

Sustainability Matters

18th August 2016

A fortnightly selection of topical **news and views** about economic, social and environmental issues.
Designed especially for accountants and those who use the services of accountants.

Sustainability Matters is;

- Compiled and published by Ray Skinner of *Sustainability Matters*, providers of specialist services relating to sustainability and business support. **Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children.**

Thirty Million

"*Thirty Million* is a 35 minute documentary on the effects sea-level rise and climate change will have on the people of Bangladesh. The country is widely considered the most vulnerable in the world to climate change. The title *Thirty Million* references a staggering statistic: 30 million people are expected to be displaced over the coming decades as the country is projected to lose 17% of its land as global sea levels rise by one metre.

"The film was made by three New Zealanders – myself [Adrien Taylor], Sam Walls and Michael Roberts – and Welsh climate scientist Dr Daniel Price, who last year cycled from New Zealand to Paris to raise awareness on climate change as part of the Pole to Paris campaign. *Thirty Million* was commissioned and funded by the United Nations, but it is an entirely non-commercial film.

"With the predicted one metre of sea-level rise by 2100, 30 million Bangladeshis are expected to be displaced', explains the film's Co-Director and climate scientist Dr Price, who cycled from New Zealand to Paris to raise awareness on climate change last year.

"The people of Bangladesh are on the front lines of climate change. The greenhouse gasses we've amassed over previous decades and are continuing to contribute to are affecting them today. We wanted to give these people a voice, and ultimately, show the rest of the world that our actions in displacing them will affect us in the West, too.'

"In terms of the number of people affected, Bangladesh is widely considered the most vulnerable country to climate change in the world because of its coastal and low-lying nature. Climate change is increasing the frequency of fatal cyclones along the coast, and one metre of sea-level rise is expected to make 17% of the land uninhabitable.

"It takes more than forty Bangladeshis to emit the equivalent in carbon dioxide of one American, according to the World Bank.

[Documentary is viewable from the web site]

More: <http://pureadvantage.org/news/2016/06/23/5139/>

Source: Pure Advantage, 21st July 2016. ❖

Just How Ethical are Socially Responsible Investments?

A commentary on the New Zealand scene. An 'app' is to be launched in August to help investors filter investments.

More: www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/309517/just-how-ethical-are-socially-responsible-investments

Source: Barry Coates, LinkedIn, 27th July 2016. ❖

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

Next event – Date of webcast yet to be 'sorted'.



Announcements in 'due course'. ❖

Introduction to Permaculture

"Permaculture has developed into something that we can put into practice in our everyday lives, such as housing, energy efficiency and food production.

"This weekend course is designed as a taster and an overview of what permaculture is all about. It aims to inspire and empower you to use permaculture design in your everyday life; drawing not only from our tutor's vast experience, but also through meeting other people using this design for living every day.

"The course will cover:

- Permaculture ethics and principles
- The design process, sectors & zones
- Examples of permaculture
- Practical exercises
- Field trips to several permaculture properties in the area

"Tutor: Trish Allen – Trish and her late husband Joe Polasicher founded the iconic, award-winning Rainbow Valley Farm in 1988 on permaculture principles and ethics. The farm in Matakana inspired thousands of people over 25 years in sustainable living and demonstrated the principles of permaculture in action. Trish travels internationally to speak about permaculture, and has established a village-scale model of permaculture that can be applied in any situation.

When/Where: 24th/ 25th Sept, Matakana

More: <http://kaipatiki.org.nz/courses/permaculture/>

Source: Kaipatiki Project Environment Centre, 11th Aug. ❖

Energy Landscapes: An Aerial View of Europe's Carbon Footprint

"..... aerial photographer Alex MacLean documents why, despite its equally high standard of living, Europe's per-capita carbon emissions are less than half of those in the United States. Flying over MacLean came away with an appreciation for the historical advantages many European nations have inherited and now knowingly reinforce in the design of their physical landscapes. 'A country's carbon footprint is directly related to how we organise ourselves on the ground.'

More:

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/energy_landscapes_an_aerial_view_of_europes_carbon_footprint/2955/

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 5th February 2016. ❖

A Thank You to Donors to Sustainability Matters

A hearty thanks to the ten people who recently provided donations to support publication of *Sustainability Matters*.

