

Sustainability Matters

15th Sept. 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.**

National Strategy for Environmental Education for Sustainability Government Seeking Views

".....The Government has also released a draft National Strategy for Environmental Education for Sustainability for public feedback.

"The Strategy is a framework that will engage and connect people to their environment and to their community. It encourages collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders to support projects and initiatives to advance social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability in New Zealand',

"That is why we are collaborating with businesses, councils, NGOs, community groups and schools to develop a strategy that is consistent with modern ways of learning and communicating.

"This strategy is about better connecting a range of programmes which support communities being more involved with the environment.

"I am very pleased with this draft and believe it provides a next step to the Environmental Education for Sustainability. I look forward to hearing public feedback', Ms Wagner says.

Closing date: Monday 10th October 2016.

More: www.beehive.govt.nz/release/double-boost-environmental-education plus www.doc.govt.nz/eefs and www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2016/national-strategy-for-environmental-education-for-sustainability/draft-strategy-for-2016-2026/

Source: *Carbon News*, 31st August 2016

Editor: It seems important industry groups, professional organisations, NGO's and others participate. ❖

Ever Thought of Working for UNPRI?

[UN Principles for Responsible Investment]

Roles, often London-based are advertised at their web site.

Recent examples include;

- Research Officer
- Reporting and Assessment Manager
- Senior Consultant Role: ESG Credit Ratings
- Manager: Fixed Income

More: www.unpri.org/about/vacancies

Source: Lynn Christie, CSEAR, 30th August 2016. ❖

Beating Weeds Saves Our Biodiversity

More: <http://pureadvantage.org/news/2016/08/18/beating-weeds-saves-biodiversity/>

Source: Pure Advantage, 23rd August 2016. ❖

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

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



Announcements in 'due course'. ❖

Accounting Body CEO's Call for Low Carbon Future

"The global accountancy profession urged world leaders to demonstrate determination and political will in order to achieve a low carbon sustainable future.

"In an open letter to world leaders ahead of the COP 21 Climate Change meeting, chief executives of the accounting bodies representing one million accountants world-wide, urged governments to;

- Commit to an agreement in Paris that provides a clear signal that governments will act to achieve a low carbon, sustainable future
- Put in place a framework that sets out necessary government actions, reduces uncertainty and enables investors, businesses and others to make informed decisions that are consistent with this aim.

"The 12 accountancy bodies, all members of the A4S Accounting Bodies Network commit to a set of principles that support action by the accounting community to address climate change. In particular , though these principles they commit to;

- Equip accountants with the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to support their organisation's response to climate change by incorporating into training and professional education, driving thought leadership, and working with others to accelerate learning and progress
- Influence and inform our membership to understand the implications of climate change, and how approaches such as the adoption of integrated reporting can support an effective response.

More: www.accountingforsustainability.org/accounting-bodies-network/abn-open-letter including 12 signatories

Source: *Acuity*, September 2016 page 29 and Leanne Holdsworth 4th Sept 2016.

Smart Water Networks Not a Pipe Dream

Benefits of installing and using smart water meters outlined from early adopters; outlook looks promising.

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2016/09/07/smart-water-networks-not-a-pipe-dream/

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 8th September 2016. ❖

Bougainville – Owners Walk Away

"Rio Tinto, the largest shareholder in Bougainville Copper has just announced it will give away its shares in Bougainville Copper and walk away from any responsibility for the environmental and social damage it caused. This has provoked

mainstream media coverage of this appalling example of lack of corporate responsibility by Rio Tinto.

More: www.canberratimes.com.au/world/billiondollar-mess-a-major-disaster-the-people-do-not-deserve-to-have-20160817-gquzli.html

Source: ACCR, 1st September 2016

Editor: See cartoon. ❖

Finalists Announced for 2016 NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards

"Judges for the 2016 NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards have announced the line-up of finalists [1st September].

"CEO of the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) Rachel Brown says these organisations and individuals are leading the transformation to a more sustainable New Zealand. These Awards are unique. They recognise outstanding achievement in making New Zealand a more sustainable nation.

"Together we can restore New Zealand's landscapes, oceans and waterways and we can tackle this nation's social issues. Those leading on this are pioneering new forms of business success. In my book they all deserve to be New Zealander of the year. It can feel like swimming uphill a lot of the time, so recognising those doing the right thing is vital.

