

# Sustainability Matters

11<sup>th</sup> May 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.**

## Annual Review of the State of CSR in Australia and New Zealand 2017

"The annual *State of CSR* series is the largest ongoing study of CSR practices, trends and capabilities in this part of the world.

"This year's report explores the theme of 'Re-imagining Sustainable Value'. It builds on the ground work from the 2016 Annual Review, which examined the uptake of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Australia and New Zealand.

"This year's research presents the most up to date insights on how companies are addressing the SDGs, CSR priorities for the year ahead, trends in sustainability reporting and much more. Some key insights include:

- More than half of respondents think sustainability reporting should be mandatory.
- 35% of respondents say sustainability reporting has improved investor engagement.
- Strengthening stakeholder relationships remains the number one priority in Australia.
- Managing the impacts of regulation is the top priority in New Zealand. ...

"One thousand two hundred and fifteen professionals completed the online survey....., the largest number of respondents to date split 69% Australia and 29% New Zealand. ... [Page 2].

**More:** <http://accsr.com.au/what-we-do/latest-research/> 24 pages, 4.799Mb. Registration required.

**Source:** ACCSR, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## Company Reports: The Surprising Reason Why Firms Must Account for the Six Capitals: PART 1

"We've just had that season again – no, I [Clare Feeney] don't mean for giving presents, but for presenting company reports. Eye-glazing for most of us, but vitally important for the integrity of business and the employment and other benefits it creates.

"But a big shake-up is now well under way.

"In 2010 Mervyn King announced to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange that listed companies had two years notice of the requirement to prepare integrated reports: gone were the days when a company could present financial reports that excluded its social and ecological externalities.

"New Zealand has discussed the virtues of triple bottom line, ESG (ecological, social and governance) and sustainability reporting since at least the early 2000s. Several early adopters have been preparing award-winning sustainability, corporate responsibility and integrated reports for several years, including ....

"These and other organisations have realised a suite of financial, reputational and competitive benefits from integrated, responsibility or sustainability reporting, and have been independently recognised for it. But when I looked through the New Zealand stock exchange listings for other likely contenders for sustainability or integrated reports, there were also some absences. Why? .... [Long article]

**More:** <http://pureadvantage.org/news/2017/05/09/company-reports-part-1/>

**Source:** Pure Advantage, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

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



Announcements in 'due course'. ❖

## Vivid Economics and GLOBE-NZ

"*Net zero in New Zealand Scenarios to achieve domestic emissions neutrality in the second half of the century.* Summary Report'.

**Editor:** Unlike a multitude of other reports regarding environmental and related issues which various public, private and NGO entities have produced in recent years, this one compiled by Vivid Economics under contract with GLOBE-NZ, a cross-party group of 35 members, drawn from all parties within the 51<sup>st</sup> New Zealand Parliament, seems to have captured the Government's attention. This is evidenced in part by the special debate in the House on 17<sup>th</sup> April and leave to table the report being agreed.

The report contains four illustrative scenarios about how New Zealand could become a net-zero carbon emissions country and is now being used widely as a platform for debate and discussion.

**More:** [www.vivideconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Net-Zero-in-New-Zealand-Summary-Report-Vivid-Economics.pdf](http://www.vivideconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Net-Zero-in-New-Zealand-Summary-Report-Vivid-Economics.pdf) 52 pages, 11.957Mb. Plus <http://pureadvantage.org/news/nznz/>

**Source:** Robert Howell, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017. ❖

## Four Future Scenarios for New Zealand: Work in Progress Edition 2

"The four scenarios are presented in this work are summarised below. They range from an increasingly insular society that finds little benefit in diversity other than separating 'winners and losers' to one where multi-cultural aspects are heralded as a cornerstone of the nation's identity. Within these future possibilities our relationship with the natural environment and its resources, on which so much of our current economy depends, can be seen as available for short-term exploitation, at one extreme, or for stewardship and longer-term conservation. Similarly our approach to being a future 'maker' or 'taker' of new technology (such as genetic engineering, biotechnology and information/communication technology) and also the models of governance that we choose will markedly influence which, if any, of these future directions we migrate towards by 2055.