They include a person who does not seem to be on the mail list; initials are "JMRG"; contact Ray for your GST receipt ☺
Donations can be made at any time. Bank account details are;

Sustainability Matters

A/c No. 123 011 0249104 00

That's at the ASB Bank, Queen Street branch. ❖

Communicating in an Age of Authenticity: The Two Essentials for Business Success

"Businesses looking for tips on how to succeed in today's age of authenticity can learn from brand leaders at a one day conference in Auckland on 31st August.

"Communicating in an Age of Authenticity, run by the Sustainable Business Network, will help businesses understand the two vital elements to authentic communication – purpose and proof.

"People now want to know the good being done by the businesses they buy from, work for and invest in. To succeed, your business will need a positive purpose at its core. You have to be able to prove it. And you must be able to express it in everything you do", says Rachel Brown, CEO of the Sustainable Business Network.

"Conference attendees will learn how to meet this challenge from business leaders in pioneering NZ and overseas companies. They'll identify the enormous opportunities it creates, and they'll work with you to help you make it happen in your organisation."

"The speakers are some of the top sustainability thinkers and business leaders from New Zealand and overseas. They include:

- Christopher Davis, The Body Shop International's head of Corporate Social Responsibility (UK, by video);
- Dom Thurbon, Founder and Chief Creative Officer of fast-growing multinational business Karrikins Group (Australia);
- Josh Page, Global Brand Manager of NZ success story Blunt Umbrellas;
- Jacqueline Farman, Founder of The Purpose Business, and creator of the Colmar Brunton Better Business reports;
- Avram Deitch, Global Marketing Manager of multi award-winning Yealands Wine Group;
- Associate Professor Niki Harré, Author of *Psychology for a Better World* from The University of Auckland;
- Matt Dagger, General Manager of Kaibosh Food Rescue;
- Lucy Kebbell, Chair of CommonSense Organics;
- Dean Easterbrook, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Borderless;
- Dave Williams, aiming to be the first in the world to climb the highest peak on every continent from sea level.....

When/Where: Wed 31st August at AUT Auckland

More: www.sustainable.org.nz/conference2016

Source: Fiona Stephenson, 11th August 2016. ❖

Solar Thermal Collector

"It all began because I wanted a hot shower when I came in from the Coromandel surf."

"So says Richard Gourley, the man behind the 'PlexiSun' solar thermal collector range showing at this year's Fieldays. From devising an award-winning sun-heated outdoor shower, Gourley has extended his innovation into an entire system of solar building panels. ...

"It's still early days in commercialisation terms, but looking ahead Gourley can see potential uses in agriculture, and by 'low infrastructure communities' in developing nations.

"..... His 'SunShower' is essentially a radiator-like system of pipes sandwiched between two different kinds of acrylic. On the side facing the sun, the acrylic sheet is uncoated, allowing the sun rays to penetrate and heat the water in the pipes. Away from the sun, Gourley has used the reflective material, but with its reflective surface on the inside. As a result, the pipes get heat from both sides ...

More: <http://pureadvantage.org/news/2016/07/19/plexisun>

Source: Pure Advantage, 21st July 2016. ❖

Design Thinking 101

"Summary: What is design thinking and why should companies care? History and background plus a quick overview and visualisation of 6 phases of the design thinking process. Approaching problem solving with a hands-on, user-centric mindset leads to innovation, and innovation can lead to differentiation and a competitive advantage.

More: www.nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking/

Source: Jacob Nielsen, NN Group, 2nd August 2016.

Editor: A lengthy article. Although written for the software industry the concept has universal applicability. ❖

Restoration of an Urban River

"Journalist Jim Robbins reports on a \$1.3 billion plan to revitalise and re-green the 51-mile Los Angeles River.

"The once wild, meandering waterway was tamed and supplanted with a concrete channel starting in 1938. The city soon turned its back on the ditch, and public access to it was prohibited. Over the last few decades, however, conservation organisations and neighbourhood groups in the U.S.'s second-largest city have worked to recreate some semblance of nature along the river. And now, the Army Corps of Engineers, partnering with the City of Los Angeles and environmental groups, is poised to launch the largest coordinated restoration effort of the Los Angeles River to date: Removing three miles of river-killing concrete, recreating 719 acres of wetlands, and enhancing an 11-mile run through the Elysian Valley, a stretch called the Glendale Narrows. But, as Robbins reports, the project raises an intriguing question: Just how much of an urban river can really be returned to nature?"