"The Awards are our way of celebrating together. They are one of the ways we recharge ourselves for the challenges to come.

"I hope New Zealanders give these people and their organisations the support they deserve. Because every time we buy something or support a cause we make a choice about the kind of country we want to live in."

"The Award winners will be announced at a black tie ceremony on 17th November at Shed 10 on Auckland's waterfront.

[Extensive list of finalists – multiple categories.]

More: www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU1609/S00038/finalists-for-2016-nzi-sustainable-business-network-awards.htm

Source: Fiona Stephenson, SBN, 1st September 2016. ❖

Banks Pump Billions into Deforestation-linked Firms in Southeast Asia: Study

"Banks have financed companies responsible for rainforest destruction in Southeast Asia to the tune of billions of dollars, a study showed Tuesday [6th Sept], and called on lenders to stop 'fuelling forest crime'.

"Southeast Asia is home to some of the world's most diverse rainforests, but they have come under threat in recent years due to large-scale expansion in industries such as palm oil, pulp and paper, rubber and timber.

"The new study found at least \$38 billion worth of commercial loans and underwriting facilities were provided to 50 companies in these sectors between 2010 and 2015, for their production or processing operations.

"The figures were derived from a new research tool aimed at examining how firms linked to deforestation are financed. It was developed by the California-based Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Indonesia-based community group Tuk Indonesia and Dutch consultancy Profundo.

More: <http://news.trust.org/item/20160906043216-21z3e/>

Source: eco-business.com, 7th Sept. 2016. ❖

River Conference Planning Underway

"A major international conference on river science is to be held in Hamilton next year with planning now well underway.

"The 5th Biennial Symposium of the International Society for River Science (ISRS) has previously been held at locations all around the world (Europe, China and USA) and this will be the first for the conference in the southern hemisphere. The conference is being hosted by the University of Waikato in collaboration with the Waikato River Authority and Waikato-Tainui and will be held 19th - 24th November 2017.

"The conference theme is 'Integrating Multiple Values' and will provide a forum for sharing knowledge underpinning management of rivers for multiple goals.

More: www.isrs2017.com

Source: Waikato River Authority Newsletter, 12th Sept. ❖

Supporting Credibility and Trust in Emerging Forms of External Reporting: Ten Key Challenges for Assurance Engagements

"The International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB)'s Integrated Reporting Working Group, dedicated to exploring emerging forms of external reporting (referred to as EER), has released a Discussion Paper, *Supporting Credibility and Trust in Emerging Forms of External Reporting: Ten Key Challenges for Assurance Engagements*.

"The IAASB needs to be at the forefront of the debates on external reporting and how professional accountants and other practitioners can contribute to enhancing credibility and trust", said IAASB Chairman Prof. Arnold Schilder. "We hope this paper furthers the debate and helps us gain a deeper understanding of how the IAASB, as the global assurance standard setter, can contribute to the quality of different engagements, in the public interest, and where others can or need to play a role."

"The Working Group is seeking input from investors, preparers, those in governance roles, standard setters, practitioners, internal auditors, regulators, academics, and other stakeholders in the external reporting supply chain. The input will assist the IAASB in effectively responding to these developments in the public interest, including whether new or revised international standards or guidance may be necessary. ...

"Comments to the Discussion Paper are requested by 15th December 2016.

More: www.ifac.org/news-events/2016-08/iaasb-releases-working-group-paper-supporting-credibility-and-trust-emerging 44 pages 502kb.

Source: Nicola Hankinson, CA ANZ, 1st September 2016. ❖

Responsible Business Forum on Sustainable Development Goals

"The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created to transform the world, but for these global goals to work, everyone needs to know about them and support their governments to achieve them. With the launch of the SDGs and Paris climate agreement still fresh in mind, we now have an unprecedented opportunity to bring together countries, businesses and people around the world to embark on a new path towards a more sustainable and better planet for us all.

"The 5th Responsible Business Forum (RBF) on Sustainable Development , will examine each of the 17 SDGs in depth with case studies and perspectives from businesses, governments, UN agencies, investors and international experts. Building on the 2015 introduction to the SDGs, this year's forum will help companies better understand the SDGs and the opportunities in supporting governments to achieve them. ...

"With 34 SDG workshops to choose from, delegates can design their own RBF 2016 agenda around the goals most relevant to their organisations and participate in discussions around action, innovation and collaboration.