"Various possibilities for the evolution of the economy are explored. These New Zealand scenarios suggest that from 2007 looking forward, we could move in a few decades towards any of:

- A An economy with unevenly distributed benefits (80% to minority elite: 20% to the rest), or
- B An economy with equity and very different 'genuine progress' indicators taking the place of GDP growth targets
- C We might stay globalised and 'hit the wall' of resource and ecosystem limitations (after several decades), resulting in economic crash and social conflict
- D Avoid the social conflict 'at the last minute' by creating a localised, inward-looking lifestyle on a depleted resource base.

**Source:**

[www.landcareresearch.co.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/43925/4\\_future\\_scenarios.pdf](http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/43925/4_future_scenarios.pdf). Published 2007. 112 pages, 10.922Mb.

**More:** <http://tools.envirolink.govt.nz/case-studies/denew-casestudy/>

**Editor:** Referenced in the 13<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2007 edition of *Sustainability Matters*, the scenarios merit a repeat particularly in view of several significant reviews and reports released recently in New Zealand; the Vivid Economics report being among those. ❖

## The Devastation of Food Waste

An extensive infographic about food waste for those interested, together with numerous links.

**More:** [www.alternet.org/environment/how-supermarket-sales-gimmick-has-become-major-driver-climate-change](http://www.alternet.org/environment/how-supermarket-sales-gimmick-has-become-major-driver-climate-change)

**Source:** Malcolm Rands, Facebook Link. 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017. ❖

## Introduction to Integrated Reporting

"Brief Description: Integrated Reporting is enhancing the way organisations think, plan and report the story of their business. This Introductory Level training has been developed to help organisations identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need in order to adopt Integrated Reporting and realise its benefits.

"Registration: This topic is available for registration as a 5 part webinar series only. [For CA NAZ members] each individual session is worth 1 CPD hour, with an additional 3 hours allocated for additional reading. ...

"Presented by: Nick Ridehalgh FCA [KPMG, Partner, Audit & Assurance, KPMG Sydney] and Kylie Dumble CA [Associate Director, Audit, KPMG Sydney] [More via 'Contacts' at KPMG.com.au.]

"Content Description: The Introduction to Integrated Reporting 5 part webinar series is designed to give participants an understanding of Integrated Reporting, including integrated thinking, and the benefits it can bring to an organisation. ....

**When:** Weekly webcasts, Thursdays, 2.00-3:00pm [NZ time], with first Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May, plus pre-reading

**More:** <http://store.charteredaccountantsanz.com/Introduction-to-Integrated-Reporting#more-info>

**Source:** CAANZ, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017. ❖

## NZX Joins UN Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative

"NZX [18<sup>th</sup> April] announced it has joined the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchange (SSE) initiative as a partner exchange.

"The SSE initiative provides a platform for exchanges to discuss environmental, social and corporate governance enhancements and stimulate discussions about sustainable investment.

"Joining more than 60 global exchanges this partnership reinforces NZX's ongoing commitment to promote more sustainable and transparent capital markets here in New Zealand, and improved environmental, social and corporate governance disclosure by listed issuers to ensure increased transparency for investors.

"In addition, this partnership reinforces the work currently being undertaken by NZX to update its Corporate Governance Code (Code), which will be released shortly. This will be the first substantive update to the Code since 2003 and represents a significant step forward in reducing fragmentation between various governance reporting requirements and guidance for NZX Main Board listed issuers.

"NZX CEO Mark Peterson commented: 'NZX is delighted to join the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchange initiative. Given the role NZX plays at the centre of New Zealand's capital markets we have a unique opportunity to work with listed companies to encourage and enhance the quality of environmental, social and corporate governance reporting.'

"We are looking forward to collaborating with other partner exchanges and passing our learnings onto NZX listed issuers.'

"As part of this initiative, NZX will also join United Nations discussions on Green Finance, which will investigate how stock exchanges can work with regulators, policy makers, listed companies and investors to better support the transition to greener and more inclusive economies.

"The SSE is organised by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the UN Global Compact, the UN Environment Program Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), and the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). ....

