

Sustainability Matters

19th January 2017

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.**

Celebrating the Biggest Conservation Wins of 2016

"In the waning days of 2016, it's important to pause for a moment to celebrate all we've accomplished for wildlife, people, and the planet in the past 12 months.

"Together, we pushed for new regulations to help shut down the illegal elephant ivory trade within our borders and to stop wildlife crime overseas. We saw global wild tiger numbers rise for the first time in 100 years, and we put a stop to oil and gas drilling exploration near Belize's barrier reef.

"And while there's still work to be done, this past year has shown us that when we work together, we can challenge the threats to nature and help ensure its ability to provide – for the sake of every living thing.

"Take a look at our year in review:

More: www.worldwildlife.org/stories/celebrating-the-biggest-conservation-wins-of-2016

Source: *ECO Tieke*, 21st December 2016. ❖

99 Reasons Why 2016 was a Good Year

"Our media feeds are echo chambers. And those echo chambers don't just reflect our political beliefs; they reflect our feelings about human progress. Bad news can be a bubble too.

"I spent the year tracking news stories you probably didn't hear about, and sent them out once a fortnight in a newsletter. Here's the full list....

More: <https://medium.com/@angushervey/99-reasons-why-2016-has-been-a-great-year-for-humanity-8420debc2823>

Source: Malcolm Rands, *Facebook*, 20th December 2016. ❖

The Soul of an Octopus, Winner of the 2016 Orion Book Award

"Montgomery introduces us to the incredible intelligence and physical capacities of octopuses, an animal whose biology and behaviour suggest a kind of alien mind. But the real joy of this book-and of all of Montgomery's writing – is the author's ability to build emotional connections between herself, her subject, and her readers. Montgomery writes with such warmth, curiosity, and humanity that our understanding of the cold world of these beautiful animals is utterly transformed." -The Editors

More: <https://orionmagazine.org/2016/10/winner-2016-orion-book-award-soul-octopus-sy-montgomery/> plus <https://orionmagazine.org/2016/10/finalists-2016-orion-book-award/>

Source: Orion, 25th October 2016. ❖

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

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



Announcements in 'due course'. ❖

Win for Whales, Dolphins as Obama Rejects Explosive Blasting for Oil

"In a move praised by conservation groups, the Obama administration on Friday [6th January] announced it rejected the six pending permit applications to conduct airgun seismic surveys for fossil fuel exploration off the Atlantic coast.

"Without a doubt, this decision will save whales, dolphins, and other animals from suffering painful hearing loss and other damage inflicted by these terrible blasts of noise," said Miyoko Sakashita, oceans director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

"The federal government had already determined that up to 138,000 whales and dolphins could be harmed, and millions more disturbed, by proposed blasting in the area stretching from Delaware to Florida.

"We know seismic airgun blasting is dangerous," declared Oceana campaign director Claire Douglass. 'Seismic airguns create one of the loudest manmade sounds in the ocean, firing intense blasts of compressed air every 10 seconds, 24 hours a day, for weeks to months on end. The noise from these blasts is so loud that it can be heard up to 2,500 miles from the source, which is approximately the distance from Washington, D.C. to Las Vegas.'

"In addition to being extremely loud', she stated, 'these blasts are of special concern to marine life, including fish, turtles and whales, which depend on sound for communication and survival. Numerous studies demonstrate the negative impacts that seismic airgun noise has on ocean ecosystems, including reduced catch rates of commercially valuable fish and silencing bowhead whales'

"In the present circumstances and guided by an abundance of caution, we believe that the value of obtaining the geophysical and geological information from new airgun seismic surveys in the Atlantic does not outweigh the potential risks of those surveys' acoustic pulse impacts on marine life', said BOEM director Abigail Ross Hopper.

More: www.commondreams.org/news/2017/01/06/win-whales-dolphins-obama-rejects-explosive-blasting-oil

Source: Greenpeace, Facebook post 10th January 2017.

Editor: This is the same technology New Zealand's government has endorsed and is currently in user in NZ waters. ❖

Sustainable Schools Advisor

"Auckland Council is looking for a Sustainable Schools Advisor to join our passionate team of educators. This exciting

opportunity is to work closely with our South Auckland schools and their communities, and help us support and build new and innovative sustainability initiatives through student-led action. We are interested in experienced teachers and facilitators who have proven leadership skills and expertise in implementing

More: www.linkedin.com/comm/jobs/view/248262248

Source: LinkedIn, 17th January 2017. ❖

630+ Businesses to Trump: Support the Low Carbon Economy Businesses Back Low-Carbon USA

"Dear President-elect Trump, President Obama, Members of the US Congress, and Global Leaders:

"We, the undersigned members in the business and investor community of the United States, re-affirm our deep commitment to addressing climate change through the implementation of the historic Paris Climate Agreement.