When/Where: Singapore, 22- 24 November 2016

More: www.responsiblebusiness.com/events/responsible-business-forum-on-sustainable-development-2016/ plus <https://fidef.wordpress.com/2016/09/03/responsible-business-forum-on-sustainable-development-2016/> → 40 confirmed speakers; workshops by regional Government representatives from Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, New Zealand, China, South Korea, Fiji, Australia and Cambodia.

Source: Tony Gourlay, CEO, Global Initiatives, 1st Sept. ❖

<IR> Reporting as a Strategic Initiative

"Organisations often spend a disproportionate amount of time focused on writing and publishing an integrated report rather than on the more difficult considerations that will make the report a reflection of the way a company ethically and responsibly delivers superior financial performance.

"But the benefits of integrated reporting are derived from strong governance processes, a culture that shares a common understanding about the role of the corporation in society and the ability to focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues that have the greatest ability to create shareholder value and drive major innovations. Consider the following:

- A letter from BlackRock CEO Laurence Fink to the CEOs of S&P 500 companies stated, 'Generating sustainable returns over time requires a sharper focus not only on governance, but also on environmental and social factors facing companies today. Over the long-term, environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues – ranging from climate change to diversity to board effectiveness – have real and quantifiable financial impacts.'
- The CalPERS Board of Administration revised its Global Governance Principles (PDF) to call on boards to 'provide an integrated report that puts historical performance into context, and portrays the risks, opportunities and prospects for the company in the future, help shareowners understand a company's strategic objectives and its progress towards meeting them.'
- During research for a Harvard Business Review (HBS) case (PDF) on integrated reporting at Novo Nordisk, an investment firm partner explained that from a stock-price perspective, Novo Nordisk did not receive a premium because it won corporate reporting awards. People won't pay half a point more of P/E multiple for that; it's a company's approach to integrated reporting that drives better earnings and market performance.'

"These points focus on integrated thinking – the development of a business model, strategy and decision-making that integrates concerns for society and the environment into the pursuit of profitability and growth.

"Should boards consider the concerns of the broad stakeholder community?

"Building a foundation for integrated thinking

- Governance
- The Corporation and Society
- Materiality and Innovation

"Next Steps: Adoption of integrated reporting is a daunting task. It is built on a foundation of governance and a culture that understands how to create the business models and strategies needed to drive long-term viability. The challenge for companies is where to begin.

"One approach is to 'just do it'. For some organisations, 'do it' might mean an initiative to publish an integrated report at the end of the next reporting cycle. For others, 'do it' could mean a prototype report focused on critical concepts such as governance, stakeholder engagement, materiality, strategy, risks and opportunities. A prototype can be published on an internal website to illustrate concepts and vet the content with executives and the board.

"Whichever approach best fits your company, you are encouraged to take the necessary steps to evolve your reporting to effectively respond to increasing investor and societal expectations.

More: www.greenbiz.com/article/integrated-reporting-strategic-initiative

Source: *SnippETS*, 25th August 2016. ❖

Dow Jones Sustainability Indices Additions, Cuts Announced

"The results of the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) review were announced today with a few major additions – and deletions – to the annual sustainability benchmark.

"After being cut in 2015, Cisco Systems is back and one of the three largest additions to the DJSI World this year. The other two are Shell and Adobe.

"Meanwhile, the three largest deletions are Intel, Samsung Electronics and British American Tobacco.

"Unilever, Nestle, LG Electronics and Hewlett Packard Enterprise Co are among the top scoring companies in each of the 24 industry groups. Additionally, BMW has replaced Volkswagen as the top sustainability-driven automaker. Volkswagen was suspended from the London Stock Exchange's FTSE4Good Index Series following last year's emissions scandal.

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2016/09/08/dow-jones-sustainability-indices-additions-and-cuts-announced plus www.robecosam.com/en/sustainability-insights/about-sustainability/corporate-sustainability-assessment/review.jsp

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 9th September 2016. ❖

New Integrated Human Governance Report

"Our new, integrated Human Governance Report (HGR) on AT&T is the first of its kind. It has been produced as part of MI's ground-breaking research collaboration with Harvard Law School's Pension and Capital Stewardship Project into the S&P500 and other global stock indices.

"The report advises that AT&T have significant market value opportunities (20%+ over 5 years) if the company were able to develop more effective human governance. It also breaks new ground by utilising traditional financial analysis to complement the perspective of viewing the company through the lens of human governance.

