned a new approach to business and is one of few companies that have implemented significant structural change in order for responsible and sustainable practices to take place in every stage of the supply chain. Patagonia is a California-based clothing company that produces high-end outdoor clothing. Patagonia has focused heavily on CSR in developing a sustainable business model. Responsibility for CSR is owned by all of its employees. This integration of corporate social responsibility is a prime example of how a business can implement total responsibility management. In the words of Patagonia CEO Rick Ridgeway, as quoted by O’donnell (para. 9 2015) the intention was to “integrate innovative sustainability thinking, values and goals into every employee” by making sustainability the responsibility of every member of staff in every department of the business. By freeing corporate social responsibility from the confines of the CSR and sustainability department, Patagonia gets every employee involved in reducing the environmental footprint of the company (O’donnell 2015).

Patagonia prides itself in the production of “green” goods, which can be defined as goods which do not have a large impact on the environment during their production or are equal or lower to that of other competing products (Casadesus-Masanell et al. 2009) through the use of recycled products as well as organic. Patagonia aims to contribute to the community and be socially responsible beyond their requirements as a company. Their mission is to remain as ethical as possible, and they do this by participating in numerous activities which promotes their business mission. Such activities include:

- 1% for the planet – originated from Patagonia’s idea of contributing 1% of its sales every year to environmental groups. Patagonia aims to bring other companies together and encourages them to follow suit and donate 1% of their sales to other environmental groups (Patagonia 2013c).

- World trout initiative – aims to protect endangered fish around the world by providing the right group with the appropriate funds (Patagonia 2013c).

- Common threads partnership – is a partnership between Patagonia and its customers to share the responsibility of the life of the products it sells. The goal is to make every item that Patagonia produces to be capable of recycling. It requires everyone to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle (Patagonia 2013b).

- Reduction – To reduce the impact of the goods produced by Patagonia, the company has created partnerships with Bluesign Technologies and works tirelessly to reduce the energy and water use, as well as minimizing the use of toxic substances in the manufacturing processes. Patagonia also uses environmentally conscious fibres in their products, which include organic cotton and recycled polyester. The company also tries to minimize the amount of packaging and transportation required (Patagonia 2013e).

- Repairing – Patagonia aims to produce long lasting clothing that wears out as evenly as possible. Patagonia also agrees to repair any clothing that has been sent back to get fixed, and charge accordingly to whether or not the fault was by them, or their
customer. Their policy is to get repairs unpacked, done and back in the mail to their customer within 10 business days (Patagonia 2013f).

- Reusing – Patagonia has a program in place called the ‘worn-wear program’ which involves the company buying back used clothing and reselling them to its customers (Patagonia 2013g).

- Corporate responsibility – Patagonia products are produced under safe, fair, legal and humane working conditions throughout their supply chain. Patagonia ensures this through the use of numerous movements such as working with factories to ensure that fair labour practices are promoted and the employees have good working conditions. Patagonia also works with its mills to minimize harm to the environment, and also through the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act of 2010 (SB 657), which is a program developed to stop human trafficking and also forced labour (Patagonia 2013a).

In conclusion, it is clear that implementing CSR into the everyday operations of business will lead to an increased competitive advantage within the marketplace, as a company becomes transparent, and values and actions are visible to all on the outside. Both consumers and industry tend to place a considerable amount of value on good ethical conduct in a business, adding to a company’s competitiveness (PJC 2006).
2.4 AUSTRALIAN FASHION INDUSTRY

2.4.1 Historical Perspective and Government

From the early beginnings of the fashion and textiles industry in the late 1780’s, the main issue that presented itself was basic clothing for the common person. This was to ensure order to maintain uniformity and authority (Maynard 1994). Compared to today, the needs put upon the TCF industry were vastly different. Through the development of the TCF industry, it began as an undercapitalised and struggled to keep up with demand causing products to often be of a poor quality. The strength of the early stages of the industry were durable basics and work clothes (Acker and Craik 1993). Through these early phases we discover that there was low investment for the industry to develop manufacturing, production and staff. Therefore, because of the lack of funding, end products suffered in terms of quality and the consumer demands could not be met, as the volume of product was unable to be produced (Acker and Craik 1993). However, in comparison to this and because of the absence of financial support, basic products such as simple work clothes became the essential products for the survival of the industry (Maynard 1994).

By the mid 1860’s a sizeable industry could be identified (Acker and Craik 1993). The industry was still relatively low paying, and was unstable in terms of the use of outworkers in the form of female and youth employees. The introduction of mechanical manufacturing processes whilst leading to job losses enabled the industry to compete with cheap imports (Maynard 1994). Whilst there were small clusters of dressmakers, tailors and couturiers, the bulk of production was used for long-lasting work wear and basic items. However, locally made clothing for the mass population had begun to rise (Maynard 1994). Australian made clothing was celebrated in the early beginnings of the industry as it allowed for an increased number of jobs for the everyday Australian (Acker and Craik 1993). While this isn’t necessarily seen as a bad thing, there is however a much more in-depth view of the Australian fashion industry that should be recognised more strongly. In distinction between Maynard and Acker, locally made clothing was highly recognised in the beginning of the industry as local and international competition was at a minimum. However, compared to the familiarity of Australian products today, there is still little recognition for ‘Australian Made’.

From then on between 1880 to the late 1930’s Frances discusses gender associated problems, work patterns, exploitative divisions of labour, and how low pay characterised the industry (Frances 1993). While basics and work wear fuelled the growth of the industry, there were cracks appearing from the social aspect. These included gender issues where men were given specialist jobs while women dulled down to less skilled and highly repetitive tasks that they were often confined to the home space or unsatisfactory sweatshops to complete (Frances 1993).

From the 1960’s Australian government regulations and tariffs were considered as an important aspect of social protection (Castles 1988). The recession in the early 1960’s and many other issues from the past had been the cause of an unstable and often unpredictable road for the TCF industry (Acker and Craik 1993).

In the 1970’s it became apparent that the protection of the Australian local manufacturing industry especially in the TCF industry was hindering the nation’s ability to make better use of its resources to compete in the global economy.
The world-wide economic crisis of the 1970's encouraged the government to believe that Australia was falling behind in the race for economic growth. Industry protection came to be viewed as inefficient, impractical and out dated. The restructure of the TCF industry has created new highly skilled jobs that underpin Australia's prosperity as Australia internationalises its economy into global trade flows (Weller 2007).

The impact of this new globalisation mind set during the mid-1980's, prompted the government to cut the trade protection of the Australian TCF sector (Webber and Weller 2011). As a result, some Australian producers were forced out of business whilst other firms took a new approach and restructured the TCF labour force. The semi-skilled production jobs that were lost have been replaced with jobs in design, marketing and management contributing to an increased inequality within the industry. Ultimately the reduction of trade barriers has encouraged economic growth. Although some businesses did close, the few that remain have improved their operations and standards to become more innovative and competitive.

By the mid 90’s large manufacturing firms closed local factories and shifted aspects of the business overseas. Retailers and importers increased their direct importing, buying at prices well below local production costs. Core planning of design, research and merchandising in Australia retained (Weller 2007). Through these methods, Australian retailers maintained the ability to continue as viable businesses, although they had to completely restructure the organisation to take advantage of the benefits a globalised economy provides.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007 as cited by Weller (2007), it was noted that due to these business restructures and closings, employment in the manufacturing sector of the Textiles, Clothing, Footwear and Leather industries has dropped 60%, from 104,800 workers to just 43,800 between the years of 1985-2005. These jobs were typically female employees and resulted in devastating job losses especially during the financial crisis of the early 90’s. The decline in manufacturing employment has been offset by increased employment in clothing, importing, wholesaling, retailing and various associated services (Weller 2007).

Tariff reductions were paused between 2000 and 2005 to slow the rate of industrial change. In January 2005 import duty on clothing fell to 17.5%, in 2010 to 10%, and it is planned that by 2015 import duty will be at 5% (Weller 2007). These duty rates can vary for different countries, New Zealand is a free trade zone and imports from developing countries attract a 5% concession. As tariffs were reduced the Government provided positive assistance measures through bounties and innovation grants to assist business restructuring. The bulk of these measures were phased out in 2010.

The current state of the Australian TCF Industry is no longer viewed as that of a low skilled industry, but part of a creative capitalist economy and essential for regional development (Weller 2007). The Australian TCF Industry has been repositioned and although some manufacturing does remain, due to competition, the manufacturing sector has declined.

The removal of quota and barrier protection across all sectors over the past two decades has seen the majority of TCF manufacturing replaced by lower cost offshore producers (China being the main source) with retail supply chains and wholesalers/brand houses dominating the market. The domestic supply chains have been “hollowed out” with only a
handful of fibre producers (carpet and industrial products) and downstream manufacturers (Green 2008).

As discussed by Kellock (2011, para.16) the Australian fashion and textile industry needs to address the competitive forces from the implementation of Free Trade Agreements (FTA), “as a result of the FTAs, tariffs have dropped and the increase in the dollar value has completely re-shaped the whole industry”. This has resulted in zero tariffs and competing with countries that have significantly lower labour rates. As a result, Australia cannot compete with FTA partner countries in Asia. The consequences for the industry as stated by Kellock (2011, para. 19) “this only reinforces that Australia cannot compete with the ASEAN imports in terms of price, range, value and margins”.

Despite these changes, the Australian TCF industry from fibre to consumer is an AUD 14 billion industry in a first world country which has seen its manufacturing base relocated offshore. How the industry responds to the sustainability challenges posed and its relationship with its offshore supply chains will be of relevance to the global textile industry.

New business models need to be developed and implemented to remain sustainable in this highly competitive market. Kellock (2011 para. 19) highlights that “there has to be a clear focus on ethical clothing, combined with design, automated garment development and new innovations in materials”.

