

# Zara CSR manager visits Oz



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By AAP

Zara's former corporate social responsibility manager, Javier Chercoles, will speak at the Mainstream Sustainability conference as part of the three day Retail World event at Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, kicking off on June 27.

The fast fashion retailer unveiled its new "eco-store" model last week at the launch of the latest flagship store. The announcement from COO Jesus Echevarria was met with a healthy dose of cynicism and more than a few questions. Echevarria said the eco stores will use 30 per cent less energy and 70 per cent less water than its normal stores, with Zara now beginning to roll out this model to its stores internationally.



This timely visit from Chercoles, the company's outgoing CSR manager, is sure to interest local retailers who will look to gauge their own CSR efforts against those of the global leader. Having spent 10 years with the retail giant and overseen the introduction of corporate responsibility initiatives in some of Zara's key manufacturing centres, Chercoles will no doubt have some interesting insights to share with members of Zara's newest consumer market.

The speaker line up for Mainstream Sustainability also features Alexie O'Brien from Lululemon Athletica, well renowned for their social policies and employee engagement strategy. The company has seen its share price grow 1800 per cent in the last two years.

The conference will also highlight the efforts of international retailers like WholeFoods who have a policy of creating shared value from sustainability innovation. These international leaders will provide insights for their local counterparts, especially considering Australia is a little way off the pace when it comes to sustainability.

Local speakers Turlough Guerin from Telstra's environment team and Armineh Mardirossian from FMCG giant Woolworths will also share their experiences in implementing sustainability in two of Australia's largest retailers.

Tara Allsop from sustainability consultancy Green For Retail will be chairing the conference and will present a strong business case and a clear market opportunity for retailers who do choose to head down the path of sustainability ahead of the pack.

Full conference program: <http://www.retail-world.com.au/sustainabilityatretail.html>