More: www.omservices.org/?p=1085 4 pages, 548kb

Source: Nick Shepherd, Ontario, Canada, 6th September 2016.

Editor: This article ties in with the article above. ❖

New Zealand Green Building Council Announces New Chief Executive

"The New Zealand Green Building Council (NZGBC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Andrew Eagles to the position of Chief Executive.

"Effective 29th September, Eagles will step into the role currently held by Alex Cutler, who has led the organisation since May 2010. Ms Cutler's final day with the NZGBC will be 30th September.

"Andrew has a breadth of technical skills relevant to the property, building and construction industries, and has been directly working in the field of sustainability for more than 13 years. His enthusiastic leadership and strategic experience will be an invaluable asset to our organisation.'

"Taranaki-born Eagles is currently working in London as CEO of the Brick Development Association, and prior to that was the Managing Director of Sustainable Homes for nine years. He has an honours degree in public policy from Victoria University of Wellington.

"At Sustainable Homes, Andrew led a business focused on providing sustainability solutions for the built environment, with core services in consultancy and professional training....

"NZGBC is celebrating its 10th anniversary later in the year.

More: www.nzgbc.org.nz/Story?Action=View&Story_id=152

Source: *Carbon News*, 9th August 2016. ❖

The Hysteresis Effect and what It Means to Politics

"Phil Goff wants to pay Auckland Council employees at least the living wage. Is that moral or practical? Is it attacking capitalism or saving it?"

"Apple shuffles money around to evade tax, the European Union reminded us last week, demanding it pay the Irish government around \$NZ20 billion. Is Apple stoking capitalism or sinking it?"

"The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development implies Apple is damaging capitalism. The OECD has been developing a mechanism for states to collectively cut down transnational companies' routine Apple-type profit-shifting and tax underpayment.

"What is legal is not necessarily moral, as John Key acknowledged in comments on the Apple affair.

"Legality alone is not enough to hold societies and polities together. So governments are likely to find themselves under increasing voter pressure to do something about global firms that play rough. Key got a warning flick after his initial bland response to the Panama papers trust exposures.

"At stake is the liberal capitalist democratic system that made Europe, North America and Australasia – and, in their own ways, Japan and more recently some other Asian nations – prosperous and stable.

"The puzzle is that those with directly the most to lose seldom deplore the wayward.

"As inequality has embedded in this country, now infecting a third generation, the full effect has been hardening.

"The social logic of that is hardening class division. ...

More: www.colinjames.co.nz/2016/09/06/the-hysteresis-effect-and-what-it-means-to-politics/

Source: Stig Ehnbohm, 6th September 2016. ❖

Total Plastic Ban in Karnataka

"The State Government on 11th March [2016] issued an official gazette notification stating a complete and total ban on plastic and all plastic and thermacol products in the State.

"The notification makes specific mention that plastic, no matter its thickness, will be banned across the State.

"The notification cites: 'No shopkeeper, vendor, wholesale dealer, retailer, trader, hawker or salesman shall use plastic carry bags, plastic banners, plastic buntings, flex, plastic flags, plastic plates, plastic cups, plastic spoons, cling films and plastic sheets for spreading on dining table irrespective of thickness including the above items made of thermacol and plastic which use plastic micro beads.'

"The notification also bars manufacturers from producing the aforementioned plastic products, store or supplying or transporting the same.

"However, exemption has been given to plastic carry bags manufactured exclusively for export purpose against any export orders located in a special economic zone and export oriented units. The State has also exempted plastic used for milk and milk products, apart from those which constitute an 'integral part of packaging in which goods are sealed prior to use at manufacturing/processing units'.

"The exemption is also extended to use of plastic in horticulture and nurseries against the government order from govt departments

More: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/Total-plastic-ban-in-Karnataka/articleshow/51397198.cms>

Source: Ranveer Singh Mahwar, LinkedIn, Environmental Consulting Professionals, 9th September 2016

Editor: Karnaka is a large state in SW India. ❖

Exploring How and Why Trees 'Talk' to Each Other

"Two decades ago, while researching her doctoral thesis, ecologist Suzanne Simard discovered trees communicate their needs and send each other nutrients via a network of latticed fungi buried in the soil – in other words, she found, they 'talk' to each other. Since then, Simard, now at the University of British Columbia, has pioneered further research into how trees converse, including how these fungal filigrees help trees send warning signals about environmental change, search for kin, and transfer their nutrients to neighboring plants before they die.