**More:** [www.stuff.co.nz/business/91671102/nzx-joins-un-initiative-as-it-looks-to-improve-reporting-quality](http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/91671102/nzx-joins-un-initiative-as-it-looks-to-improve-reporting-quality) plus [www.nzx.com/companies/NZX/announcements/299906](http://www.nzx.com/companies/NZX/announcements/299906)

**Source:** *SnippETS*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## NZX Publishes Updated NZX Corporate Governance Code

"NZX today [10<sup>th</sup> May] published its final NZX Corporate Governance Code (NZX Code). This is the first substantial update to the NZX Code since 2003 and represents a significant step forward for corporate governance reporting requirements in New Zealand.

"The NZX Code covers eight principles that reflect internationally accepted corporate governance practices, which are intended to protect the interests of and provide long term value to shareholders while also seeking to reduce the cost of capital for issuers. Each principle contains specific recommendations and explanatory commentary that NZX listed issuers are encouraged to adopt.

"The NZX Code was subject to extensive market consultation. NZX received more than 80 high quality submissions throughout the consultation process from major governance groups, issuers, corporate firms and investors in New Zealand and overseas....

"NZX considers that the final NZX Code will result in a significant improvement to corporate governance standards among its Main Board listed issuers. The final NZX Code reflects the broad stakeholder views in New Zealand's capital markets and reduces fragmentation between NZX's Code and other existing corporate governance frameworks. ....

**More:** [www.nzx.com/regulators/NZXR/announcements/300888](http://www.nzx.com/regulators/NZXR/announcements/300888) plus 32 pages 1.852Mb code at [https://nzx.com/files/static/cms-documents/NZX\\_Corporate\\_Governance\\_Code\\_2017.pdf](https://nzx.com/files/static/cms-documents/NZX_Corporate_Governance_Code_2017.pdf)

**Source:** NZX 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

**Editor:** Page 20 refers to Non-financial reporting. The provision is somewhat weak regarding environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors and practices. It does though include; 'The Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative recognises reporting frameworks for ESG policies and practices and it is now commonplace for stock-exchanges world-wide to provide guidance to issuers for reporting on ESG. This form of reporting is also referred to as sustainability reporting or by similar names. Plus; 'In order for investors and other users of this information to be able to easily compare information, NZX suggests if an issuer chooses a formal framework to report on ESG factors, it should report against a recognised international reporting initiative such as the Global Reporting Initiative guidelines [Now standards] or Integrated Reporting.' ..... There is also reference to this in Principle 6 'Risk Management' [pages 24/25]. ❖

## Consent for New Gas-fired Power Station

"Consents to construct and operate a 360 megawatt gas-fired power station in Waikato's Otorohanga district have been granted.

"The results of the consent applications by Nova Energy Limited to Otorohanga District Council and Waikato Regional Council were released today [4<sup>th</sup> May] after joint hearings involving independent commissioners.

"It was also recommended Transpower confirm arrangements to connect the new plant with its existing transmission system.

"Nova intends building the plant at Kawhia Rd to supply power, particularly at peak demand times. It is expected to occupy around 5.6 hectares. Gas will be sourced from the Maui pipeline which runs near the site, while the plant will connect to the national electricity grid. The set-up will involve exhaust stacks up to 25 metres in height and three new power pylons.

"A number of submitters raised concerns about the impacts of the plant on the environment, views and the quality of life of people in the area. However, staff from the two councils felt concerns could be addressed through appropriate consent conditions, with the commissioners hearing regional council matters agreeing plant impacts – including on air quality, waterways and views - would not be significant. ....

"A full copy of a report on their decisions is available at ...

**More:** [www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1705/S00117/nova-energy-granted-consents-for-gas-fired-power-station.htm](http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1705/S00117/nova-energy-granted-consents-for-gas-fired-power-station.htm) plus [www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=16&objectid=11717810](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=11717810)

**Source:** *Carbon News*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## See Inside Some of Christchurch's Superhomes

"Have you dreamt of living in a warm home that doesn't cost you a cent for electricity?"

"During [every weekend] in May you will be able to get an idea of what it would be like to live in such a home when the owners of 10 of Christchurch's greenest houses throw their doors open to the public.

"The homes, which incorporate features such as solar powered central heating, grey water recycling and fibre glass windows, are being showcased as part of a free Exemplar Homes Tour organised by the Superhome Movement, in partnership with the Christchurch City Council.