In summary, historically the Australian fashion industry can be defined as being focused on the manufacturing, production and final end use of products with respect to raw materials and meeting the needs and wants of consumers. It covered areas not only involved with production but also economic and government rules and regulation including; tariffs, quotas and market globalisation that will ultimately determine if the industry can remain sustainable.
2.4.2 The changing landscape of the Australian Retail Fashion Industry

The 1800’s and early 1900’s was an era of the independent speciality or lone product stores which gradually changed with the growth and development of department stores (KPMG 2009). Customers had the choice of brands, services and products available in one location. After WWII practicality and efficiency became driving trends, retailers turned to warehousing and discount stores flourished with the beginning of mass production (KPMG 2009).

From the industrial age companies wanted to own considerable amounts of their supply chain, this was known as the vertical integration business model where maximum efficiency through economies of scale was the aim (Hugos and Thomas 2006). Discounts store challenged traditional stores by reducing costs and operating on high volume- low cost basis. Similarly, this era of low prices was the no-frills low cost concept, however a shift from consumers also occurred where not only did consumers want low prices but also values (Gimenez and Francesc 2013). During the 1970 – 80 periods traditional business models provided service to customers by displaying products, offering information and advice on the product, as well as stocking the product. Critical success factors included store location, layout and access, store atmosphere and ambience. In addition, access to knowledgeable and helpful staff. This type of business model was complimented by direct marketing. That is, printed catalogues and traditional forms of marketing (Chen and Leteney 2000).

There are three forms of fashion retail models that are commonly found in organisations trading as traditional business models in Australia, low cost, cost plus, and premium retailers (Noren 2013). Low cost retailers sell to the mass market, with a strong emphasis on price over quality. There is little focus on service attributes or premium products. There is a large number of products, offered at affordable pricing (Noren 2013). Cost plus retailers sell to a segmented mass market, maintaining comfortable margins, rather than focusing on price. Majority of cost plus retailers offer specific product segments, and develop a level of expertise in the chosen field (Noren 2013). Premium retailers target highly segmented markets and offer prestige and quality products. Whilst there is not a strong focus on pricing, it is common for these businesses to manufacture their own branded product, in order to improve the overall profit margin (Noren, 2013).

Today, the business landscape of the Australian Fashion Industry is being confronted by globalisation, advancements in technology and changing consumer demands within the marketplace (Sorescu et al. 2011). As Benady (2014 para.2) noted “no longer is there a case of simply driving efficiencies, stocking shelves with desirable goods and waiting for shoppers to flock to the door”.

International retailers Costco, Zara, TopShop and Apple have placed pressure on local retailers, who may struggle to compete with the streamlined supply-chain processes of these retail giants (Magner 2015).

David White (Deloitte, 2016 para. 5) stated “Coupled with a relatively stable economy, significant discretionary spend and strong consumer demand for international brands and products, we can expect further disruption in the Australian market with new entrants highly likely”. This is even more evident with the recent expansion and of the Japanese retailer Uniqlo, Britain’s TopShop and Sweden’s H&M.
Besides from the influx of traditional bricks and mortar international competition, digital competition is having a significant impact on the Australian market. Advanced technology has revolutionized the way consumers purchase today. Online shopping and social media are now widely used widely by consumers, many of which are being heavily influenced by the social mediated electronic word of mouth. (Choi et al. 2015) Through the internet and the introduction of broadband, online shopping combined with consumer acceptance of electronic commerce, this platform is now viewed as a viable and safe alternative, to traditional bricks-and-mortar retailing (Magner 2016).

The increase use of smartphones and tablets has prompted many businesses to develop mobile optimised websites and applications. It has allowed retailers to sell to a large spectrum of consumers, around the clock, in a matter of minutes. In 2014, ASOS announced its Android and iPhone application, which recorded 5.4 million, downloads in its first year. Nearly 60% of the brands overall traffic came from mobile devices, and 44% of orders were placed on mobile platforms (ASOS Annual Reports and Accounts 2015).

The online landscape provides further opportunities for retailers to enhance their products and services whilst reaching a wider, technologically savvy audience (Magner 2016). In 1995 the Internet was growing at a spectacular rate of 2,400% a year (Lee 2015).

For Jeff Bezos, founder and Chief Executive Offer of Amazon, this statistic sparked the idea of founding an online marketplace, where readers could purchase almost any title. 20 years on, industry giant Amazon, continues to challenge bricks-and-mortar retailers with its customer focus, technological innovations and diversified offering. Today, Amazon has expanded to offer its customers over 100 million items in more than 30 product categories (Curtis 2013). Ebay is a global marketplace and is the largest the largest online auction site, with over 800 million live listings (Smith 2016). This modern method of retailing has given buyers access to greater product diversity, with potentially lower prices. EBay's competitive advantage resulted from the development of a business strategy that integrates the global reach of the internet, low overheads of a virtual marketplace, vertical integration of support markets, and a focus on customer satisfaction (Kambil and Van Heck 2002).

According to Morgan Stanley, Amazon will account for one-fifth of all US apparel sales by 2020 (Moore 2016).

Researcher Scott Ewing released a six-year study on Online Retail in Australia through The World Internet Project, announcing Australians are among the top internet shoppers globally, with three in ten shopping online every week (Ewing 2014).

In June 2000, British e-commerce retailer ASOS (As Seen on Screen) created a business model utilising the digital space, to launch its online fashion and beauty platform. With an enterprise value of $4.6billion (Forbes 2016), the brand continues to grow by developing customised and targeted websites in foreign markets (ASOS Annual Reports and Accounts, 2015). ASOS launched an Australian tailored website in 2011, customising the site with local sizing and currencies, including a fixed conversion rate from Pound to AUD, whilst also offering free shipping and returns (ASOS, 2016).
While department stores hold an advantage over traditional clothing retailers with their significant economies of scale, this is not as effective against fast fashion stores that have sophisticated supply chains and production processes (Magner 2016).

The fast fashion business model emerged in response to the modern consumer in the early twenty first century (Bickle 2009). Rath et al. (2015 p. 308) defined fast fashion as the “acceleration of the fashion lifecycle”. Burns, Mullet and Bryant (2011 p. 568) described fast fashion as “ultra-fast supply chain operations that focus on consumer demand of fashion goods”.

Fast fashion retailers deliver on trend styles at affordable prices by appropriating the latest trends from luxury and designer runway shows (IBIS World 2016b). This is made possible by advancements in digital technology, as trend analysers communicate key looks back to their design teams in real time whilst the show is in progress (Rath et al. 2015).

Product ranges are then manufactured and distributed with short lead times allowing retailers to adapt their product offerings to current market trends in as little as two weeks (IBIS World 2016b). This requires careful supply chain management as Burns et al. (2011 p. 34) noted, companies “expand their capabilities of vertical integration across countries” to exploit cheaper labour and resource markets, reducing operational costs.

Fast fashions are produced in limited quantities creating a scarcity effect that encourages consumers to make prompt purchase decisions (Rath et al. 2015). Bickle (2009 p. 231) noted, “Consumers realise that fast fashion items are ‘special’ and will be sold out soon”. It's this characteristic of fast fashion that inspires consumers to frequently visit the store to browse the latest ranges (Bickle 2009). Fast fashion retailers typically receive new stock twice a week (IBIS World 2016b). In response to consumer demand Rath et al (2015 p. 308) noted that this can be attributed to the "rapid dissemination of fashion information enabled by the rise of online shopping".

Fast fashion allows for consumers to stay fashionable on a budget. With the fast turn-around, Zara has the ability to take a design from drawing board to store shelf in just two weeks (Regner et al. 2013). Therefore a designer product could be seen on a celebrity and within the month a cheaper version is in stores. This means consumers can keep up with the fashion on their virtual lives as a form of expression of one’s status. Fast fashion can also be described as an industrial practice in fashion, which offers consumers relatively low-cost clothing collections based on the trendiest fashion that is usually driven by the luxury fashion brands (Joy et al. 2014).

With new products in their stores weekly consumers are not waiting for new seasons like ‘Spring/Summer’ or ‘Autumn/Winter’ (The True Cost, 2015). Zara’s Chief Communications Officer Jesus Echevarria as quoted by Burns (2011 para. 4.), suggested the companies mind-boggling success is the “complete opposite to traditional manufacturing and retail models”. This international powerhouse retailer has mastered the synergy between its business and operations strategy. Its vertically integrated supply chain and manufacturing process, allows the brand to adapt rapidly to the market. Neil Saunders, CEO of retail consulting firm Conlumino, as quoted by Schlossberg (2015 para. 82),
“This is a significant point of difference to most other apparel retailers which usually commit in advance of each season, and have no capability to change volume, or introduce new styles mid-season. Zara has always been this way, but in today’s market where trends change rapidly and the weather seems to fluctuate more, this has become a major source of competitive advantage”.

Fast fashion retailers, such as H&M, TopShop and Zara, sell garments that are expected to be used less than ten times (McAfee et al. 2004). These garments then become disposable fashion, a term that describes the scenario where many customers dispose of their unwanted clothing to landfills just because they consider them out of fashion (Birtwistle and Moore 2015). The trend of throwaway fashion owes much to increases in fashion purchase frequency and a real reduction in price levels (Birtwistle and Moore 2006). Therefore the clothes purchased by the consumer are valued less and able to be thrown away and replaced at a small expense.

This increase in fashion purchasing has led to a new phenomenon of disposing of garments that may only have been worn a few times (Birtwistle and Moore 2006).

Fast fashion retailers’ vast growth can also be attributed to an increase in sourcing from low cost developing countries (Childs 2014). In the 1960’s America used to produce 95% of the clothes it sold. Today, only 3% is made in America but now 97% of manufacturing is outsourced to developing countries around the world (The true cost 2015).

The increasing competitive pressure on low prices has caused the shift of production to create supply.

The rise behind fast fashion came from the demand from the middle and bottom market for cheap, fashionable clothes. As a result we’ve seen a massive bifurcation in the retail market. People in the middle and at the bottom wanted what they needed and wanted it cheap; they didn’t care so much if it lasted, they cared that it was within their budget. (Press 2016).

Apparel and fashion products, from fast fashion to luxury goods, are manufactured, stored and distributed in global supply chains and, along with textiles, represent an immense industry with wide economic importance valued at US$ 3 trillion in terms of turnover in 2011 (Choi et al. 2015).