"By using phrases like 'forest wisdom' and 'mother trees' when she speaks about this elaborate system, which she compares to neural networks in human brains,

"Simard's work has helped change how scientists define interactions between plants. 'A forest is a cooperative system', she said in an interview with *Yale Environment 360*. 'To me, using the language of 'communication' made more sense because we were looking at not just resource transfers, but things like defense signaling and kin recognition signaling. We as human beings can relate to this better. If we can relate to it, then we're going to care about it more. If we care about it more, then we're going to do a better job of stewarding our landscapes.'

"Simard is now focused on understanding how these vital communication networks could be disrupted by environmental threats, such as climate change, pine beetle infestations, and logging. 'These networks will go on', she said. 'Whether they're beneficial to native plant species, or exotics, or invader weeds and so on, that remains to be seen.'

More:

<http://e360.yale.edu/feature/exploring-how-and-why-trees-talk-to-each-other/3029/>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 2nd September 2016. ❖

Global Initiatives and UNDP Launch the Responsible Business SDG Centre

"Global Initiatives is proud to announce the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Centre, developed in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

"The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted nearly a year ago in September 2015, were created to transform the world, but for these global goals to work, everyone needs to know about them and support their governments to achieve them.

"The Responsible Business SDG Centre provides a platform for all stakeholders to learn about these global goals, share best practices and follow progress being made towards achieving the SDGs.

"Each SDG will have a dedicated area, packed full of the latest news, business case studies, interviews, videos and information for decision-making. The SDG Centre will be updated daily with reports from all stakeholders engaged in the 2030 agenda, a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

"Let's work together to end poverty, protect and restore our planet, and ensure equality and prosperity for all.

For feedback, ideas for contributing content, share resources contact via website.

More: <http://sdg.responsiblebusiness.com/>

Source: Tony Gourlay, CEO, Global Initiatives, 11th Aug 2016

Editor: Home page features a photo of Auckland. A good choice for 'affordable quality housing'? ❖

Sick Oceans, Disease for Humans, Animals that's Global Warming

"A major new [September 2016] scientific report warns that oceans are sicker than ever, disease is spreading among humans and animals, coupled with threats to food security across the planet as a result of global warming.

"The French newsagency AFP reports that 80 scientists from 12 countries compiled the findings, based on peer-reviewed research. ...

"We all know that the oceans sustain this planet. We all know that the oceans provide every second breath we take', IUCN director general Inger Andersen said at the meeting, which has drawn 9,000 leaders and environmentalists to Honolulu.

"And yet we are making the oceans sick.'

"The report, *Explaining Ocean Warming*, is the 'most comprehensive, most systematic study we have ever undertaken on the consequence of this warming on the ocean',

"The study included every major marine ecosystem, containing everything from microbes to whales, including the deep ocean.

"It documents evidence of jellyfish, seabirds and plankton shifting toward the cooler poles by up to 10 degrees latitude.

"Dr Laffoley said the movement in the marine environment was '1.5 to 5 times as fast as anything we are seeing on the ground.'

"The higher temperatures will probably change the sex ratio of turtles in the future, because females are more likely to be born in warmer temperatures.

"The study includes evidence ocean warming 'is causing increased disease in plant and animal populations', it said.

"Pathogens such as cholera-bearing bacteria and toxic algal blooms that can cause neurological illnesses such as ciguatera poisoning spread more easily in warm water, with direct impact on human health.

More: <http://econews.com.au/51720/sick-oceans-disease-for-humans-animals-thats-global-warming/> plus www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objid=11704421 and https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2016-046_0.pdf 460pages, 19.76Mb

Source: *eco-News*, and *NZ Herald*, 7th September

Editor: Recommended reading of at least the first 20 pages, plus the conclusions and recommendations. ❖

167 Tiny Maps Tell Major Change Story

"Climate change just got another telling visual courtesy of the famed temperature spiral creator. But rather than a graph, it's a series of 167 maps.

"Alone, they each tell the story of whether a year was mostly hot or mostly cold or mostly average. Together, they show unequivocally how much our planet has warmed since the 1850s, including the rapid rise over the past three decades.

"Ed Hawkins, a climate scientist at the University of Reading, is responsible for the latest visual. You may remember him from the temperature spiral that went viral earlier this year. Turns out he's still turning out compelling graphics to show the impact humans are having on the place we call home.