"Many people building or renovating want to build to a higher design and performance standard than legally required because they want warm, energy efficient homes but often they're uncertain about what products are out there or where to start," says Tony Moore, the Council's Principal Sustainability Advisor.

"The aim of the Exemplar Homes Tour is to allow people to see first-hand how sustainable, energy efficient design can be incorporated into a build without compromising on style or costing too much. At each home people will be able to speak to the designers or builders and get ideas for how they could create their own superhome' ...

"Homes featured in the free self-guided tour include:

- A luxurious high performance home in Riccarton that was built in only three days using off-site and Passive House building methods.
- An ultra-low energy beachside home in New Brighton that has heat recovery ventilation, grey water recycling, fibre glass windows and an insulated heated floor.
- A Sumner home that has zero power bills, rain water collection, passive solar design and energy efficient appliances, walls, windows and foundations.
- A central city townhouse that has an innovative low-impact foundation system and showcases all aspects of modern, sustainable energy efficient design.

**More:** [www.ccc.govt.nz/the-council/newsline/show/1637](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/the-council/newsline/show/1637) plus [www.superhome.co.nz/](http://www.superhome.co.nz/)

**Source:** *Christchurch Newsline*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## Valuing Sustainability Webinar and Workshop

"The Sustainability Society [TSS] is hosting one-day workshops in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to offer built environment professionals to learn more about the different frameworks and tools to integrate sustainability into their projects. These workshops will be supported by a pre-workshop online webinar ...

"For those wanting to take a broader view of 'value', it is often a challenge to understand what is relevant for your particular context and how to apply it to support smart decision-making, and explore ways to account for social, cultural and natural capitals, as well as wider economic value.

"These workshops will focus strongly on the application of these tools to the built environment and is relevant for engineers, architects, planners and other built environment professionals whose work involves planning, designing, building and managing New Zealand's built environment ...

**Where/When:** Auckland Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May, Wellington Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May, Christchurch Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> May. [The pre-workshop webinar was 7:00-8:30am 1<sup>st</sup> May]

**More:** [www.thesustainabilitysociety.org.nz/forums-short-courses/](http://www.thesustainabilitysociety.org.nz/forums-short-courses/)

**Source:** Editor 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017. ❖

## GE-free Foods Sought by 70% of Chinese

".....a Reuters news item has reported on a Nielsen survey of Chinese consumers, 70% of whom say they actively seek GE free.

"The ability for regions to declare themselves GE-Free in crops, forestry, and grasses won with the support of the Maori Party is a marketing advantage. ... New Zealand's reputation for non-genetically modified animals is worth a great deal to our export trade. ... Fortunately under the new resource legislation, the right of local communities to remain GE free was preserved – after intense work by the Maori Party MPs.

**More:** <http://press.gefree.org.nz/press/20170504.htm>

**Source:** *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## Big Polluters' Lobbyists Inside the UNFCCC

"..... *The Inside Job: Big Polluters' Lobbyists On the Inside at The UNFCCC* report peels back the curtain on just six of the more than 270 Business/Industry NGOs non-governmental organisations (BINGOs) currently admitted to the climate talks: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Mining Association, Business Roundtable, FuelsEurope, Business Council of Australia, and International Chamber of Commerce.

"Therefore, it is critical that governments eliminate conflicts of interest from the UNFCCC. Rather than shape policy, the fossil fuel industry should adhere to UNFCCC policies to transform existing industry practices. In light of the worsening dangers of climate change and all that hangs in the balance, the time to do this is now. [Page 11]

"This May, when UNFCCC delegates from around the world gather in Bonn, Parties have a critical opportunity to strengthen the Convention and the Paris Agreement and protect climate policy from the manipulative influence of the fossil fuel industry by taking a stand against irreconcilable conflicts of interests. It is not only the right thing to do, but also the only thing to do, if we are to avoid the catastrophic and irreversible harm to people and the environment that experts anticipate from climate change. [Page 11]

**More:** <http://www.stopcorporateabuse.org> plus [www.stopcorporateabuse.org/sites/default/files/resources/insidejobcai.pdf](http://www.stopcorporateabuse.org/sites/default/files/resources/insidejobcai.pdf) 16 pages, 4.374Mb including 3 pages containing 133 references

**Source:** Kit Withers, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017. ❖

## Keep it Topless, Clean and Loose

"When you toss your plastic bottles and containers into the recycling bin, are you unintentionally doing more harm than good?"