"Also, take a photo tour of some of the major transformations proposed for the Los Angeles River – from converting a 125-acre riverside railroad yard into a Central Park-like space, to removing miles of concrete riverbeds and banks, to restoring marshland and creating dozens of new parks.

More: <http://e360.yale.edu/content/feature.msp?id=3016> plus http://e360.yale.edu/feature/restoring_the_los_angeles_river/3015/

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 22nd July 2016. ❖

Trends and Opportunities – 2016 and Beyond

"For our annual trends outlook, we reviewed our own ongoing issue tracking and interviewed two dozen global sustainability experts on their expectations for 2016 and beyond, honing in on key issues and opportunities that will define the field, and on signals for companies and others to watch.

"New certainty... By all accounts, 2015 was a pivotal year in sustainable development. From adoption of the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the year that started with uncertainty and anticipation culminated in historical achievements and hope that the international community is finally uniting in pursuit of ambitious, long-term solutions to our most significant challenges. Among key leaders in business, government and civil society, there is growing consensus and a new feeling of certainty about the future direction of climate action and the need for more systemic responses to poverty, inequality, resource scarcity and other linked issues. The conversation is no longer about the direction and the ultimate destination – instead, it is now about the best way to achieve the goals and the speed at which it can be done.

More: <http://hello.sustainability.com/annual-trends-report/> plus www.sustainability.com/blog/the-evolving-private-sector-response-to-climate-change-post-paris-agreement

Source: SustainAbility, 22nd July 2016. ❖

'Limits to Growth Revisited' Report Published

"A report commissioned on behalf of a cross-party group of British MPs authored by a former UK government advisor, the first of its kind, says that industrial civilisation is currently on track to experience 'an eventual collapse of production and living standards' in the next few decades if business-as-usual continues.

"The report published by the new All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Limits to Growth, which launched in the House of Commons on Tuesday evening [26th April], reviews the scientific merits of a controversial 1972 model by a team of MIT scientists, which forecasted a possible collapse of civilisation due to resource depletion.

"The report launch at the House of Commons was addressed by Anders Wijkman, co-chair of the Club of Rome, which originally commissioned the MIT study.

"At the time, the MIT team's findings had been widely criticised in the media for being alarmist. To this day, it is often believed the 'limits to growth' forecasts were dramatically wrong.

"But the new report by the APPG on Limits to Growth, whose members consist of Conservative, Labour, Green and Scottish National Party members of parliament, reviews the scientific literature and finds that the original model remains surprisingly robust.

"Authored by Professor Tim Jackson of the University of Surrey, who was Economics Commissioner on the UK government's Sustainable Development Commission, and former Carbon Brief policy analyst Robin Webster, the report concludes that:

"There is unsettling evidence that society is tracking the 'standard run' of the original study – which leads ultimately to collapse. Detailed and recent analyses suggest production peaks for some key resources may only be decades away.'

"The 1972 team used their system dynamics model of the consumption of key planetary resources to explore a range of different scenarios.

"As Professor Jackson and Webster explain in the new APPG report:

"In the standard run scenario, natural resources (for example oil, iron and chromium) become harder and harder to obtain. The diversion of more and more capital to extracting them leaves less for investment in industry, leading to industrial decline starting in about 2015. Around 2030, the world population peaks and begins to decrease as the death rate is driven upwards by lack of food and health services.'

"Not all the model's scenarios result in this outcome, but the majority of them 'show industrial output declining in the 2020s and population declining in the 2030s. The researchers didn't put precise dates on their projections. In fact, they deliberately left the timeline somewhat vague."

More: <http://wiseresponse.org.nz/national-risk-assessment/item/9>. 'Related articles and links across the web' links to <http://wiseresponse.org.nz/2016/05/01/limits-to-growth-revisited-report-published/>, and the April 2016, 24 page 4Mb report which in part states 'Perhaps the most important priority of all is to ensure that the Limits debate doesn't become mired in ideological conflict or side-lined by political intractability. The consequences for society as a whole are too important.