"Using a technique called 'small multiples' developed by data visualisation expert Edward Tufte, Hawkins mapped out the annual average temperature anomaly for every year from 1850 through 2016 using data from the UK Met Office.

"The technique allows viewers to consume a lot of information and then start searching for patterns in the data. It makes a lot of sense to use when it comes to climate change, which has driven up surface temperatures across the world but in a non-uniform way.

More: www.climatecentral.org/news/tiny-maps-climate-change-20652

Source: *Carbon News*, 1st Sept 2016. ❖

Named and Shamed: The Top Funds Blocking Climate Action

"Environmental issues like climate change 'have real and quantifiable financial impacts', Blackrock CEO Larry Fink said in a letter to business chiefs in May.

"Fink praised shareholder activists, saying they often had better strategies for dealing with long-term risk than company boards.

"Why then did the world's biggest fund of its kind, with US\$4.7 billion of assets under management, side with ExxonMobil at its AGM against a proposal to do just that?

"It is real hypocrisy', said Julian Poulter, CEO at non-profit the Asset Owners Disclosure Project. 'There is no other word for it.'

"AODP on Tuesday named and shamed the biggest Exxon investors blocking action to manage climate risk, including Vanguard, Bank of New York Mellon and JP Morgan.

"Of the funds that endorsed the status quo, 45% were signatories to the Principles of Responsible Investment and 25% to the Carbon Disclosure Project.

"They were trying to show clients they were serious about sustainability', said Poulter, but undermining it with their voting behaviour. 'You can't have your cake and eat it.'

More: www.climatechangenews.com/2016/09/06/named-and-shamed-the-top-funds-blocking-climate-action/

Source: *Carbon News*, 7th September 2016. ❖

The Rodale Institute's 30-Year Farming Systems Trial Report [October 13, 2011.]

"The Rodale Institute has been, for a full 30 years now, conducting a long-term comparative Farming Systems Trial. Starting in 1981, when it was already abundantly clear that industrialising nature was creating far more problems than it solved, the Rodale Institute began documented research comparing organically fertilised fields and conventionally fertilised fields on its 330 acre farm in Pennsylvania, USA.

"It's the longest running comparative study of its kind in the world. In time for their trial's 30-year anniversary, the institute has put out a report outlining its documented observations. [Link]

"This report is one of several well-researched reports that have come out in recent years, including the Union of Concerned Scientists' Failure to Yield report (which proves GMOs do not perform as claimed) and the IAASTD's 400-scientist-strong, 3-year worldwide study (which concluded we need to quickly transition back to localised, diverse, agroecological methods). ...

"Facts from the 30-year study;

- Organic yields match conventional yields.
- Organic outperforms conventional in years of drought.
- Organic farming systems build rather than deplete soil organic matter, making it a more sustainable system.
- Organic farming uses 45% less energy and is more efficient.
- Conventional systems produce 40% more greenhouse gases.
- Organic farming systems are more profitable than conventional.

" The Rodale Institute's 30-year report begs the question – will we spend another thirty years comparing sustainable farming methods with industrial farming methods, or will we do what needs to be done, and get rid of the latter entirely?

More: <http://permaculturenews.org/2011/10/13/the-rodale-institutes-30-year-farming-systems-trial-report/>

Source: Mike Finlayson, Facebook post, 4th Sept. 2016. ❖

California Passes Toughest US Greenhouse Gas Laws

"California is poised to make the nation's strictest carbon emission controls even tougher, with a bill to cut greenhouse-gas discharges to 40% less than 1990 levels by 2030 now headed to Governor Jerry Brown.

"The state Senate gave final approval 25 to 13 [Wednesday 24th August], following an earlier 42 to 29 vote in the Assembly.

"Bloomberg newsagency reports Governor Brown, a Democrat in his fourth term leading the most-populous state, said he intends to sign the measure.

"It is paired with a separate bill tightening legislative oversight of the California Air Resources Board.....

More: <http://econews.com.au/51629/california-passes-toughest-us-greenhouse-gas-laws/> plus www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-24/california-passes-toughest-greenhouse-gas-emission-curbs

Source: *eco-News*, 29th August 2016.

Editor: Leaves us wondering why NZ is so timid. ❖

A Preference for Permaculture

"For more than ten years Andrew Martin worked alongside some of Australia's leading stock brokers and investors.