A big focus for modern retailers is the ‘Millennial’. This captures consumers born between 1980 and the early 2000’s, which have grown up with the technology revolution. Hanington (para. 1 2013) concluded that "Consumers are using innovative technology, researching online and on mobile devices, attending events, participating in social conversations, and consuming more and more visual content like videos and infographics - and this has made marketing to the modern-day consumer anything but straightforward".

Young consumers on social media want to appear as on trend and commit to expressing it through their virtual life. Therefore fashion apparel is the most popular product influenced by electronic word of mouth as fashion products not only reflect the consumers values, but also their social status. Hence, people are more likely to engage in electronic word of mouth
transmissions of information about fashion apparel products that have a high level of social visibility (Kim, Park and Lee 2013).

Omni channelling is another force for Australia Fashion Retailers now need to compete with. Omni-channel retailing aims to integrate the different ways of interacting with the consumer, whilst maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction (McCormick et al. 2014). Fashion retailers need to consider the combined development of all digital channels including mobile devices, social networks and interactive in-store technologies (McCormick et al. 2014). Omni-Channelling allows the consumer to use the buying process on their own terms and at their own convenience.

There is a shift in the balance of power between retailers and consumers, Consumers now have great transparency on the price and quality of products (Niemeier, Zocchi and Catena 2013). Technology has offered power to consumers that have dramatically changed each stage of their purchasing decision (Emery 2013). Consumer habits are changing primarily due to technology, economic uncertainty and evolving demographics. There is new perception of the quality and value of products which correlates to an improvement in consumer knowledge.

This new competitive environment of globalisation, new technologies and changing consumer demand, requires innovative business models in order to create a sustainable advantage in the marketplace (Sorescu et al. 2011). When fashion retail businesses don’t have the critical capabilities necessary to effectively compete, they must reconfigure their operational activities and processes. This involves the development of new business models that can communicate the innovative logic for continued and improved success in the marketplace (Sorescu et al. 2011). Mason and Mouzas (2012 p. 1340) assert that companies need to “strive to develop flexible business models in response to…problems related to environmental factors’ for this success”.

Neilson (2013 p. 2) reinforced this notion for Australian fashion industries need to innovate, “while retail may barely be recognisable since its earliest days, the need to differentiate from the competition through innovation, has never been greater”. It is important to consider whether local fashion retailers can compete in such a challenging market. In particular, local department stores are struggling as consumers move towards modern retailers with innovative business models. Berg (2012 p.2) suggests “The key determinant as to who will flourish and who will die will have nothing to do with market fluctuations, competitors or national economies. It will have everything to do with a retailer’s vision and ability to innovate”. Farfan (2016 para. 7) corroborates Berg, “These days, innovation is what grabs the attention of the consumer, even more than retail products themselves”.

As quoted by Warren (2004 p.9) Wycoff defined innovation stating it is “about people using new knowledge and understanding, to experiment with new possibilities, in order to implement new concepts that create new value”.

Warren (2004) developed ‘the anatomy of innovation’ to be used as a metaphor for businesses who are looking at becoming more innovative and entrepreneurial, by prescribing the key drivers of successful innovation (Warren 2004). There are three primary success factors include wisdom, culture and reach.
1. Wisdom in a business sense refers to the time required for the innovation, sharing vision and ideas, and rewarding and recognising success.

2. Culture is the involvement of people and processes, the risk and support required for innovation and the team orientated nature, built around the common objective.

3. Reach involves the processes, time, commitment and resources involved, in order to achieve the innovation, as well as the team members required, to execute the goal. These primary success factors are all driven by customer centric teams, clearly outlined aims and objectives, and a shared vision of the new innovation (Warren 2004).

The Australian Fashion Industry is under immense pressure to remain competitive. As previously noted, the industry needs to be innovative in its approaches to be competitive in a new world of globalised markets, technological advancements and identifying and meeting changing consumer demands whilst protecting and developing brand equity. As such, fashion organisations need to develop and facilitate staff at all levels to identify and resolve sustainability issues (social, environmental and economic).

For educational institutions it is incumbent upon them to teach students the necessary skills and knowledge to be innovative in their approach when identifying and resolving sustainability issues in the workplace.
Chapter 3 EDUCATION IN SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 The Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management)

Graduates from the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program find careers within the fashion industry both locally and globally. The range of employed positions includes:

- Assistant retail buyers
- Merchandise and assortment planners
- Sales and retail managers
- Visual and store planning merchandisers
- Marketing
- Advertising and brand assistant managers
- Computer aided design (CAD) and technical product support
- Product development and design assistants
- Product and customer analytics
- Distribution logistics and supply chain management,
- Quality assurance and product specifications

Within the context of this research graduates have studied various facets of sustainability. These facets evolve from the TBL concept of social, environmental and economic factors. These are described as follows:

Social
- Consideration for developing ethical supplier relationships via employee welfare and safe work practices. Community contributions and human rights.

Environmental
- Identifying the use of environmentally friendly sustainable materials. The efficient use of precious resources (e.g. power and water). Minimising waste and reducing the use and release of hazardous materials, including chemicals and dyes. Taking into consideration the product life-cycle including the recycling of products. Understanding concepts of overconsumption and end of life disposal. Overall carbon footprint issues.

Economic
The following is a brief overview of the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program:

Program information is sourced from the RMIT website (https://www.rmit.edu.au/study-with-us/levels-of-study/undergraduate-study/bachelor-degrees/bp310/program-structure).

The Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) is a three year program. The first two years, however, provides for an exit point with an Associate Degree. The focus of the program is to develop fashion merchandising business management skills and knowledge relevant to the Fashion and Textile Industry both locally and in a global context.

Students develop advanced methods of investigation, merchandising, planning and collection management. This includes studying fashion management, marketing strategies within the global fashion system, and global and local supply chains, as well as how to lead the market within them. Students gain in depth knowledge of how the national and global fashion system operates and how to work effectively within it.
3.2 The Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandising Management) program architecture

Course information is sourced from the RMIT website (https://www.rmit.edu.au/study-with-us/levels-of-study/undergraduate-study/bachelor-degrees/bp310/program-structure/bp310ausbr).

Twenty-four core courses are offered grouped into four key fields: Marketing, Product Development, Product Management and Supply Chain and Industry Management.

Extracts from the twenty-four course guides identify the following key learning objectives within each of these fields:

1. Marketing

Students develop an understanding of marketing concepts and strategies to analyse the needs of consumers within the fashion market, both locally and globally.

Students develop the skills to develop visual merchandising and store presentation strategies for specific target markets.

Students investigate global and emerging markets to understand culture, management styles and business systems, identifying market viability and international opportunities.

Students gain an understanding of the principles of brand management and identify strategies to protect and build a brand within a digital environment.

Finally they are provided with a strategic-level analysis of product, price, promotion and distribution issues, to develop a range of strategies related to market entry, growth markets, and mature and declining markets.

2. Product Development

Students learn the principles of the fashion design process, including trend forecasting. Design concepts are developed following an analysis of consumers, colour, fabric and trims within a given market.

Students learn to identify and assess the textiles, fibres, yarns and fabrics used in fashion products throughout the product life-cycle including the investigation of environmental and social issues in the production of fashion materials.

Students develop creative concepts and proposals via the use of computer software packages used for fashion product design and fashion design presentations.

Students evaluate and apply CAD and business software systems to effectively communicate product information throughout the fashion supply chain.

Finally, students investigate and develop fashion product based upon customer needs including cultural, environmental and social for a specific target market. They also explore the competitive landscape and provide promotional strategies.
3. Product Management

Students formulate and interpret mathematical equations involving margins, mark ups and mark downs, as well as stock turn and breakeven analysis to calculate retail prices of fashion products and the development of merchandising plans.

Students create technical drawings and complete garment specification documents to enable designers to communicate design to production to ensure fit, quality, cost and garment construction for fashion products.

Students develop fashion allocation product and merchandising plans via analysing retail data. They apply technical knowledge in buying management to meet the cultural and social needs of the target market.

Students investigate and analyse commercially viable fashion product ranges within local and global business models, including developing strategies for sourcing, buying, retail budgeting and management.

Students identify and apply fashion merchandising theories, including the function of the buying office, sourcing, merchandise intelligence and styling in a physical and digital context, addressing sustainable sources and production practices.

Finally, students identify and apply fashion retail strategies in an increasingly competitive market.

4. Supply Chain and Industry Management

Students identify and analyse the components of a fashion supply chain, including sourcing and applying contemporary management theories to develop effective supply chains.

Students identify the social and environment conditions that are impacted upon throughout the product life-cycle. They analyse and implement strategies for a fashion business to minimise social and environmental factors throughout each stage of the product lifecycle.

Students investigate and analyse major issues and practices within the local and global fashion industry.

Students apply management principals and concepts related to innovation, marketing and entrepreneurship within the fashion industry.

Students identify and analyse systems and issues to manage effective and sustainable fashion supply chains.

Finally students investigate, analyse and manage emerging issues related to the fashion industry.

The following table lists the courses delivered under the four key fields:
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<th>Product Development</th>
<th>Product Management</th>
<th>Supply Chain &amp; Industry Management</th>
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<tr>
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Table 3.1: Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program architecture.
3.3 Learning and Teaching Strategies

Students develop knowledge of sustainable practice via a range of delivery modes. Lectures, tutorials and industry seminars are the primary delivery modes. Learning activities include class discussion and case study analysis. Students are assessed via identifying, analysing and problem solving a range of sustainability issues. The assessment tools include; examinations, portfolio development, case studies and project assignments.

The learning and teaching strategies are based upon the theories and practice of PBL. Barrows (2002) suggests that PBL should explore a problem that is ill-structured. This allows for learning in complex topics that require more than just one solution. Sustainability issues in the Fashion Industry is a topic where there is no single answer, learners must explore the whole issue and critically evaluate alternative solutions with evidence to support decisions and resolutions. The range of sustainability topics that students investigate within the program curricula allow for the problem solving activity that PBL theory and practice is focused upon. The goals of PBL align with the learning objectives of the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program in five key areas:

1. To construct an extensive and flexible knowledge base around sustainable fashion practice in a global context.
2. For students to develop effective problem solving skills
3. Enhance student ability of Self Directed Learning (SDL) and lifelong learning skills
4. Develop their capabilities and become effective collaborators
5. Become intrinsically motivated to learn and sustainable fashion practice and take ownership of the issues, problems and solutions. (Hmelo-Silver 2004)

Real life case studies provided minimal information for the student to investigate. This ensures that the emphasis of learning is based upon discovery with experimental approaches (Yusof et al. 2012). Within this learning and teaching structure, the process of PBL allows for student discovery. This learning strategy should allow the student to develop an awareness of what they do not understand and develop a process to develop their own learning goals and define what they need to know more about before choosing appropriate strategies to achieve this (Allen, Donham and Bernhardt 2011).