"We want the US economy to be energy efficient and powered by low-carbon energy. Cost-effective and innovative solutions can help us achieve these objectives. Failure to build a low-carbon economy puts American prosperity at risk. But the right action now will create jobs and boost US competitiveness. We pledge to do our part, in our own operations and beyond, to realise the Paris Agreement's commitment of a global economy that limits global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius.

"We call on our elected US leaders to strongly support:

- 1 Continuation of low-carbon policies to allow the US to meet or exceed our promised national commitment and to increase our nation's future ambition
- 2 Investment in the low carbon economy at home and abroad in order to give financial decision-makers clarity and boost the confidence of investors worldwide
- 3 Continued US participation in the Paris Agreement, in order to provide the long-term direction needed to keep global temperature rise below 2°C

"Implementing the Paris Agreement will enable and encourage businesses and investors to turn the billions of dollars in existing low-carbon investments into the trillions of dollars the world needs to bring clean energy and prosperity to all.

"We support leaders around the world as they seek to implement the Paris Agreement and leverage this historic opportunity to tackle climate change.

More: www.lowcarbonusa.org

Source: Ceres, 11th January 2017

Editor: Notable by their absence are the large accounting firms. Each signatory will likely have CPA's and similar among its personnel. Some have operations in New Zealand and Australia – another incentive for the peak accounting bodies and their memberships to seriously grasp what's going on. ❖

Saving Multiple Birds with One Stone

An inspiring story by Sam Judd of Sustainable Coastlines about thinking and acting strategically to achieve objectives and overcome challenges. About understanding the cohorts in your target market and 'playing on' what motivates each of those cohorts.

More: <http://pureadvantage.org/news/2016/12/01/saving-multiple-birds-with-one-stone/>

Source: Pure Advantage, 20th December 2016. ❖

Austerity Has Failed

Austerity politics have inflicted a lot of damage but achieved little. Against a background of new uncertainties the UK needs a new fiscal policy to facilitate the economic prosperity and happiness of citizens. Prem Sikka's article adds another voice to those calling for a change of direction. Firstly, economic inequality needs to be addressed.... Poverty is experienced by many in full-time employment..... Secondly, the government needs to invest in infrastructure and new industries to provide long-term economic growth... Thirdly, focused government expenditure can stimulate the economy, but the government has little idea of the value it obtains.

More: <https://leftfootforward.org/2016/11/austerity-has-failed-the-autumn-statement-should-but-wont-reflect-that/>

Source: CSEAR Newsletter, 15th December, page 10. ❖

With Rousing Call for Climate Action Obama Bids Farewell

[The following article refers to the adjacent article from Ceres.]

"Speaking in Chicago, [11th January] in a nationally televised address President Obama warned against the divisiveness that has permeated US politics and led to a disintegration of a 'common baseline of facts'.

"He warned this made finding common ground and compromise on important issues such as climate change all but impossible.

"Take the challenge of climate change', he said.

"In just eight years, we've halved our dependence on foreign oil, doubled our renewable energy, and led the world to an agreement that has the promise to save this planet.

"But without bolder action, our children won't have time to debate the existence of climate change; they'll be busy dealing with its effects: environmental disasters, economic disruptions, and waves of climate refugees seeking sanctuary.'

"Now, we can and should argue about the best approach to the problem', he continued.

"But to simply deny the problem not only betrays future generations; it betrays the essential spirit of innovation and practical problem-solving that guided our founders.'...

"Earlier this week a letter signed by more than 600 businesses and investors boasting revenues of over US\$1tr urged Mr Trump to stick with current US efforts to tackle climate change and stand by the United Nations sponsored Paris Agreement on climate change.

"With many in the US green community fearful of what the next administration will bring, not least on the issue of climate action, President Obama's words were pitched to inspire a peaceful and united response to the challenges facing the nation.

"He used his wide-ranging speech to issue a clear warning to US citizens to protect their democracy by demanding a more transparent, bipartisan approach to policymaking in Washington.

"When trust in our institutions is low, we should reduce the corrosive influence of money in our politics, and insist on the principles of transparency and ethics in public service,' he said.

"When Congress is dysfunctional, we should encourage politicians to cater to common sense and not rigid extremes.'