"Today you might find him scattering vegetable seeds, picking buckets of tamarillos or digging a pond on his two hectare property near Katikati in the western Bay of Plenty.

"Andrew's given up the high life and now tries to live as self-sufficiently as possible.

"Being involved with guys working in the financial markets it was pretty interesting...they were driving luxury Porsches and Ferraris ..and living in expensive homes...and it can be a trap this materialistic lifestyle and I found myself getting drawn into it to some degree just by osmosis.

"It feels a bit soulless sometimes, making lots of money. You're on a treadmill and you think 'why am I doing this?'"

"So Andrew packed up, left Australia and came to New Zealand where he has spent the last couple of years researching oil demand around the world and whether it's sustainable.

"I came to the conclusion we are living in an unsustainable model of existence at the moment I just thought there has to be a better way."

"Andrew has chosen permaculture as his method of farming and grows most of the food he eats.

"The chooks lay eggs, they also fertilise the place. We use the chook poo to put in the garden so we don't have those inputs (fertiliser) coming into the system. That's what permaculture is about - using the resources we have on site to put back into the system."

"Andrew has a bountiful garden with many dozen fruit and nut trees, a prolific vegetable garden and a small flock of obliging chooks.

"Andrew says some of his stock broker friends think he's crazy.

"They think 'what the hell are you doing' but then the other half of the people that I know in the finance industry say 'I wish I could do that as well'."

More: Listen duration 14':53"
www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/countrylife/audio/201814651/a-preference-for-permaculture

Source: Andrew Martin, 6th September 2016. ❖

Soil & Health and BioGro Merge: New Era

"A growing sector. A recent merger between two of New Zealand's largest organic organisations. Plans for a national legal standard for organic certification within two years. Is the organic sector ready for lift off?

"It is estimated that \$217 million worth of organic produce was bought and sold in New Zealand last year. Organics earned a further \$250 million in exports. The global organic market is set to hit NZ\$100 billion this year.

"The BioGro Society recently re-evaluated its mandate to educate and advocate for the promotion of organic production. It became clear that this part of its work was duplicating effort with Soil & Health.

"So after negotiations and paperwork the BioGro Society will cease to exist at the end of this month [September]. It will pass BioGro NZ Ltd into the ownership of the Soil & Health Association. BioGro's continued commercial expansion can then directly support the Association's work. ...

"There remain quite a few different organisations representing and advocating for organic producers, retailers and wholesalers in New Zealand. ...

"New Zealand's organic sector punches well above its weight.

"New Zealand's organic sector is worth around half a billion dollars in a market of around 4.4 million people. This compares to a \$1.2 billion sector in Australia, a market with five times the population.'

"The NZ organic sector on a per capita basis is considerably larger than Australia's, and many European countries, including the UK and France. While there has been a decline in land under organic production in some types of farming, organic production in other areas has increased significantly, for example wine is up by 128%."

"NZ is one of the last countries in the OECD that doesn't have legal or regulatory protection for the phrase 'certified organic.' This makes it hard for consumers to know and trust what is organically certified. It makes it more complex to make large scale international import and export deals.

"The sector is now working with the Ministry of Primary Industries to work up the regulations needed. ...

More: <http://sustainable.org.nz/sustainability-news/organics-a-new-organic-era-for-new-zealand>

Source: SBN, 7th September 2016. ❖

Revolutionising Reporting: Why Care?

At a public sector symposium in Canberra on 12th August, Ian McIntosh, Vice-chairman of the International Accounting Standards Board and three others are interviewed and discuss *Revolutionising Reporting: Why Care?* 1:12:06. Published 31st August, 2016

More: www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4aw8GOHThs

Source: CA ANZ, LinkedIn, about 2nd September 2016. ❖

Fossil Fuel Investments Out at Otago Uni

Policy change to also exclude direct investment in the production or distribution of alcohol, tobacco or munitions.

More: www.odt.co.nz/news/campus/university-of-otago/otago-university-goes-fossil-free plus www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1609/S00064/otago-vestment-decision-leaves-auckland-falling-behind.htm

Source: 350.org.nz, 13th September 2016. ❖

Contributions and feedback are welcomed.

Send your news items, handy hints, case studies, suggestions, comments and questions to Ray Skinner of *Sustainability Matters*.
eMail: ray@sustainabilitymatters.co.nz Phone: +64 (09) 443 0773 Web: www.sustainabilitymatters.co.nz