This constructivist approach of learning within PBL, allowed the use of PBL pedagogy for students to integrate information and learning across multiple topics:

1. Within the marketing field of study, students identify, analyse and discuss a range of industry case studies. These case studies are designed for the student to explore and analyse local and global sustainable issues related to culture, management styles, business systems and market viability. Students complete a marketing plan that includes an investigation and analysis for an Australian fashion company. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are identified with plans developed to resolve sustainable issues emanating from the analysis.
2. Within the product development field of study, students are required to complete a textile portfolio identifying their product use and environmental impacts throughout the product life-cycle. Utilising case studies, students identify and analyse social and environment impacts in the production of textiles. Students design and develop textile products taking into account customer needs including sustainable practice related to cultural, environmental and social issues.

3. Within the product management field of study, students investigate and analyse commercially viable product development strategies for sustainable sourcing and buying. In addition, students complete product specification documents to communicate construction, quality, fit and cost.

4. Within the supply chain and industry management field of study, students analyse and problem-solve sustainable issues in developing effective and cost-efficient supply chains. This includes issues related to social and environmental impacts throughout each stage of the product-life-cycle.

The PBL process and diverse sustainability topics has allowed students to develop a scaffold to develop knowledge construction and the transformation of knowledge between students, academic staff and industry partners via industry based projects forming a rich learning community (Smith et al. 2005).

In conclusion the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) is designed to provide the graduate with the skills and knowledge to practice sustainability. The program architecture, learning outcomes and learning and teaching strategies (PBL) are consistent within and throughout the program for the graduate to develop a capability in sustainability.
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology applied in this thesis. A discussion on the focus of the research and use of methods is followed by an analysis of the data collection methods employed. Validity and ethical issues are also discussed.

4.1 Qualitative Research

The aim of this research was to determine whether graduates of the RMIT University, School of Fashion & Textiles, Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program are developing a graduate capability to apply sustainable practices. The research also determined the degree that the fashion industry is strategically responding to sustainability issues and whether the workplace environment is either enhancing or impeding the application of sustainable practice.

Given that this research sought perceptions and personal understandings from both graduates and industry stakeholders, a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate methodology. As Kumar (2014, p.14) argued, qualitative research “follows an open, flexible and unstructured approach to enquiry and involves the study of feelings, attitudes and opinions”.

This would allow for the gathering of insights relating to sustainability and its practice in industry settings.

The nature of qualitative research also creates opportunities to engage with small groups of participants, creating a deeper understanding of the subject being studied. Malhorta et al. (2006, p.30) stated: “Qualitative research is unstructured, exploratory in nature, based on small samples, and may use popular qualitative techniques. … This method provides and in depth understanding of a problem and its underlying factors”.

Two methods of data collection were used in the research: an online graduate questionnaire and industry stakeholder interviews.

The questionnaire for this project was designed for ease of analysis. Questions were either multi-choice or open. The survey data from multiple choice questions was analysed by simple statistical analysis of trends of sustainable practice by industry segments. Further thematic analysis from a qualitative perspective was applied to identify and explain emerging themes. The instructions for completing the online graduate questionnaire did not provide any definitions of sustainability. The intention of the questionnaire was to attain their personal viewpoint of sustainability that may have been influenced from their studies in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management), career or life experiences.

The graduate questionnaire also determined their attitudes and knowledge of sustainability and if their Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) studies assisted them in understanding sustainability. Further, the questionnaire determined the graduate’s knowledge of their employer’s sustainability practices. These questions provided multi choice options to respond.

The industry interviews were designed to determine the degree of policies and objectives related to sustainability practice within the organisation and the level of related support
provided to employees. As per the graduate questionnaire no definitions of sustainability were provided to the industry representatives. This was to ensure that their responses related directly to their industry practice without prompting.

4.2 Data collection and analysis

4.2.1 Data collection and analysis – Graduate Questionnaire

An online graduate questionnaire was electronically emailed to graduates of the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandising Management) using Qualtrics web-based software designed specifically for developing, distributing and analysing online surveys. Data collected using Qualtrics is secure and is the tool recommended by the Human Research Ethics Committee at RMIT University for collecting privacy-sensitive surveys. The use of an online survey instrument is an appropriate tool to collect data qualitative in nature. As defined by White, (2014 para.1) “Web-based questionnaires, also commonly referred to as online surveys, are an increasingly utilised surveying tool to gain knowledge about the attitudes and sentiments of a given population”.

Graduates were invited by email to participate in the questionnaire and were advised that all data generated through the questionnaire would be treated anonymously. They were further advised that participant names and their organisations would not be identified in the data collection. Details pertaining to the research, ethics approval, information storage and destruction were provided by a participation letter that was attached to the email. As respondents could not be identified reminder messages were sent to all participants.

The graduates were drawn from the researcher’s database emanating from the business media platform LinkedIn. This platform identified 220 graduates of the Bachelor of Fashion who were asked to complete an online questionnaire related to sustainability practice. As indicated above, the questionnaire was a mix of open plus multi-choice questions. Of the 220 graduates contacted, 59 responded (27% response rate). A small number of respondents were currently employed offshore. The response rate provided the in–depth information required for this research, as Archer (2008, para.24) discussed “Although it would be desirable to apply findings in any survey effort to the entire potential respondent pool, having responses from 40% or less of the potential respondents is still a great deal of information”.

The questionnaire had 18 questions which were structured into four key areas (see Appendix 7.3.1 for the complete questionnaire):

1. The working profile of the graduate (Questions 1 – 4).

2. The graduates sustainability attitudes and issues of importance to them. It also explored if their undergraduate studies in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) gave them the skills and knowledge in relation to sustainability practice (Questions 15 – 18).

3. The graduate’s knowledge of the employer response to sustainable practice (Questions 5 – 8, 10 and 14).
4. The level of employer communication and support to employees to implement and practice sustainable strategies (Questions 9 and 11-14).

1. **Working profile of the graduate**

Respondents were asked for the year of their graduation, the type of organisation they were employed in, the size of the organisation they were employed in and their job position.

These four multi-choice questions (see Appendix 7.3.1, Q1-4) were used for cross referencing and analysis.

The cross referencing determined variations of responses based upon the following:

- Their opinions and attitudes towards sustainability knowledge and practice **based upon the year** that they graduated from the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program.

- Variation of responses towards sustainability knowledge and practice **based upon the type of organisation** (manufacturing, wholesale, retail or vertical) they were employed in.

Additional cross referencing was conducted and analysed to determine variations in organisational communication and support to employees for sustainable strategies to be developed and practiced as follows:

- Variation of graduate responses towards their employer response to sustainability practice **based upon the size of the enterprise in which they were employed** determined by the total number of employees (less than 10, 10 – 25, 25 – 100, 100+).

- Variation of graduate responses towards their employer response to sustainability practice **based upon their job position and responsibilities** they held within the organisation.

2. **Graduate attitudes and knowledge of sustainability issues.**

The four questions in this section (see Appendix 7.3.2, Q15-18) were asked to determine the graduates’ attitudes, skills and knowledge on sustainability issues and if the student thought that their undergraduate studies in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) assisted them in understanding sustainability issues.

These questions provided multi-choice and open options in relation to whether sustainability is an important issue to them and if the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program assisted them in attaining their knowledge of sustainability. Respondents had the opportunity to highlight sustainability issues that were important to them and the sustainability issues learnt from their studies in the form of a written response.

These questions were analysed to determine:

- If the graduate believed that sustainability is an important business issue and what they thought the main issues are.
- If their studies at RMIT University gave them the requisite skills and knowledge in relation to identifying sustainability issues.

As discussed in the introduction, the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) review was undertaken and completed in 2007. When discussing and analysing the results on what sustainable business issues were important to them and whether the graduate’s studies had assisted them in their understanding of sustainability, the results have been cross tabulated from students who have graduated from 2010 onwards.

Graduate’s opinions prior to 2010 have been removed from the data via cross tabulation to their year of graduation. Hence the results of this question have been drawn upon from those graduates who have completed the program following the review and implementation of sustainability principle within the curriculum.

This ensures that the evaluation on the graduates knowledge of sustainability issues and whether they thought their studies assisted them in attaining knowledge of sustainability issues related directly back to the revised program implemented in 2008.

3. Graduate knowledge of their employer’s response to sustainable practice.

Questions were asked to determine if the graduate had knowledge of whether their employing organisation had a sustainability plan and, if so, what the key elements of that plan were.

Five multi-choice questions and one written response question (see Appendix 7.3.3, Q5-8, 10 and 14) were analysed to determine:

- The graduate awareness of whether their organisation had a formal sustainability plan and if so their knowledge of the key elements contained within that plan.

- If the graduate had knowledge of whom within the organisation had responsibility for the sustainability strategy.

- Graduate knowledge of the primary driver for the development of the organisations sustainability strategy. Was the organisation responding to sustainability based upon consumer/customer pressure or regulation/legislation requirements or corporate social responsibility or productivity?

- If the graduate believed that their organisations sustainability response concentrated on internal business practice or broadly within their supply chain.

- If the graduate thought that their organisation understood sustainability issues.

- Overall how the graduate rated their employer in terms of being sustainable, ethical and the organisations level of understanding on sustainability issues.

4. The level of employer communication and support to employees to implement and practice sustainable strategies and processes.
Multi-choice questions were asked to determine the level of communication and support provided to employees to implement and practice the organisations sustainability strategies and processes.