More: <http://econews.com.au/52971/with-rousing-call-for-climate-action-obama-bids-farewell/>

Source: *eco-News*, 13th January 2017. ❖

'Inclusive Economy Unit' Created by British Government

"Britain's new prime minister, Theresa May, has made her mark on civil society by establishing an Inclusive Economy Unit.

"The unit will sit within the Office for Civil Society, which deals with social enterprises and charities.

"Announcing the creation of the unit on Tuesday 11th October, Rob Wilson, minister for civil society, said: 'A strong civil society works best when all parts of the economy and of society are being used to their full potential.

"This unit will bring together the expertise of the public, private and civil society sectors to achieve this and help us build an economy and a Britain that works for everyone, not just the privileged few.'

More: www.pioneerspost.com/news-views/20161011/new-inclusive-economy-unit-created-british-government

Source: CSEAR Newsletter, 15th December, page 10. ❖

Study Guide and Flash Cards

The International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP) recently announced availability of their ultimate preparation tool: the *ISSP-SA Study Guide* for ISSP-SA credential exam candidates. As addition to the Study Guide, *ISSP-SA Flash Cards*, are a comprehensive resource for aspiring candidates to drill down on the Core Sustainability Concepts tested by the ISSP-SA exam.

"Candidates interested in joining the first cohort of ISSP Certified Professionals can now register for the ISSP-SA exam, which will be available through 18th February. Registration for the ISSP-CSP exam will begin during the first quarter of 2017. In order to be eligible for the ISSP-CSP exam, candidates must first pass the ISSP-SA exam.

More: www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/node/10801 plus www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/civCRM/event/info?reset=1&id=5785 and www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/civCRM/event/info?id=5769

Source: Julian Crawford, 22nd December 2016

Background: The International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP) is the world's leading professional association of sustainability professionals. We work to make sustainability standard practice through empowering professionals to advance sustainability in organisations and communities around the globe. As a professional association, ISSP improves the skills of sustainability practitioners through education, knowledge sharing, research, and professional credentials. www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/about-issp#Report

Editor: Board members include Simon Harvey of Auckland and Julian Crawford of Sydney. ❖

Orchestrating Change: Catalyzing the Next Generation of Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Sustainability

"Collaborations have played a key part in bringing us to where we are now – i.e., on the cusp of much more transformative change. But how, and to what extent, can they help achieve the full and final transformation that's needed?"

"In the wake of the Sustainable Development Goals and COP21, there is more need than ever for cross-sector collaboration to drive progress on sustainability, but there are also real questions about how far and how fast it can take us, and how much of it any given organization can effectively sustain.

"Our latest report, *Orchestrating Change*, grapples with these questions and offers a vision for a new generation of multi-stakeholder collaboration, with the aim of helping companies and other organisations better plan for and cope with the increasing demands of collaboration, and bring sustainability much more rapidly to scale.

More: <http://sustainability.com/our-work/reports/orchestrating-change/> 65 pages 4.27Mb, 1st February 2016

Source: SustainAbility, 17th December 2016

Editor: The survey looked at and lists nearly 200 examples of multi-stakeholder business-involved initiatives. ❖

San Francisco Bans Styrofoam

San Francisco supervisors adopted the most extensive Styrofoam ban in the US on 5th July 2016. It bans the sale of polystyrene foam from 1st January 2017 and includes everything from foam egg cartons and packing peanuts to ice chests and beach toys. There are fines for violations. The ban strengthens San Francisco's earlier 2007 law which prohibited serving food in polystyrene. While San Francisco was one of the first major cities to restrict foam packaging, more than 100 US cities now have either banned or limited polystyrene.

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2016/07/01/industry-attacks-san-franciscos-styrofoam-ban/

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

TEDxScottBase

Celebrating the 60th anniversary of Scott Base, Antarctica, this live event took place there on Sunday 15th January 2017 in front of a live local audience. The dialogue will emerge on Saturday 21st January.

More: www.ted.com/tedx/events/19015

Source: Editor 17th January 2017. ❖

Draft Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land

"The draft *Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land* is now available for public review, consultation and comment. This guide will update the 2003 Biosolids Guidelines and includes for a range of other organic material. The documents comprise:

- Volume 1; The Guide
- Volume 2: Technical Manual

"The timetable for consultation and comment is:

- Public meetings held in Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Queenstown late February 2017 (exact dates yet to be confirmed)
- Comments can be made and queries sent to nick.walmsley@waternz.org.nz
- Receipt of comments will close Friday 31st March 2017

"The draft documents can be downloaded from the Water New Zealand Library.