"Christchurch people are great at recycling but a few common mistakes are causing issues at the city's recycling plant.

"Unfortunately a proportion of the items put out for recycling cause issues for the recycling plant during processing", said ...

"If we want to maximise the amount of material being recycled people need to remember three things when they're putting items out for recycling – topless, clean and loose."

"..... lids on bottles and other containers were made from a variety of materials that could contaminate the recycling so they needed to be removed and placed in the red wheelie bin. It was important too to wash bottles and containers so they were free of any food scraps or liquid.

"One of the most common causes of contamination with recycling are items containing food or liquid. If items put out for recycling have food in them or any liquids it can contaminate other recycling such as glass and paper which then can't be recycled....

"Another message the Council was trying to get out was items put out for recycling needed to be loose, not bagged up.

"If it is in a bag it is unable to move freely along the automated Materials Recycling Facility. When you have 25,000kg of material to recycle every hour you don't have time to open all the bags and remove any contamination', Unfortunately if items turn up at the recycling plant bundled in bags they get thrown away.'...

**More:** <https://www.ccc.govt.nz/the-council/newsline/show/1593>

**Source:** *Christchurch Newsline*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## London to Introduce Vehicle Pollution Tax

"Motorists in London who own old polluting vehicles are to be hit with a new charge from October, Mayor Sadiq Khan said today, two days after the European Union ordered Britain to cut air pollution....

"Called the T-charge, the £10 daily tax will apply to diesel and petrol vehicles typically registered before 2006 which do not meet the Euro4 2005 EU directive to regulate vehicle emissions. ...

"It's staggering that we live in a city where the air is so toxic that many of our children are growing up with lung problems' ....

**More:** <http://econews.com.au/53339/london-to-introduce-vehicle-pollution-tax-from-october/>

**Source:** *eco-News* 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017. ❖

## Consistently Warmer Weather Means the Harvest Season Comes Early

"Imagine you're a local kiwifruit farmer, says Dr Judy Lawrence, and the consistently warmer weather means the harvest season has come early.

"If you have higher temperatures earlier, it means you've got to harvest earlier and cool your fruit for longer. This means higher energy costs, which reduces your profit. And you've got a greater potential for spoiling the product, and therefore market demand may not be met.

"Optimum temperature zones may change, leading to regional impacts on the economy, which flow onto social impacts.

"This is just one scenario that demonstrates the cascading impacts of climate change."

"Dr Lawrence is a research fellow at the New Zealand Climate Change Research Institute at Victoria University of Wellington working on a number of future-focused projects to better understand the scale and scope of climate change implications across the country.

"We know the impacts of increases in temperature, floods and sea-level rise trickle down within and across sectors affecting people, assets and our social and economic interactions', says Dr Lawrence.

"And as these changes become more frequent, like heavy rainfall, and as the sea-levels rise and the effects increase from storm surges, we're going to have less time to recover from them—which will also have cumulative consequences.

"We need to make sure that we're thinking about the interconnections. The impacts themselves cascade, but policy responses can also cascade if the interconnections are not factored in.".....

"Dr Lawrence is co-chairing the group alongside Penny Nelson, Deputy Secretary Sector Strategy at the Ministry for the Environment.

"We're currently doing a stocktake of what's been done on climate change adaptation, both in New Zealand and overseas', says Dr Lawrence. Then we will identify a range of options for how New Zealand can build resilience through adaptation to climate change, identify how adaptation can be managed and what the priorities are.

"A lot of countries already have adaptation plans that coordinate economy-wide actions so you could say this work in New Zealand is well overdue. It's a challenging project to be working on that links research and policy.'

**More:** <https://phys.org/news/2017-03-warmer-weather-harvest-season-early.html>

**Source:** Penny Nelson, LinkedIn 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017. ❖

## Squawk Squad – Saving NZ's Native Birds

"Squawk Squad is a start-up social enterprise engaging New Zealanders to protect and sustain our unique birdlife.

They are currently bootstrapping and are looking for funding NZ \$20,000 to get set up, further validate the market and progress their prototype hardware and software.

"Collectively fund sensor-connected traps towards sanctuary projects and be notified in real-time when your trap activates!

"Each trap costs \$400. Squawk Squad wants 20 pledgers per trap, each contributing \$20 through a Kickstarter campaign beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017.

"Each time a trap kills a rodent a notification is sent to the phones of those who have contributed money to the enterprise.

"We believe if we can connect a lot more people to the process of conservation then we can make much more of a big difference.'

**More:** [www.kickstarter.com/projects/2041721565/squawk-squad-saving-new-zealands-native-birds](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/2041721565/squawk-squad-saving-new-zealands-native-birds) plus [www.squawksquad.co](http://www.squawksquad.co) and [www.stuff.co.nz/business/small-business/91537004/squawk-squad-to-bring-bird-conservation-to-your-fingertips](http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/small-business/91537004/squawk-squad-to-bring-bird-conservation-to-your-fingertips)

**Source:** Squawk Squad, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017. ❖

## Why Your Finance Director Should Care About Soil

"Key points:

- Natural capital accounting can help to make the case for across the business for considering natural capital in decision making, for example to the Finance Director.
- Businesses can start to develop natural capital thinking by considering the internal information they can make more of and thinking about the assets they are dependent on.
- Natural capital's importance for business decision-making is growing internationally, aided by the Natural Capital Protocol.

"My biggest victory last year was getting a Finance Director to care about soil quality.' This key quote from a recent Scottish Forum on Natural Capital Business Breakfast encapsulates why the natural capital approach represents something new for business.

"Organised in partnership with the University of Edinburgh Business School, *Directing for Resilience: Using natural capital accounting in business* attracted attendees from ..... The event was part of the 'Directing for Resilience' business breakfast series organised by the Scottish Forum for its members and invited guests..."

**More:** <http://naturalcapitalscotland.com/article/why-a-finance-director-cares-about-soil/> plus <http://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/why-your-finance-director-should-care-about-soil/>

**Source:** Natural Capital Coalition Newsletter, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017. ❖

## How Swedes and Norwegians Broke the Power of the '1 Percent'

Published Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 by Waging Nonviolence

"While many of us are working to ensure that the Occupy movement will have a lasting impact, it's worthwhile to consider other countries where masses of people succeeded in nonviolently bringing about a high degree of democracy and economic justice. Sweden and Norway, for example, both experienced a major power shift in the 1930s after prolonged nonviolent struggle. They 'fired' the top 1% of people who set the direction for society and created the basis for something different. A march in Ådalen, Sweden, in 1931.

"Both countries had a history of horrendous poverty. When the 1% was in charge, hundreds of thousands of people emigrated to avoid starvation. Under the leadership of the working class, however, both countries built robust and successful economies that nearly eliminated poverty, expanded free university education, abolished slums, provided excellent health care available to all as a matter of right and created a system of full employment. Unlike the Norwegians, the Swedes didn't find oil, but that didn't stop them from building what the latest CIA World Factbook calls 'an enviable standard of living'.

"Neither country is a utopia, as readers of the crime novels by Stieg Larsson, Henning Mankell and Jo Nesbø will know. ...

"Labour stepped in, seized the three largest banks, fired the top management, left the stockholders without a dime and refused to bail out any of the smaller banks. The well-purged Norwegian financial sector was not one of those countries that lurched into crisis in 2008; carefully regulated and much of it publicly owned, the sector was solid.

"Although Norwegians may not tell you about this the first time you meet them, the fact remains that their society's high level of freedom and broadly-shared prosperity began when workers and farmers, along with middle class allies, waged a nonviolent struggle that empowered the people to govern for the common good.

**More:** <https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/how-swedes-and-norwegians-broke-the-power-of-the-1-percent/#more-14898>

**Source:** Christopher Evatt, Facebook 'like', 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017. ❖

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](mailto:ray@sustainabilitymatters.co.nz) Phone: +64 (09) 443 0773 Web: [www.sustainabilitymatters.co.nz](http://www.sustainabilitymatters.co.nz)