These four questions (see Appendix 7.3.4 Q9 and Q 11–13) were analysed to determine:

- If the graduates position description included a responsibility in relation to sustainability.
- Whether the organisation provided employee professional development and support to practice sustainability.
- The degree that sustainability issues were discussed at business team meetings.

The questionnaire results were compared and contrasted with interview responses from Senior Managers at two Fashion and Textile organisations.

4.2.2 Data collection and analysis – Industry Interviews

Interviews were conducted with two major fashion retail organisations, employing over 100 staff with multiple store locations throughout Australia. In addition both organisations have a strong online presence. Crowther and Lancaster (2008) noted that the use of industry professionals further solidifies the findings as the data is from a reputable well known and original source.

Both organisations operate fashion apparel product development teams that comprise a range of job positions including design, buying, fashion marketing and branding, technical support, merchandise assortment, planning and analytics. These positions are typical of the career outcomes that graduates of the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) are employed in. These organisations are also major employers of the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) graduates. Smaller organisations were not selected as it was unknown if they employed Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) graduates.

From the two major fashion retailers one individual interviewed was the General Manager of Apparel referred to in this research as Company A. Company A is a major discount department store in Australia. In fashion apparel, the company has strong competition from similar discount department stores, fast fashion stores and online apparel sites. The mix of apparel product ranges from known brands to home brands. The customer target is all ages, male and female. The General Manager of Apparel has been known to the researcher on a professional basis for the past 10 years. This professional relationship allowed the interview to be conducted in an open and friendly manner giving the interviewee the opportunity to provide deep personal insights into the research topic in a safe environment. As Stilling and Heldbjerg (2011, p.30) wrote: “the interviewing of acquaintances does seem to add positively to interpretive research insofar as it adds to openness, honesty, and trust; to the researcher’s pre-understanding; and to her/his interpretations and contextualisation”.

The interview was conducted face to face at the company’s headquarters.

The second individual was a Senior Human Resource Manager referred to in the research as Company B.
Company B is a major mid-priced department store in Australia. In fashion apparel, the company has strong competition from similar mid-priced department stores, fast fashion stores and online apparel sites. The mix of apparel product ranges from known brands to home brands. The customer target is all ages, male and female.

The Senior Human Resource Manager has been known to the researcher on a professional basis for the past 5 years. As with the previous interview respondent, this professional relationship allowed an open interview environment conducive to honest responses to the questions asked.

The interview was conducted via a telephone link up at the company's headquarters.

The interview questions were open ended to allow for deeper discussion.
(See Appendix 7.2 for the Industry interview questions).

The interviews involved seven questions focused upon three key areas:

1. The first key area determined the organisation's understanding of the term sustainability asking, if they could refer to and present company policies and plans.
2. The second key area determined the organisation’s strategic approach to sustainability issues.
3. The third key area determined the human resource management approach for employees to practice sustainability within the workplace.

See Appendix 2 for the Industry complete interview questions. In brief the focus of the questions was as follows:

1. The organisation's understanding of the term “sustainability”.

This question (see Appendix 2, Q1) was designed to determine how the organisation defines sustainability.

2. The organisation's strategic approach to sustainability issues.

Four questions (see Appendix 2, Q2-5) were asked to determine the organisations strategic approach to sustainability issues, in terms of planning, managing and implementing.

The responses were also compared and contrasted to the graduate survey results for deeper analysis.

3. The organisation's human resource management approach for employees to practice sustainability within the workplace.

Two questions (see Appendix 2, Q6-7) were asked to determine whether the organisation required all employees to practice sustainability as a key responsibility within the workplace and if the organisation provided professional development to staff to support the practice of sustainability within the workplace.
The responses were also compared and contrasted with the graduate survey results for a deeper analysis.

4.3 Data Analysis

To evaluate the research findings the data was analysed by utilising a triangulation technique. As discussed by Lambert and Loiselle (2008), triangulation helps to verify what has been researched so it is relevant for analysing so conclusions and recommendations can be validated. This involved comparing and contrasting graduate questionnaire results with industry interviews in relation to the organisations strategic approach to sustainability and the degree of support for graduates in practicing sustainability.

This technique was applied to the graduate questionnaire and industry interviews. By comparing the participant responses from both data collection methods, accuracy of findings was increased.

4.4 Validity and Ethics

To validate the research, data collection participants were selected for topic relevancy and industry expertise. As the research is evaluating the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) graduates on their level of knowledge pertaining to sustainability issues and industry practice of it, only graduates were invited to participate in the survey.

For comparing and contrasting purposes only senior level executives of major fashion organisations were selected for interviews as they had knowledge of the organisations strategic sustainable directions including the level of employee involvement in implementing relevant policies and procedures.

The project was approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee under ethics approval - Register Number CHEAN 000018790-06/14

This research adhered to the principles in: National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) - Updated May 2015

4.5 Conclusion

This research is based upon an education program that develops sustainability as a required graduate capability.

The graduate questionnaire was designed to interpret whether the graduate had attained the skills and knowledge to practice sustainability in a workplace environment. It also gathered graduate perspectives on whether the organisation has developed a response to sustainability and whether the organisation is actively encouraging and supporting its employees to address sustainability issues.

The research compared and contrasted the graduate questionnaire findings with key industry representatives via interviews to determine the organisations understanding,
response and employee support towards addressing sustainability issues related to their organisation.

**Chapter 5: GRADUATE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW FINDINGS**

5.1 Graduate Questionnaire results

5.1.1 Questions 1-4 - Graduate year, employment organisation by description and size and position.

Questions 1, 2, 3, & 4 provided graduate statistics related to the graduation year, employment organisation by description, size and position (see Appendix 7.3.1 for detailed results).

In relation to the year of graduation of the graduates who responded 81% graduated prior to 2013. The majority of respondents graduated between 2010 and 2014 (85%).

The majority of respondents worked for organisations that had a retail focus (56%). Manufacturing and wholesale employment accounted for 31% and a further 9% described their organisation as a vertical operation (an organisation that includes manufacturing, wholesale and retail operations).

The majority of graduates (58%) worked for large organisations where the number of employees was in excess of 100. 10% were employed in medium sized organisations, with 32% employed in small businesses.

5.1.2 Questions 15-18 - Attitudes and knowledge.

These questions were asked to determine the graduates’ attitudes and knowledge of sustainability issues and if the student thought that their undergraduate studies in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) assisted them in understanding sustainability (see Appendix 7.3.2 for detailed results).

In terms of sustainability issues 66% of respondents stated that sustainability is an important issue for them with 34% stating it was not.

The main sustainability issue highlighted was the environment. This included issues related to waste, carbon footprint, environmental impacts, fast fashion and over consumption. Other issues highlighted were ethical trading, fair work, supplier relationships and productivity.

The following table (Table 4.1) provides a summary of their responses under each of the TBL categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

51
Table 4.1: Graduate response to knowledge of sustainability issues.

In reflecting upon their studies at RMIT University 80% of graduates believed that their studies did assist them with their understanding of sustainability issues; whilst 20% said it did not.

The main sustainability issues learnt from their studies in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) were related to the TBL. These included issues concerning the product-life cycle, corporate social responsibility, waste, environmental impacts, water usage, fast fashion, over consumption, sustainable design, ethical trading, fair work, supply chain management and productivity.

The following table (Table 4.2) provides a summary of their responses under each of the TBL categories:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>conditions</th>
<th>impacts of dyeing textiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer ignorance</td>
<td>Water recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal responsibility</td>
<td>Over consumption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Graduate response to sustainability issues learnt from their studies in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management).

5.1.3 Graduate Questionnaire results – Questions 5-8, 10 and 14 - Graduate knowledge of their employer’s sustainable practice.

These questions were asked to determine the graduates’ opinion and knowledge of their employer’s practice of sustainability (see Appendix 7.3.3 for detailed results).

Of the graduates who responded to the questionnaire, 71% were not aware that a sustainable plan existed within their organisation.

Of the 29% who reported that their employer did have a sustainability plan, the key aspects were: ethical sourcing, including environment and fair trade; supply chain transparency, community involvement and diversity were also mentioned. Three respondents believed that a plan existed but were unaware of its content.

In terms of who was responsible within the organisation for developing sustainability strategies, 46% of respondents did not know; 20% believed it resided with the Chief Executive Officer and Board, whilst 20% stated that there was a specific department that was responsible. In addition, 14% believed that all employees were responsible.

In relation to the primary drivers for their organisation’s sustainability response, 36% of respondents believed that the sustainability strategy related to corporate social responsibility, with 12% stating it was related to productivity. A further 19% believed it was customer driven, whilst 27% did not know.

In rating their organisation on their own knowledge of sustainability, 51% of respondents thought their employers understanding of sustainability was good to excellent whilst 49% thought it was fair to poor. Questionnaire results cross tabulated with the size of their company (See Appendix 7.3.5) indicated that for graduates employed in organisations with more than 100 employees, 44% rated their company as fair to poor. For organisations with less than 100 employees 58% of graduates rated their organisation as fair to poor.

In relation to whether the graduate thought that their organisation was ethically responsible, 66% of respondents stated that they thought their organisation was, whilst 34% stated that it was not. For questionnaire results cross tabulated with the organisation’s size, those with more than 100 employees, 67% rated as good to excellent. For companies with less than 100 employees 66% of graduates rated their organisation as good to excellent.

5.1.4 Graduate Questionnaire results – Question 9 and 11-13 – Employer communication and support to employees to implement and practice sustainable strategies and processes.
These questions were asked to determine the graduates opinion and knowledge on employer communication and support for employees to practice sustainability (see Appendix 7.3.4 for detailed results).

In relation to employee professional development on sustainability, 51% of respondents were not aware of any professional development activities, 22% stated that there was training and education, whilst a further 24% stated that it was learnt on the job. Only 3% stated that there was a specialist manager/leader within the organisation. Questionnaire results cross tabulated with the organisation’s size (See Appendix 7.5), for those with more than 100 employees, 58% stated that they participated in professional development. For companies with less than 100 employees 20% of graduates stated that they participated in professional development.

In regards to the organisations sustainability response and strategy, 62% believed it related to business practice and or their supply chain, whilst 38% of respondents did not know that their organisation had a sustainability response.