"A vital element in that process must be the ability to open up political space for a balanced and informed conversation both about limits and about the possibilities for change. One of the key aims of the APPG on Limits to Growth is to provide that opportunity.

Source: Editor, 23rd July 2016. ❖

How a Simple, Fun Smartphone Game Could Solve Some Serious Social Problems and Save Taxpayers Millions

"A world-first smartphone app invented in Brisbane has cut thousands of dollars off power bills and is now set to help in the international fight against obesity, smoking and binge drinking.

"The \$6.8 million 'Reduce Your Juice' project devised by award-winning sustainability agency CitySmart has released its final report, showing impressive results in the energy saving habits of the 1,000 program participants.

"On average, participants cut \$220 off their yearly power bills, some saving more than \$2,000 per year.

"These results have not only proven that conventional awareness programs costing taxpayers millions of dollars are now redundant', CitySmart CEO Neil Horrocks said, 'but it's opened the door to multiple opportunities to apply the same approach to some of our most challenging social and health issues.'

"Reduce Your Juice* is an energy-saving initiative that targets low-income Brisbane renters aged 18 to 35 through interactive digital games that encourage reductions in power use, including turning off appliances on stand-by and limiting the use of power hungry devices like dryers and air conditioners.

"The results show an average 12.3% improvement in energy consumption but CitySmart says the most exciting outcome was the startling ability of the 'gamification' approach to change people's behaviour.

"We see conventional awareness programs in the health sector can achieve around 5% improvement in behaviour, whether it be drinking or smoking less or improving eating habits', Mr Horrocks said.

"Our program has achieved a 22.5% improvement, more than four times what you would expect from traditional campaigns that often use expensive, mass advertising methods.

"Conventional campaigns are more prone to pushing large amounts of information onto consumers, which seem to be far less effective when compared to results of the Reduce Your Juice trial program', he said.....

"In this way, gamification can be applied to a whole range of social issues that require people to adjust their behaviour through encouragement, positivity and reward. Rather than using 'guilt' as a way to deliver a message to a large group', she said.

"The Brisbane City Council was a major contributor to the Reduce Your Juice project and Lord Mayor Graham Quirk says the results confirm Brisbane's status as a leader in sustainability.

"This project proves that Brisbane is ahead of the pack on sustainability issues', Mr Quirk said.

"Using the latest digital technology and social media smarts to engage the community is not only proving to be remarkably effective as this program has shown, the relatively low cost will have local and national governments everywhere looking at this Brisbane invention to chart new ways to tackle a range of social challenges.'

More: www.ecovoice.com.au/how-a-simple-fun-smartphone-game-could-solve-some-serious-social-problems-and-save-taxpayers-millions/

Source: eco-Voice, 22nd July 2016. ❖

Two People Achieve 2,000 tonne Rubbish Clean Up

A project in India to feast your mind on. Fascinating inspirational story. Numerous photos at web site.

More: <http://econews.com.au/51469/historys-largest-beach-clean-up-clears-2000-tonnes-of-rubbish/>

Source: *eco-News*, 15th August 2016. ❖

Pathways to the Sustainable Development Goals

“Annual Review of the State of CSR in Australia and New Zealand 2016: ACCSR’s eighth publication of Annual Review of the State of CSR in Australia and New Zealand is titled ‘*Pathway to the Sustainable Development Goals*’.

“The State of CSR series is the largest ongoing research study of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, trends and capabilities in Australia and New Zealand.

“The 2016 Annual Review found Australian business is very aware of the newly adopted United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It examines how companies are aligning their business strategies with the SDGs and revealed the most important Goals for Australia and New Zealand business are Gender Equality; Good Health and Wellbeing; and Decent Work and Economic Growth.

“New Zealand Snapshot: This year there were 226 New Zealand survey respondents, compared to 159 last year, representing 21% of our total respondents. Participation and our understanding of CSR development in New Zealand continues to build.