More: www.waternz.org.nz/Story?Action=View&Story_id=302

Source: Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events, 11th January 2017. ❖

A Cure for Post-Election Malaise

"Civic participation offers a way out of the 2016 doldrums.

"For anyone still in a post-election stupor, unsure what to do or how to repair our ailing democracy, here are three words of advice:

Start a club.

"I don't mean that sarcastically, as in, 'Oh, you got a beef with Trump or the rest of them in Washington? Well, join the club!' I mean it literally. Make a group. Invite people. Create rules and rituals. Establish goals. Meet regularly. In short: Start a club.

"This is the great democratic self-cure sitting right before our eyes. I was reminded of this immediately after the election, when so many people I knew were in states of shock or despondence. At Citizen University, the non-profit I run, my colleagues and I decided that doing something was better than doing nothing. We accelerated plans for a project called Civic Saturday, which we'd been intending to launch in the new year but instead launched four days after Donald Trump was elected president.

"Civic Saturday is a civic analogue to church: a gathering of friends and strangers in a common place to nurture a spirit of shared purpose. But it's not about church religion or synagogue or mosque religion. It's about American civic religion – the creed of liberty, equality, and self-government that truly unites us (even as we argue over it). We invented Civic Saturday because even before the election we felt that citizens need ritual, shared experiences to help them make sense of our changing country.

"We designed a simple structure that will feel familiar to anyone who's been to a faith gathering: song, a greeting of neighbours, quiet meditation, readings of civic scripture

More: www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/the-cure-for-post-election-malaise/509807/

Source: The Story of Stuff, 18th December 2016. ❖

This is the Most Dangerous Time for Our Planet

[Stephen Hawking](#)

"As a theoretical physicist based in Cambridge, I have lived my life in an extraordinarily privileged bubble. Cambridge is an unusual town, centred around one of the world's great universities. Within that town, the scientific community that I became part of in my 20s is even more rarefied.

"And within that scientific community, the small group of international theoretical physicists with whom I have spent my working life might sometimes be tempted to regard themselves as the pinnacle. In addition to this, with the celebrity that has come with my books, and the isolation imposed by my illness, I feel as though my ivory tower is getting taller.

"So the recent apparent rejection of the elites in both America and Britain is surely aimed at me, as much as anyone. Whatever we might think about the decision by the British electorate to reject membership of the European Union and by the American public to embrace Donald Trump as their next president, there is no doubt in the minds of commentators that this was a cry of anger by people who felt they had been abandoned by their leaders.

"It was, everyone seems to agree, the moment when the forgotten spoke, finding their voices to reject the advice and guidance of experts and the elite everywhere.

"What matters now, far more than the victories by Brexit and Trump, is how the elites react

"I am no exception to this rule. I warned before

More:

www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/01/stephen-hawking-dangerous-time-planet-inequality

Source: Joe Mather, Sustainable Business Leaders in New Zealand, 3rd December 2016.

Editor: As might be expected well worth reading and contemplating. ❖

New Law Says Pension Funds Must Assess Climate Risk

"The EU has passed a new law which says pension funds must consider environmental, social and governance factors, including climate risk, when making investment decisions.

"The IORP II Directive sets out rules for the EU's retirement funds – overseeing €3.3tn of assets.

"..... 'This new law is a turning point for European investment. It requires pension funds to consider risks related to climate change – such as stranded assets – to protect savers. It's the first time a European law has regulated this kind of risk and it is symbolic of a coming transformation in the investment world.'

"The law is good news for Europeans and has been widely welcomed by responsible investment campaigners, but ClientEarth has urged the UK to act decisively.

"She added: 'In the UK, the Pensions Regulator and the Law Commission have both previously recommended financial 'ESG' risks be taken into account by fund managers. As other EU leaders embed this new legislation into their own national law, the UK must ensure it does not get left behind. Given the uncertainty as to the future of EU directives in the UK, it is vital that clarity is achieved in domestic law.'

More: www.clientearth.org/new-law-says-pension-funds-must-assess-climate-risk/

Source: Tieke: *ECO Alerts & Events*, 7 December 2016. ❖

Cluster Development Handbook Launched

"The Cluster Development Handbook was launched last month [November] at TCI Network's Global Conference in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

"The Handbook provides a comprehensive guide to the logic and practicalities of cluster development, with guidance for experienced cluster practitioners, for those new to cluster development and for policy agencies

"For regional and national economic development agencies, for multilateral agencies, NGOs:.....

"For cluster organisations and cluster managers:.....

"For businesses, industry associations, chambers of commerce:

"For academia, tertiary institutions, vocational training, public R&D and high schools:

"The Handbook includes examples from around the world, drawing on my [Ifor Ffowcs-Williams] cluster development involvement in over fifty countries. This covers hundreds of clusters and my experience as a Founder and Past President of the TCI Network.

"In the Foreword, Dr. Christian Ketels (Harvard Business School & TCI Network's current President) highlights that the book identifies what works and what does not work.

"Specific chapters in this 2nd Edition have Invited Forewords, with contributions from sixty-four experts on six continents. The 240-page Handbook draws on an extensive range of external material. Over 300 quotations are used, identifying further information sources.

More:

https://clusternavigatorslimited.airsquare.com/websuite/email/view.cfm?ebs_email_recipient_id=852175F2-BCF9-11E6-B693A58F43E5BE4B&ebs

Source: Ifor Ffowcs-Williams, 8th December 2016. ❖

Fundamentals of Sustainability Accounting

"Today [9th December] we're proud to announce the first cohort to earn the Fundamentals of Sustainability Accounting (FSA) Credential with the public launch of the FSA Level II exam.

"Since the launch of the FSA Level I exam last year [2015], hundreds of candidates have signed up to further their career and deepen their expertise on the intersection of financial performance, sustainability, and materiality. Fast facts include:

- Over 350 candidates have registered
- From over 20 countries
- Over 80 candidates have passed Level I and Level II and earned the FSA Credential
- The majority of test takers have a CFA, CPA, MBA, or JD.
- Candidates tend to be investors, consultants, or corporate sustainability professionals

"Level I focus is on principles and practices of sustainability accounting, while Level II builds on this foundation by using case studies to teach how material sustainability information can provide an enhanced understanding of a company's performance and value.

More: http://fsa.sasb.org/?utm_campaign=Register+-+FSA+Level+II plus <http://fsa.sasb.org/infographic/>

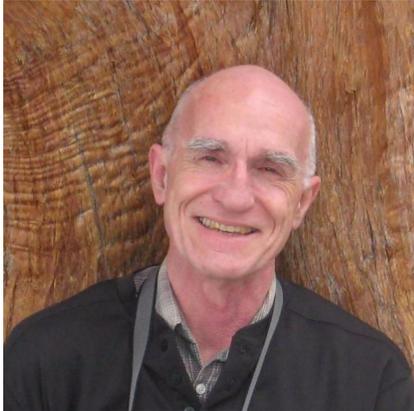
Source: SASB, 9th December 2016

Comment: Worth considering even though SASB Standards are USA centric. ❖

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

ORION



Greetings!

What shall we do now? How can we resist the rise of bigotry in our society? How can we protect the most vulnerable of our fellow humans from prejudice and violence? How can we preserve the Earth and its creatures from devastation? How can we restore kindness, and advocate for truth-telling?

If you've been asking these questions, you're in good company. Since the presidential election, everyone I've spoken with or heard from is appalled by the racism, misogyny, xenophobia, climate denialism, and crass materialism of the incoming administration. My former students, in particular, are wondering what to do.

In brief, here is what I say to them: Everything you loved and cared about before the election, you still love and care about, only now you recognize more clearly how endangered those precious places, people, creatures, and causes are. Now you realize you must defend them with all your heart and all your might.

I have been reading and writing for *Orion* for over thirty years. Since its founding, this magazine has drawn on the arts, sciences, humanities, and spiritual traditions to offer a vision of a more just, caring, conserving, and peaceful way of life. It's tempting in our present crisis to feel that everything *Orion* has stood for, and everything that we as individuals have striven for, is under assault.

The assault is real, but so is the resistance. You are not alone. Across this nation and around the world, people are rising up to protect and nurture the very things that *Orion* has championed all these years—beauty, equity, diversity, compassion, and the health of communities and planet.

In the latest issue of *Orion* you will find this challenging line from Barry Lopez: "We repeatedly lose touch with what we intend our

lives to stand for." These words bring to mind the opening of a poem by Theodore Roethke: "In a dark time, the eye begins to see."

In this difficult time, we see what matters most deeply, in our own lives and in the life of our culture. For me, one of the essentials is *Orion*. Here is a resource that helps me to understand more deeply and imagine more vividly all the other causes I care about.

Please join me in support of *Orion* by making a donation today. Your gift will help *Orion* tell stories of kindness, truth, and care. Together we can help light the way in dark times.

Yours,



Scott Russell Sanders

P.S. Your tax-deductible donation will help ensure another great year of ad-free, inspirational reading. Please give as generously as you can. Thank you.



ORION MAGAZINE | ORIONMAGAZINE.ORG | 888-909-6568