In terms of the graduate’s job description, 69% of respondents stated that they do not have a responsibility related to sustainability in their job description whilst 31% stated that they did.

When participating in organisational team meetings, 66% of respondents stated that they did not discuss sustainability issues at their team meetings; 34% stated that they did.

5.2 Results of Industry Interviews with key fashion and textiles organisations

Interviews were conducted with two major fashion and textile retail organisations based in Melbourne. Both employed in excess of 100 staff. One interviewee was the General Manager of Apparel (referred to as Company A) and the second individual was the senior Human Resource Manager (referred to as Company B).

5.2.1 Organisations understanding of sustainability

In relation to each organisation’s understanding of sustainability, the key question asked was “How do you define sustainability within your organisation?”

Company A’s response was: “Short term for the long term” To paraphrase, the short term is about meeting shareholder return expectations whilst building a long term sustainable future. It is about the brand, product and organisation; a profitable brand with a socially responsible product life-cycle and that values suppliers as partners and staff as team members.

Company B’s response consisted of two views – traditional in the sense of corporate social responsibility and also productivity, that is, efficiency and effectiveness of existing resources to ensure long term sustainability.

Both respondents referred to their website and presented strategic plans in relation to their existing corporate social responsibility policies and procedures.

5.2.2 Organisations’ strategies for sustainable practice

The key questions asked in relation to each organisation’s strategy towards sustainable practice were:
1. Within your organisation who is responsible for sustainability strategies?

2. Does your organisation have a planned approach to managing sustainability?

3. How would you describe your organisation’s sustainability approach within the supply chain?

4. Does your organisation have policies and procedures related to managing your sustainability strategy?

Company A’s response was: “Responsibility for sustainability resides with the Chief Executive Officer and the leadership team”. To paraphrase, sustainability is a key performance indicator for the leadership team and is included in their job description responsibilities. A planned approach has been undertaken with policies and procedures related to the selection and management of suppliers. These policies relate to values and behaviours and include supplier transparency, social responsibility and integrity. The organisation also embeds employees into supplier factories to ensure compliance. The main purpose is to protect brand equity, ensure social responsibility and improve margins. Whilst policies and procedures are in place, they are constantly evolving. The organisation benchmarks its sustainability practice with similar global organisations in order to adopt best practice.

Company B’s response was: “We have a sustainability team made up of a manager with two team members”. To paraphrase, responsibility does sit with the Chief Executive Officer and the executive team. There are plans, policies and procedures in place, in particular from an ethical supplier point of view.

5.2.3 Organisations’ human resource management of sustainable practice

Two questions were asked about the human resource management of sustainable practice.

1. Do general employee job descriptions include responsibilities related to managing sustainability?

2. Does your organisation provide any professional development for its staff in relation to sustainability practice?

Company A responded: “For senior management yes, it is included as a key responsibility but for lower level operational staff including product teams it is not”, and “In relation to professional development no programs have been developed and delivered”. When questioned further, the General Manager thought that his organisation should include all staff in relation to sustainable practice, saying “anything that will assist us in improving our margin and as a result our long term financial sustainability would be good for our organisation”.

Company B responded: “There are no key responsibilities on sustainability practice in any job description. There is also zero professional development or training programs that relate to sustainability in existence”. It was also stated that the organisation is going through a major change in which sustainability will have an increased focus.
In summary, the Graduate Questionnaire determined the respondents profile in relation to their year of graduation, a description of the organisation they were employed in, the organisation’s size and their position within their organisation. The questionnaire also determined their attitudes and knowledge of sustainability and whether their Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) studies assisted them in understanding sustainability. Further, the Questionnaire determined the graduate’s knowledge of their employer’s sustainability practice.

The Industry Interviews determined the organisation understanding of sustainability and the organisations’ strategies for sustainable practice. In addition, the interviews determined the human resource management of sustainable practice.

These findings are analysed in chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6: KEY FINDINGS ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Key Findings Analysis

6.1.1 Graduate profile.

The types of positions held by the graduates are aligned with the careers options that are expected from studying the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program at RMIT University. These positions can be categorised as roles in design, merchandising, buying, planning and sales. Typically these positions form the basis of a product development team. Many graduates considered themselves to be in assistant roles confirming that they were in the early stages of their career.

6.1.2 Graduate attitudes and knowledge of sustainability issues.

When questioned on how important sustainability was to them personally 66% indicated that it was an important issue. Cross tabulated questionnaire results indicated no major differences with the respondent's year of graduation.

When graduates were asked about what sustainability issues concerned them, the majority raised environmental matters. Other prominent issues raised related to ethical trading, supplier relationships and productivity. When asked if their Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) studies assisted them in understanding sustainability related to the fashion and textiles industry, the majority said yes. When asked to recall the key aspects of their undergraduate learning in sustainability, the main responses related to the TBL concept.

In comparing the findings of what sustainable issues are important to them and what sustainable issues they learnt from their studies in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management), the responses were similar. That is, in both situations, sustainability issues related to social, environmental and economic (competition and productivity).

These responses indicate that the majority of graduates think that sustainability is an important issue, that they do understand sustainability as key concepts as studied in the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program and that their studies assisted them with their knowledge and understanding of sustainability overall.

6.1.3 Fashion industry response to sustainability issues and graduate perspectives.

When surveyed about their knowledge of who was responsible for the sustainability plan within their organisation, more than 46% of graduates did not know. The management
representatives from the two large companies that were interviewed indicated however, that they had dedicated sustainability teams with overall responsibility residing with the Chief Executing Officer and the executive team. This indicates a lack of communication within the whole organisation about clear roles and responsibilities in relation to sustainability practice.

When interviewed both Company A and B stated that their sustainability strategy was built around two pillars:

1. Corporate Social Responsibility (including social policies related to ethical sourcing, community involvement, and the environment).
2. Productivity and economic organisational management (the efficient use of resources to remain financially sustainable as a business in the long term).

Graduates who were surveyed recognised corporate social responsibility (social and environmental) and productivity as the primary drivers for sustainability within their company.

Two questions were asked of graduates in regard to rating their employer in terms of their understanding of sustainability and their ethical responsibility. The results were cross tabulated with the size of the company in which they were employed.

These responses indicated that organisations are not successfully communicating their vision or requirements for a sustainability response to all their employees. In addition, the size of the fashion organisation may have a bearing on whether there are adequate resources to formally practice sustainability within the business. That is, there was a higher negative response for small-to-medium sized businesses on sustainability organisational knowledge. However the positive ethics response for these small-to-medium sized companies may indicate a level of confidence in their organisation’s management to operate sustainably.

As indicated in Chapter 5 the majority of graduates did not think that their organisation had a sustainability plan.

This contrasts with the Industry Interview findings with the leaders stating that they do have sustainability plans and that they do have formal policies and procedures. This indicates once again that there is lack of communication within the organisation as a whole, this time in terms of sharing and understanding the organisation’s sustainability plans and procedures.

The fact that the majority of graduate’s employed in smaller businesses indicated that their company did not have a sustainability plan in place, suggests that smaller organisations did not have the time or adequate resources to strategically plan for sustainability. As previously discussed in the research methodology chapter, additional industry interviews could have been conducted from organisations with less than 100 employees to provide broader industry perspectives.

6.1.4 Graduate sustainability practice and employer support.

When graduates were asked if sustainability was a responsibility within their job description, most respondents said “no”. This is consistent with the responses from the company
representatives interviewed. In addition most graduates stated that they did not discuss sustainability issues at their team meetings.

Where questionnaire results related to organisational support for employees to practice sustainability, more than half of the respondents were not aware of any professional development or support activities with limited training and education or on the job support.

Cross tabulated questionnaire results indicated that there was a significant difference in relation to size of organisation and the provision of employee sustainability professional development and support. For organisations with fewer than 100 employees, only 20% of respondents indicated that professional development or support for sustainability was provided by their employer whereas, 58% of respondents who were employed with organisations with more than 100 employees were provided with such training and support. This indicates that smaller businesses may not have the resources to provide professional development and support activities.

Contrasting these results both companies A & B stated that they do not provide staff with professional development or support to practise sustainability.

This finding is contradictory to the graduate questionnaire. That is, a significant number of graduate responses have indicated that that sustainability professional development has been undertaken but the company management representatives state that no professional development or support for sustainability is provided. This could indicate that the graduate is recognising that sustainability is embedded within professional development activities rather than a specific program that is centred upon sustainability practice. Further research is required to explain this contradiction.

6.2 Addressing the aims and objectives of this research

The aim of this research was to determine whether those who studied the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program attained knowledge of sustainability issues from their studies. In addition, the research sought to determine whether the workplace environment was either enhancing or impeding the practice of sustainability among employed graduates.

From the research results it can be concluded that graduates have maintained their knowledge of sustainable practice classified within three key areas: corporate social responsibility, environmental and business economic productivity. However, the organisations they are employed in are not providing the workplace environment for them to apply their skills and knowledge.

In terms of the research objectives the following can be concluded:

**Objective 1: To determine current graduate sustainability knowledge and practice within Australian Fashion and Textile organisations**

This has been achieved by analysing the responses from the Graduate Questionnaire. It was determined that the graduates have attained knowledge on sustainability. Furthermore the majority of graduates believed that their Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) studies had assisted them in understanding sustainability issues.
In terms of graduate practice in sustainability, research suggests that this is very limited and that graduates, as a business resource, are being underutilised by Australian Fashion and Textiles organisations.

**Objective 2: To identify and analyse the strategies and processes that Australian Fashion and Textiles organisations have implemented in response to sustainability issues.**

The Industry Interviews confirmed that their sustainability strategies revolved around the TBL. That is, plans, policies and procedures relating to ethical sourcing, community involvement, environment and efficient use of resources were in place. Responsibility for implementing these resided with executive and senior management. In terms of rating their organisation on sustainability knowledge, however, 49% of graduates thought it was poor. A further 71% did not think that their organisation had a sustainability plan in place.

However, the responses of graduates indicate that they are largely unaware of these initiatives. In short, communication and the practice of sustainability has not extended down to employees at the operational level.