“New Zealand respondents showed very similar levels of awareness of the SDGs as Australians. Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth – was the most frequently identified by New Zealand participants, while Gender Equality was the most important Goal in Australia. Figure 13 shows the top Goals in New Zealand and how organisations plan to take action on them.

“Engaging in strategic partnerships and reporting on progress were the key actions New Zealand respondents said their organisations are planning to undertake in 2016. When it came to the top five Goals, respondents said their organisations are planning to report on progress and assess impact and performance, indicating New Zealand companies understand where they can have the greatest impact, and plan to take practical and concrete action to address those impacts....

“Value of reporting frameworks: New Zealand’s ranking of sustainability frameworks differed quite significantly from Australia’s. GRI and Integrated Reporting were the most widely used frameworks in New Zealand. Respondents found The AA1000 Accountability Standard, although not widely used, was recognised as very useful by the few that use it. The UN Global Compact on the other hand, was not as widely used in New Zealand as it is in Australia.

“CSR Management Capabilities: New Zealand organisations scored 73% in overall CSR management capabilities. This is only slightly below the average score achieved by Australian companies (75%). Similar to Australia, New Zealand achieved the highest scores for stakeholder engagement, and lowest for social accountability.

More: <http://accsr.com.au/csr-services/latest-research/> 24 pages. There is a feature article on Z Energy which with BNZ and Toyota NZ were the top three NZ reporters. Log in required.

Source: ACCSR, 27th July 2016. ❖

The Littlest Big Problem You’ve Never Heard Of

“Plastic pollution has become one of the biggest and most well known threats to aquatic ecosystems, with media stories trumpeting the ‘Texas-sized garbage patch’ in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

“But while we tend to think of plastic bags, bottles, packaging and other large Stuff as the source of the problem, scientists are increasingly concerned with the tiny plastics that enter our waters every day, which have a much higher likelihood of being eaten by animals at the bottom of the food chain and working their way up to us.....

“Today, I need your help to get another mission off the ground, solving a pollution problem you’ve probably never even heard of: plastic microfibres.

“As with microbeads, it was scientists who first sounded the alarm about microfiber pollution. Five years ago, European researcher Mark Browne released a groundbreaking study that found widespread microplastic pollution on shorelines and coastal waters around the world, particularly near densely populated areas. The source of this pollution was synthetic clothing fibers, less than 1 millimeter in size, that are discharged from clothes washers, through water treatment and into the environment.

“And just last month, outdoor clothing company Patagonia released a study it commissioned found a single fleece jacket could release as many as 250,000 plastic fibers per wash! ...

“Given the scale of the plastic pollution problem, it would be easy to dismiss microfiber pollution as a small, unintended consequence. Surely there are more important sources of plastic pollution, right?

“But the threat from synthetic fibers is greatly amplified by the fact these small plastics attract the toxins in the water around them, accumulating harmful chemicals that are then passed into small organisms eaten by small fish. Bigger fish, of course, eat the smaller fish -- and that’s a big problem, not just for marine life, but for us; think sushi.

“The great news is scientists and others have already begun the work of figuring out how to solve this problem, with ideas ranging from reformulating the materials used to manufacture garments to using filters in washing machines to capture the fibers. Surely if we can figure out a way to make a fleece out of recycled plastic bottles we can figure out a way to keep the plastic in those garments from reaching our waters.

“That’s where this Community comes in. ...

More:

www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jun/20/microfibers-plastic-pollution-oceans-patagonia-synthetic-clothes-microbeads As at 16th August 8,903 shares and 222 comments. There’s a cut down version at https://action.storyofstuff.org/donate/microfibers_film

Source: StoryOfStuff, 25th July 2016. ❖

A Transparency Report

TradeMe has released their extensive transparency report regarding requests from government agencies and TradeMe members for privacy related information. It also outlines how TradeMe itself uses member information. The resources put into the activity are extensive as is the report. Well worth a read. For one high profile requester the number of requests is surprisingly few – you guess which it is!

More: www.trademe.co.nz/trust-safety/transparency-report-2016-by-trade-me/

Source: TradeMe, 5th August 2016. ❖

Contributions and feedback are welcomed.

Send your news items, handy hints, case studies, suggestions, comments and questions to Ray Skinner of *Sustainability Matters*.

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