**Objective 3: To evaluate the impact that Australian Fashion and Textiles organisations are having on graduate employee practice in sustainability**

The Industry Interviews indicated that sustainability professional development and training activities did not exist within their organisations. This was largely confirmed by the graduates. In addition, the findings from the graduates and employers confirmed that sustainability issues are not a key performing responsibility within the job descriptions of employees at the operational level.

It can be concluded, therefore, that Australian fashion organisations are not encouraging or supporting the operational employee in identifying and resolving sustainability issues and are not aware of the benefits that maybe gained as a result.

**6.3 Recommendations**

1. **Involving operational level employees in identifying and resolving organisational sustainability issues.**

The results from this research indicate that graduates have attained knowledge of sustainable practice in the three key areas of social, environmental, and productivity. However, the organisations they are employed in are not providing a suitable environment for them to practice their skills and knowledge. As previously discussed, most graduates who responded to the survey stated that sustainability is not included as a responsibility in their job description and that the issue is not discussed at team meetings. The responses from industry interviews confirmed these findings, noting that sustainability as a key performance indicator has not extended down to the operational level of front line employees within their organisation.

Fashion and textile organisations may be pre-occupied with short-term goals to satisfy shareholder returns while ignoring long-term business sustainability. The key asset that is
being underutilised is the knowledge and experience held by their staff, in particular those at the operational level.

As the research has confirmed graduates have the knowledge in sustainability but have limited organisational support to practice it. What can fashion organisation’s do to utilise the skills and knowledge of its employees at the operational level? Are the organisation’s aware that employees who have graduated with Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) have a considerable level of skills and knowledge in sustainability practice? In addition, how can fashion organisations create a positive environment for sustainability and business innovation to be actively practiced throughout the whole company?

There is growing consumer demand for fashion organisations to adopt sustainable practices both socially and environmentally, and companies are facing the threats of ever increasing competition. Given this, it is recommended that fashion organisations fully communicate the commitment of management to sustainability in clearly-defined areas and access the capability of their front line operational staff to identify and resolve sustainability issues and create an environment for business innovation to flourish.

2. Improvements to the curriculum of the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) in relation to sustainable practice.

The results from this research indicate that students have learnt the principals of TBL. The results also indicate they are not actively practicing sustainability within the organisation they are employed in. As previously discussed perhaps the employer is not aware that the graduate does have sustainability knowledge that could contribute to improving the operations of the organisation.

As highlighted in chapter 3, the learning and teaching strategy employed has embedded sustainability throughout all courses of study. The program highlights and discusses sustainability issues as they arise within the context of the learning outcomes. What is not learnt is sustainability practice.

It is therefore recommended that the program consider introducing an industry project centred upon sustainability practice.

In partnership with industry, students would investigate and analyse current industry practice in sustainability. Organisations would be selected to participate in the project based upon their likelihood of employing graduates in the future. Small groups of students (2 – 4) would be formed to provide the opportunity for a number of organisations (10 – 15) to participate.

Industry would provide a set brief of a current sustainability issue that is of concern to the organisation in consultation with teaching staff. Industry would also provide background information and resources for the project to be successfully undertaken. Teaching staff from the Bachelor of Fashion (Merchandise Management) program would provide the theoretical framework related to the industry brief and associated student mentoring support.

From this investigation, students would analyse and report back to industry their findings and recommendations for industry to consider in resolving the sustainability issue.

A project of this nature has the potential to be a win, win for all of the key stakeholders:
1. This project would benefit the student by improving their investigation and communication skills, collaborating with industry to improve their capability and understanding of sustainability on a much deeper level.

2. This project would benefit industry by having a sustainability issue investigated and potentially resolved. Industry would also benefit by having knowledge that potential graduate employees do have the skills to practice sustainability.

3. Teaching staff would benefit by working collaboratively with industry to keep abreast of sustainability issues currently impacting upon the fashion and textile industry in Australia.

3. **Develop an organisational employee communication strategy on sustainability policies and procedures.**

   The research indicated that the majority of graduate employees were not aware that their organisation had a sustainability plan in place. Whilst the industry interviews confirmed that they did have sustainability plans, policies and procedures in place it is clear that this information was not permeating down to employees at the operational level.

   It recommended that existing employee communication strategies be reviewed to ensure that existing policy and practice in sustainability is understood by all employees.

4. **Developing models for sustainability to be practiced by fashion and textile organisations at the operating level.**

   This recommendation is divided to reflect two types of fashion and textile organisations: small-to-medium companies (under 100 employees) and large (over 100 employees). This differentiation is made to take into account the different levels of financial and human capital resources that are available to each type of organisation.

   For organisations with fewer than 100 employees, the results indicate lower sustainability practice for employees in terms of team discussions, professional development and support for employees to participate in identifying and resolving sustainability issues. This discrepancy could be due to financial and human resource capital factors.

   Based upon these findings, for small-to-medium sized fashion organisations, it is recommended that further research is conducted to determine how they could access additional resources to remain sustainably viable.

   For large fashion organisations, with access to financial and human resource capital, it is recommended that an experiment be conducted within one company but in two product development teams. The experiment could provide further professional development in sustainability practice within one fashion product development team. In this team, job descriptions with sustainability responsibilities and key performance indicators would be developed and implemented. The second team would have no such intervention. From the minutes of both team meetings, outputs related to a team sustainability responses could be measured over a twelve-month period. The results related to sustainability practice could then be compared and contrasted between the teams to determine if an organisation could benefit through additional training on sustainability responsibilities.
This new research would determine the benefits in sustainable practice that would be derived if an organisation establishes the appropriate workplace environment for its operational employees to practice sustainability and business innovation.

This recommendation also provides an opportunity for educational institutions to customise and deliver sustainability professional development programs for industry clients.

6.4 Limitation

The majority of respondents to the graduate questionnaire were employed in large organisations. In hindsight, additional interviews could have been conducted to provide responses from organisations with fewer than 100 employees. This would have provided broader perspectives on industry practice related to sustainability. However, time limitations made this problematic. Future research into this area with a broader scope of enquiry would be recommended to enhance the current study.

6.5 Conclusion

Results from the research have indicated that graduates have maintained their knowledge of sustainable practice in three key areas: corporate social responsibility, environmental, and business economic productivity. However the organisation they are employed with are not providing the workplace environment for them to apply their skills and knowledge. Of the graduates who responded to the survey, 69% stated that sustainability is not included as a responsibility in their job description and 66% stated that sustainability is not discussed at team meetings. Supporting these percentages are the responses to interviews conducted with senior management at two of the largest fashion companies in Melbourne, Australia. In addition, the findings indicate that a disconnect exists between organisations and their operational employees in regard to the communication of existing sustainability plans, policies and procedures. These findings confirm that sustainability as a key performance indicator has not extended to the operational level of employees within their organisation.

The research has also established that learning about current business practices and innovations that begin to address the social, environmental and economic impacts of the Fashion Industry, requires a high level of research and analytical skills. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, (2004, p. 6) state that “The skills needed for analyzing and mobilizing to solve problems from multiple perspectives will require individuals who are cognitively flexible, culturally sophisticated and able to work collaboratively in groups made up of diverse individuals”. Not only is it important for fashion’s future professionals to gain a broad perspective of the industry they seek to enter, they must also develop the requisite analytical abilities and intellectual agility needed to succeed in a globalized marketplace. For the Fashion Industry to be socially responsible and survive into the future, innovation in sustainability practice must have the appropriate workplace environment to thrive.

It is the responsibility of educational institutions and industry to provide the tools needed to make change and innovate in order to lessen the impact of sustainability issues. Industry must also develop, nurture and challenge staff at the operational level towards creating responsible social, environmental and economic practices within their organization.
7. Appendices

7.1 Graduate Questionnaire

Question 1: What year did you graduate from RMIT University?

Question 2: What best describes the organisation that you work for?

Question 3: How many employees does your organisation employ?

Question 4: What is the title of the job position that you are currently employed in?

Question 5: Does your organisation have a formal sustainability plan?

Question 6: If you answered yes to Question 5, briefly describe the key sustainability areas covered within the plan.

Question 7: In your organisation who is responsible for the sustainability strategy?

Question 8: What do you believe to be the primary driver of your organisation's sustainability strategy: consumer/customer need, regulation/legislation, corporate social responsibility, productivity or don't know?

Question 9: How does your organisation ensure that business employees have adequate knowledge of sustainability issues: Provision of a specialist manager/leader, training and education or on the job learning?

Question 10: Does your organisation's sustainability response rate relate to: business practice, your supply chain, both or don't know.

Question 11: Broadly, how would you rate your organisation's level of understanding in regards to sustainability issues: excellent, good, fair or poor.

Question 12: Does your job description include a responsibility related to sustainability?

Question 13: Does your team discuss sustainability issues at business meetings?

Question 14: Do you believe your organisation is ethically responsible?

Question 15: Is sustainability an important business issue for you?

Question 16: If you answered yes to question 15, briefly describe the main issues that are important to you.

Question 17: Did your Bachelor degree studies at RMIT University assist you with understanding sustainability issues related to the Australian Fashion & Textiles industry as a whole?
Question 18: If you answered yes to question 17, briefly describe the main sustainability issues that you learnt at RMIT University.

7.2 Industry Interview questions

Question 1: How do you define sustainability within your organisation (please discuss your company’s policies plans and policies)?

Question 2: Within your organisation who is responsible for sustainability strategies?

Question 3: Does your organisation have a planned approach to managing sustainability?

Question 4: How would you describe your organisation’s sustainability approach within the supply chain?

Question 5: Does your organisation have policies and procedures related to managing your sustainability strategy?

Question 6: Do general employee job descriptions include responsibilities related to managing sustainability?

Question 7: Does your organisation provide any professional development for staff in relation to sustainable practice?
Table 7.3.1: Questions 1-4 - Graduate year, employment organisation by description and size and position.

1. What year did you graduate from RMIT University?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. What best describes the organisation that you work for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wholesale</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How many employees does your organisation employ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 - 25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25 - 100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. What is the title of the job position that you are currently employed in?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of buying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media + Marketing Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wholesale admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Buying assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise Allocator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing &amp; Business Development Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online and Loyalty Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Product Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer/Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre production technologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylist (French for Designer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Allocation analysts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design room manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Product Coordinator in Child Apparel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Product Assistant’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant QA Officer/Garment Technologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Visual Merchandising Coordinator
fashion stylist
Raw Material Development Assistant
Design Assistant - Accessories
Design Assistant
Design Co-ordinator
Junior Agent/Producer
Director
Technical Compliance Officer
Distribution manager
Supply coordinator
Administration Manager
Graphic designer / design assistant
Supervisor
Content strategist
Sales assistant
Product Coordinator/ administrator
Merchandiser
Events and Marketing
Retail sales assistant
Trainee planner
Assistant Manager
Senior brand operations executive
Intern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 7.3.2 Attitudes and knowledge - Results

### 15. Is sustainability an important business issue for you?

![Bar chart showing responses to the question about sustainability as an important business issue.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. If you said answered to Q15, briefly describe the main issues that are important to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable fabrics, recycling, not using unnecessary packaging</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical trade, supporting local communities, fair working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate sustainability - ethics in regards to all supplier relationships and internal and external business dealings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability relates to the product, environment, business relationship and our existence in the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Waste &amp; Fashion Landfill - being an industry that revolves around seasonal change and emphasis on the latest trends - we need to wonder the damage caused by landfill and the consequences of throwing out clothes every season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair work and ethical trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality, Environment, Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe strongly in on-shore manufacturing for financial and sustainable reasons. I work in London using only London based factories and mainly UK suppliers. This is a business model I hope to be able to apply when I move back to Australia as it supports local industry and allows companies to manufacture in small runs avoiding the 'fast fashion' business model. Local manufacture allows a higher level of control, minimising wastage and transport. It also allows you to understand the business practices of your factories, ensuring your garments are produced in ethically sustainable conditions. In addition to local manufacture, I am very passionate about sourcing sustainable fabrics. In Australia it is harder to go to the fabric mills directly but there are many wholesalers with transparent supply chains who only source fabric from ethical suppliers. Also selecting fabrics that use sustainable practices to produce is important and needs to be a conscious decision that designers should look at.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process of manufacturing should be sustainable to the environment. For example, how are dyes disposed of and is water recycled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm personally an environmentalist so its important for me. However, the business that I work for doesn't seem to care about it at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of fast fashion on environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How retail organisations affect the people in the countries where the goods are produce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability involves triple bottom line, but personally, the most important in my eyes would be social. Workers rights, safe working conditions etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sourcing a range of reliable suppliers, ensuring the best cost is achieved with the most margin. Developing processes to ensure speed and accuracy of sampling. Minimising the number of samples submitted before approval.

Sustainable manufacturing and sourcing

Looking after our planet

Environmental impacts and safe work practices

Ethical practices

Over Consumption & Waste/Landfill

Making sustainable choice for our future, being responsible for our actions and there impacts

I believe the recycling of fabric and materials are important in the fashion industry.

Ethical standards

working conditions, biodegradable solutions

Minimising the impact of the textile industry on the environment is important to me, to ensure that future generations can enjoy the world as we do.

environmental sustainability involved in the supply chain, corporate social responsibility,

ensuring that our collections are balanced well across our vendors to ensure competitive margins and risk management.

Reduction of waste and carbon footprint, increasing efficiency within the workplace and implementing sustainable practices when making planning and management decisions.

Longevity for future generations

Ethical wages, environmental factors such as eco friendly garment wash processes, minimal wastage

Harmful chemicals and pesticides used in materials. The water consumption used for cotton.

The waste produced in a small office is outstanding, and a lack of education about recycling in older generations means so much is going into landfill. So much can be done to reuse and reduce office waste that people don't realise.

Manufacturing locally and keeping shipping mileage low

that workers are being treated ethically

How and what raw materials are used and the impact on animals, environment and people.

Packaging, recycling

I believe that in working for a large corporation who have the means to incorporate
meaningful sustainability practice into the business that it's an issue that nothing is done.

Sustainable production practices

Knowing we are making a difference

Sustainability in regards to the brands we stock being environmentally and socially responsible in their business practices.

Ensuring minimal waste and products are easily broken down. recycling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. Did your bachelor degree studies at RMIT University assist you with understanding sustainability issues related to the Australian Fashion & Textiles industry as a whole?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. If you answered yes to Q17, briefly describe the main sustainability issues that you learnt at RMIT University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable fabrics and methods of dying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethical design, sustainable practices through every stage of the product lifecycle, global development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethical sourcing of raw materials and labour, supply chain transparency and sustainable business practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where fibers come from and how they are made. Travel to foreign manufacturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the importance of the TBL and corporate social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the effects of 'organic' cotton and the negative impacts this places on water supply. as well as the seriousness of child labour offshore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable production practices, impact of fashion on the environment, considering the conditions of workers in Australia/foreign production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycled materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fair Trade • Ethical work practices • Transparent supply chains • Waste reduction • Recycling and up cycling • Sustainable fabric choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastage, fabrics selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We learnt this in our first year at rmit, therefore I am finding it difficult to recall much. I believe this topic should be incorporated into all 3 years of the program as today it is becoming a more talked about issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At that time it was about consumption - not waiting fabric etc. There was also a sustainability subject run by Patricia that was fantastic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of fast fashion on environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How organisations impact populations as well as nature. Their impact, as well as the opportunities currently being explored by local organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability encompasses three aspects which need balance in order to thrive successfully. These are environmental, social and economic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable practices throughout the entire supply chain &amp; how these can be used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact on producing cotton on the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The triple bottom line - People, planet and profit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The importance of recognizing and analysing sustainable work practices

Fast fashion, pollution, emissions, waste

Main issues was the over production and waste by businesses and the ignorance of customers/consumers

No waste pattern making was an innovative way to be sustainable.

The triple bottom line and its benefits

It’s about being energy conscious, be water wise, smarter choices in appliances, reduce waste and recycle. Its all about what we can do to conserve and protect our environment.

Product life cycle

ethical production and practices, resource reduction

Due Diligence and personal responsibility

processes for recycling fibers and sustainable dyeing practices

Understanding the impact of the supply chain and companies carbon footprint

The waste that comes from fast fashion

the changing Australian marketplace (opening up to china - removal of tariffs on imports)

Sustainability in relation to corporate social responsibility as well as sustainable workplaces practices and the implementation of such practices.

Fair wages and work environments, fast fashions affect on the industry and landfill,

How much water was used in order to grow sustainable cotton

It's going back a while now, but the stand out issues for me was the environmental damage involved in the offshore production process in trying to cut costs.

The lifecycle of a garment and the industries waste

Everything about sustainability, what it means, what it means for a business to practise, the benefits and impacts that sustainable practise places on businesses.

Textiles and the dyes used, also about supply chains and the amount of products being made so businesses achieve the bottom line. Also how humans are impacted.

Supply chain, efficiencies, packaging

wastage

Sustainability in pre, production and post-production of a garment as well as CSR policies and practices
Cradle to grave aspect of garment manufacturing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7.3.3 Graduate knowledge of their employer's sustainable practice

5. Does your organisation have a formal sustainability plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. If you answered yes to Q5, briefly describe the key sustainability areas covered within the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All dealings with all internal and external stakeholders to be conducted ethically and fairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employing people is growing industries of manufacturing countries. Ensuring local laws, standards and innovative ways of working are maintained and explored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company has a large focus on the ‘Triple Bottom Line’ with a number of initiatives set up to give back to both the local and global community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borden discusses guidelines for foreign production workers and decreasing the impact of production on the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair-trade and organic in every detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimise environmental impact (eg. refurbished stores more energy efficient, head office reducing paper etc), active members of the communities (sponsor for numerous events such as camp Gallipoli etc), promoting diversity (eg. women in leadership at a certain %, also indigenous employees) and ensuring products are sourced ethically (eg. factory auditing, transparency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing &amp; manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a &quot;green team&quot; who are constantly supporting and encouraging different sustainable techniques. minimising social and environmental impact through all areas of the supply chain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am unaware of a formal sustainability plan, but possibly there would be one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i don't know what it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is in development now as the company grows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of paper in the organisation, minimising it and making things more online as opposed to print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very long- but it starts from manufacturer, shipping, dc, stores, consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethically sourcing and producing of goods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. In your organisation, who is responsible for the sustainability strategy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CEO/Board</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dedicated department within the organisation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All employees</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. What do you believe to be the primary driver of your organisation's sustainability strategy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consumer/customer need</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulation/legislation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Does your organisations sustainability response relate to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Your business</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Your supply chain</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7.3.4: Employer communication and support to employees to implement and practice sustainable strategies and processes

9. How does your organisation ensure that business employees have adequate knowledge of sustainability issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Specialist manager/leader</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Training and education</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>On the job learning</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Broadly, how would you rate your organisation's level of understanding in regards to sustainability issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Does your job description include a responsibility related to sustainability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Does your team discuss sustainability issues at business meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Do you believe your organisation is ethically responsible?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.5: Graduate Questionnaire - Cross tabulation results.

Year of graduation – cross tabulated – Is sustainability an important business for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What year did you graduate from RMIT University?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is sustainability an important business issue for you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year of graduation – cross tabulated – Did your bachelor studies at RMIT University assist you with your understanding of sustainability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What year did you graduate from RMIT University?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your bachelor degree studies at RMIT University assist you with understanding sustainability...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Size of organisation – cross tabulated – Broadly, how would you rate your organisations level of understanding in regards to sustainability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many employees does your organisation employee?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>10 - 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadly, how would you rate your organisations level of understanding in regards to sustainability...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Size of organisation – cross tabulated – Do you believe your organisation is ethically responsible?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many employees does your organisation employee?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>10 - 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe your organisation is ethically responsible?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many employees does your organisation employ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than 10</th>
<th>10 - 25</th>
<th>25 - 100</th>
<th>100+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How does your organisation ensure that business employees have adequate knowledge of sustainability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialist manager/leader</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the job learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. References


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http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf


