

Sustainability Matters

6th July 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.**

Sarah Thomson's High Court Case

"The way in which New Zealand's greenhouse gas emission targets needs careful scrutiny, the High Court in Wellington has been told.

"Hamilton law student Sarah Thomson has taken a case challenging the targets and asking that decision-makers be ordered to reconsider them.

"However Crown lawyer Peter Gunn today suggested the Judge hearing the case should exercise restraint, saying it would be difficult for the Court to assess the social ramifications involved against the political issues and international considerations that needed to be taken into account.

"Ms Thomson's lawyer Davey Salmon had earlier suggested there was a human rights aspect to the case and cited the case of the New Zealand-administered territory of Tokelau, which would be hard hit by rising sea levels caused by climate change.

"But Mr Gunn said human rights cases usually covered situations where people were imprisoned or their lives were at risk, prompting Justice Mallon to ask why a case about the future of life on the planet would not fall in that category. ...

"Justice Jillian Mallon was presented with 10,000 pages of scientific evidence, as well as affidavits from Nasa climatologist James Hansen, and one of New Zealand's leading climate change experts, professor James Renwick. 'I'm inviting your honour not to put this in the too-hard basket', Salmon said.

"Justice Mallon reserved her decision and indicated it might be some time away as she has thousands of pages of documents to read.

More: www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/334042/govt-s-emissions-targets-need-scrutiny-court-told plus www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/333932/govt-understands-need-to-act-on-climate-argues-crown and www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/94079123/waikato-law-student-sarah-thomson-takes-government-to-court-over-climate-change Why I'm taking the NZ government to court; <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/16-06-2017/why-im-taking-the-nz-government-to-court/>

Source: *Tieke: ECO News and Alerts*, 28th June and others. ❖

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If you do, you may wish to consider making a donation to support the back-office costs and hours of effort☺. Every contribution is much appreciated. How much? You choose. As a suggestion \$46 would be very welcome. GST receipts provided. Bank account details are;

Sustainability Matters

A/c No. 123 011 0249104 00

ASB Bank, Queen Street branch, Auckland.

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

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



Announcements in 'due course'. ❖

Investing in People and the Planet

"Public Lecture: Dr Robert Howell will be presenting and discussing the issues of investing in a responsible way based on his recent book.

"In a world threatened by ecological disaster, global inequality and human tragedy, how can we make a difference? The bank we select, the pension fund and insurance that we choose, the investments that we support, and the voice that we raise to shape Government investments and financial behaviour, can begin to make the changes that are needed when joined with the efforts of others. This presentation shows why and how.

When: 11:30am Sunday 16th July 2017

Where: Quaker Meeting House, 113 Mt Eden Rd, Auckland

More: <http://business.scoop.co.nz/2017/03/25/ethical-investment-in-people-and-the-planet/>

Source: Robert Howell, 26th June 2017. ❖

Cities, The Social Economy and Inclusive Growth

"The *Cities, the Social Economy and Inclusive Growth* report examines the actual and potential roles of the social economy in bringing about inclusive growth that generates more and better jobs in UK cities, particularly for people who are in – or at risk of – poverty. The project was undertaken by a team at Middlesex University and The Open University.

"The report finds:

- The social economy constitutes a range of organisations that have a core social mission, including social and community enterprises; voluntary and community sector organisations; housing associations; co-operatives and mutuals; informal self-help initiatives; social finance and support providers; and alternative business models.
- The social economy has been shown to promote inclusive growth by (1) Creating jobs, strengthening skills and employability; (2) Building diversified local economies; (3) Contributing to wider economic and institutional transformation.
- Successful social economy development often arises from an enabling context, or social economy 'ecosystem' of various elements of support provision and a high level of collaboration between actors, both within the social economy and the public and private sectors.

"Building on these findings, the report develops several recommendations for how UK cities can engage the social economy to lead an inclusive growth agenda.

More: www.jrf.org.uk/report/cities-social-economy-and-inclusive-growth, 87 pages, 1.29Mb

Source: Social Audit Network (SAN), 4th July 2017. ❖

Bridges Both Ways – Transforming the Openness of the New Zealand Government

"There are some great ideas in this report, and all of them are in use in places overseas in various forms.

"While there is much to be proud of, there are also serious problems, as repeatedly highlighted by international surveys.

More: <http://iqps.victoria.ac.nz/publications/files/56bff49c7f9.pdf>
32 pages, 3.22Mb

Source: *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 21st June 2017. ❖

Extended External Reporting User Survey

"Transparent and accountable corporate reporting is crucial to maintaining healthy relations between for-profit companies and the people that make up the social and economic contexts those companies operate in. Prepared in collaboration with the External Reporting Board (XRB), the *Extended External Reporting User Survey* asks consumers, employees, investors, members of the community and other stakeholders to assess the current reporting landscape and to evaluate what is or is not working and what might be missing. We believe that the current system will not serve New Zealand in the long-term, and that it is important that corporate reporting aligns with wider stakeholder interests.

"The responses from the user survey will inform the recommendations we will put forward in *Report 17 – Creating A Reporting Landscape Fit For Purpose*, which we hope to publish in December 2017. It would be greatly appreciated if you could take the time to complete the survey and/or share it with your networks. It will take approximately 15–20 minutes to complete.

"If you have questions about the survey or any other matters, please contact our Head of Research, Sally Hett by email reportingnz@mcguinnessinstitute.org or by phone +64 4 499 8888.

Deadline: 5:00 pm Monday, 10th July 2017

More: www.surveymonkey.com/r/K29H6K9

Source: McGuinness Institute, 26th June 2017. ❖

Climate Change Presents Business Risks and Opportunities

"Climate change risk does not discriminate and organisations are feeling the heat.

"Cyclone Debbie was the never-ending cyclone. From far north Queensland to New Zealand's North Island, strong winds and flooding pounded communities and left clean-up costs in the billions.

"Unfortunately, such extreme weather events are 'playing out as predicted', says Ian Edwards CA, climate change adaptation specialist.

"While peril events – big disasters like Cyclone Debbie – make international headlines, it is the ongoing stresses of climate change such as droughts, sea level and temperature rises that 'really represent what is going on', says Edwards.

"The reality is organisations are feeling the effect of extreme weather events right now. Climate change risk doesn't discriminate.'

"But where there is risk, there is always opportunity. If managed skilfully, and with appropriate strategies for adaptation governance, businesses can not only reduce climate risk they can also improve their reputation, investment portfolios and brand proposition. 'Accountants have a massive part to play', says Edwards.

"We are trusted client advisers, we are often seen as the voice of reason. These big trends are important to understand – how they are going to impact our clients' businesses.

"Mitigation or adaptation While mitigation focuses on the primary causes of climate change, adaptation covers a range of actions to help leaders and their organisations proactively address and capitalise on the opportunities that climate change itself creates.

"Good adaptation incorporates mitigation', says Edwards. 'Ultimately, how much we need to adapt is driven by how successful we are at mitigating.

"So if you look at energy efficiency, you can argue it's both mitigation and adaptation because it's both reducing greenhouse gas emissions but it's also reducing your exposure to potential regulatory changes in the future, such as carbon prices. They are inextricably linked."....

More: www.acuitymag.com/business/climate-change-presents-business-risks-and-opportunities

Source: *Acuity*, June/July 2017, pp 82-84. ❖

A Call to Action: Walk the Talk on Integrated Reporting

"IFAC recently [6th June 2017] issued a policy position on integrated reporting highlighting the need for a single report providing a fuller picture of an organization's ability to create value over time, and greater interconnectedness between different reports.

"IFAC member organisations can utilise this policy in their own context to help communicate integrated reporting key messages with regulators and others, as well as encourage alignment of integrated reporting to current requirements for annual reporting.

"But policy and advocacy is unlikely to be effective unless professional accountancy organizations (PAOs) are walking the talk by moving toward integrated reporting themselves.

"The good news is that some PAOs are adopting integrated reporting to demonstrate leadership, and to better run their organisations and engagement with members and other stakeholders.

"Integrated reporting provides the ideal framework to answer the question: How does your professional association or institute create value? Value for your members and students as well as value for others, including society more broadly?

"At the last IFAC PAO Integrated Reporting Network webinar in March, five PAOs shared their integrated reporting journey: Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, CPA Australia, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Namibia, and the South Africa Institute of Chartered Accountants.

"Each organisation started at a different point, with

More: www.ifac.org/global-knowledge-gateway/business-reporting/discussion/call-action-walk-talk-integrated-reporting plus <http://integratedreporting.org/news/a-call-to-action-walk-the-talk-on-integrated-reporting>

Source: CSEAR, 27th June 2017, page 6.

Editor's Question: Where is CA ANZ on this leadership journey with its own reporting *vis-à-vis* CPA Australia? ❖

Does This Look Natural to You?

"There are those who say the climate has always changed, and carbon dioxide levels have always fluctuated. That's true. But it's also true that since the industrial revolution, CO₂ levels in the atmosphere have climbed to levels that are unprecedented over hundreds of millennia.

"So here's a short video [3:32] we made, to put recent climate change and carbon dioxide emissions into the context of the past 800,000 years.

"The fundamental science is very well understood. The evidence that climate change is happening is abundant and clear. The difficult part is: what do we do next? More than ever, we need strong, cooperative and accountable leadership from politicians of all nations. Only then will we avoid the worst of climate change and adapt to the impacts we can't halt.

More: <https://theconversation.com/the-three-minute-story-of-800-000-years-of-climate-change-with-a-sting-in-the-tail-73368>

Source: *Carbon News*, 20th June 2017.

Editor: Simple, elegant, and hopefully persuasive! ❖

GRI Standards Seem to Be Rising to the Top

"According to Mohin [CEO of GRI], 74% of companies reporting sustainability performance are using GRI standards. The increase in the pace of GRI reporting adoption – Asia, for example, has seen a doubling of GRI reporting in the last five years – can be attributed in part to the fact that the GRI now issues actual standards, rather than just guidance.

"While GRI standards cover 33 sustainability topics, GRI says organisations should not attempt to report on all of those topics. 'Each company needs to decide which topics are most relevant for the business and its stakeholders and then choose only the most important issues', Mohin says.

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2017/06/greenwashing-serious-issue-leads-poor-decisions-says-ceo-gri/

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 1st July 2017. ❖

The Global Management Accounting Principles©

"The world's first Global Management Accounting Principles are delivered by the AICPA and CIMA, giving your organisation a practical framework to improve decision making and drive value. By using the Principles your organisation will have better insight, more relevance, improved analysis and increased levels of trust. This will galvanise better informed decision-making, which will lead to more sustainable and valuable business.

"Key Benefits;

- Optimise the performance of your management accounting function
- Drive better decision-making using better insight and information
- Maximise value for a robust, sustainable competitive advantage

"As the vital link between management and finance, management accounting builds the right environment for sustainable, long-term business value. How? Through the rigorous application of the Principles across 14 practice areas.

"The key activities of an organisation's management accounting function enable a holistic view of a business and its structures. It's about connecting people with performance and practice. The Principles are applied to what management accountants do, their effect on an organisation's performance, and their management accounting practice.

"With such diversity of information and business functions to consider, there are 14 management accounting practice areas. These enable management accountants to continually monitor a robust framework for the effective management of relationships, resources and risks – and create long-term business value.

More: <http://mapprinciples.com/>

Source: CSEAR, 27th June 2017, page 6. ❖

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is the focus of Auckland Council's this quarter's *Auckland Sustainability Quarterly*.

Among the topics canvassed is the urban forest a topic which was included in the then Auckland City's strategic plans of about 20 years ago and since has seemed to have languished.

More:

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/newseventsculture/OurAuckland/Documents/aucklandsustainabilityquarterly.pdf 8 pages, 3Mb

Source: John Mauro, 26th June 2017.

Editor: Perhaps there should be a special land rate (tax) on the percentage of impermeable surfaces on properties with offsets for various factors. Transport infrastructure ditto even though most are not levied property rates – to engender more innovative thinking. ❖

Air Pollution from Cars is Causing Nature to Change in Dramatic Ways

"News from Britain that the closer one gets to London by road, the greater the preponderance of cow parsley growing along roadsides. This weed is crowding out wild flowers because nitrogen from vehicle exhaust enriches the soil; richer soil means fewer different species of plant can grow. The British wildflower charity points out that car exhaust is now a greater threat to British wildflowers than climate change. This same air pollution causes 40,000 premature deaths in Britain every year. And there is growing evidence that particulate pollution is behind the sudden disappearance of the humble house sparrow in London; whether it was connected to the widespread uptake of diesel vehicles remains to be investigated. Yes, air pollution kills. It kills us, but it kills off the natural world just as effectively.

More: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jun/01/air-pollution-harm-humans-nature-wildflowers-car-exhaust-sparrows

Source: Tieke ECO News, 7th June 2017. ❖

The Best Break-up Story EVER

"The largest insurance company in the world, AXA, has officially dumped coal. First they divested from the dirty industry, and now they've announced they won't insure coal projects!

"Coal mining can't operate without insurance, so this might be the best break-up story ever! And now we have a chance to get several other insurance groups to follow suit.

"They could do this: 7 international insurance companies have already divested from coal -- now they should completely break up. Many of them are sensitive to public opinion and care deeply about their brand. If we create a massive global call supporting them to take the leap, we can help protect our planet and everything we love. They could do this: 7 international insurance companies have already divested from coal

"Donald Trump keeps touting how he will bring back the coal industry. But he can say what he wants about this planet-killing industry -- without insurance companies, there will be no coal projects. Simple! It's up to these companies whether or not to support coal – that's one thing Trump can't control.

"This is a huge ask to make of these companies and it feels like a long shot. But the truth is, increasing climate change disasters are an existential threat to insurance companies. It's in their favour to push industries towards clean energy. AXA have woken up to this, now it's time for other companies to wake up too.

"Tell insurance companies: it's time to break up with coal!

"From the People's Climate March to stopping plastic choking our oceans, our community has been at the forefront of the fight to save this beautiful planet from catastrophic climate change. Together we can stop the world's worst polluter and keep coal where it belongs: in the ground.

More:

https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/investment_companies_dump_coal_11 with more links, plus www.climatechangenews.com/2017/04/27/insurers-urged-stop-underwriting-coal-projects-following-axa-move/

Source: Avaaz, 9th June 2017. ❖

"We Are Still In"

"Former New York City Mayor and billionaire businessman Michael Bloomberg has submitted a statement to the United Nations that more than 1000 United States governors, mayors, businesses, universities and others will continue to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change abandoned by President Donald Trump last week.

"Mr Bloomberg, who is the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for Cities and Climate Change, submitted the 'We Are Still In' declaration to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa.

"Reuters Newsagency reports he also launched a process to work with local governments and non-state entities to formally quantify the combined, and overlapping, emissions reduction pledges, which will be known as 'America's Pledge', and submit the report to the UN.

"Today [5th June], on behalf of an unprecedented collection of US cities, states, businesses and other organisations, I am communicating to the UN and the global community that American society remains committed to achieving the emission reductions we pledged to make in Paris in 2015', Mr Bloomberg said in a statement.

"Signatories to the new initiative include 13 Democratic and Republican governors, 19 state attorneys general, more than 200 mayors, and CEOs of Fortune 500 companies and small businesses.

More: <http://economy.com.au/54459/bloomberg-delivers-us-paris-agreement-pledge-to-un/> plus www.environmentalleader.com/2017/06/1200-us-leaders-tell-world-still/ and www.wearstillin.com

Source: eco-News, 8th June 2017. ❖

Dairy Industry Lays Out Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

"The dairy industry has revealed a plan to try and reduce greenhouse gasses on dairy farms.

"Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Climate Change Issues Paula Bennett today announced the 'Dairy Action for Climate Change' plan at the opening of the Mystery Creek Fielddays in Hamilton.

"The plan is an 18-month partnership between DairyNZ and Fonterra, and is backed by the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

"DairyNZ chief executive Tim Mackle said the future of New Zealand agriculture needed modern, science-based farming and the new plan took a three-pronged approach.

"Firstly, we'll set up some pilot farms across the country and we're working with Fonterra on that to understand what is possible at the moment.

"[The] second part is really around education, we're going to do a roadshow across the country to build a better understanding of what's coming and what they can do now.

"Thirdly, we're going to mobilise dairy environment leaders out there to help farmers answer questions with government and with industry.

"National still hasn't given farmers any certainty about when they will have to start paying for and reducing climate pollution on the farm. ...

More: www.radionz.co.nz/news/country/333048/dairy-industry-lays-out-plan-to-reduce-greenhouse-gases plus www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/93682887 and www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5787488/dairy-action-for-climate-change-2017-2018.pdf

Source: *Carbon News*, 15th June 2017. ❖

NZ Young Nats – "Its' Time!"

Since announcing our support for Generation Zero's Zero Carbon Act, we've had overwhelming support from around the country. Hear from some of our members explain why, we as young people, support the Zero Carbon Act.

More: 1:30 video at <https://www.facebook.com/NZYoungNats/videos/10155434021342622/>

Source: *Carbon News*, 3rd July 2017. ❖

Retrofitting Old Buildings Reduces Costs (Like 80% in a Month), Attracts Tenants, Achieves Longer Leases

"Constructing buildings with more efficient systems in place can lead to higher rents and longer leases, but it can also lead to significant savings. A California condominium association, for example, has seen an 80% reduction in energy costs just one month after installing LED lighting.

"A recent report, *The Future of Corporate Real Estate*, outlined other strategies corporations are using to reach such cost reductions, including improving water filtration systems and adopting solar alternatives.

"Client demand and market demand are the top two reasons to pursue green building status such as LEED certification. A recent peer-reviewed study showed buildings with lower operating costs and better indoor environmental quality are more attractive to a growing group of corporate, public and individual buyers, according to the USGBC. And high-performing building features will increasingly enter into tenants' decisions about leasing space and into buyers' decisions about purchasing properties and homes, LEED suggests in its *Business Case for Green Building*.

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2017/06/retrofitting-old-buildings-reduces-costs-like-80-month-attracts-tenants-achieves-longer-leases/ plus www.usgbc.org/articles/business-case-green-building and <https://resources.corenetglobal.org/knowledgecenteronline/SearchByTopicAndResource.aspx?ID=7541>

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 6th June 2017. ❖

New Zealand a Leading Nation in IDC Smart City Asia Pacific Awards (SCAPA) 2017

"Today [1st June] IDC Asia/Pacific released the finalists in the IDC Smart City Asia Pacific Awards (SCAPA) 2017. Out of 14 categories in total, New Zealand projects have been named as finalists in six categories: Transportation, Public Works, Smart Grid, Smart Water, Connected Health and, Tourism, Arts, Libraries, Culture, Open Spaces. Shortlisted from over 150 submissions these projects are leading the way in their respective categories and with six local finalists the calibre of Smart Cities initiatives in NZ is evident.

".... These successful cases show that smart city solutions are no longer just in the concept phase in New Zealand. Real innovation is taking place, with clear benefits for the economy.'

"The finalists and categories are as follows:

- Auckland Transport (AT) - Transportation.
- NEC - Public Works.
- Unison Networks – Smart Grids ...
- Qrious – Tourism, Arts, Libraries, Culture, Open Spaces.
- Waikato District Health Board – Connected Health
- Waitaki District Council –Smart Water ...

"The NZ finalists comprise six out of a total 46 smart city projects across Asia Pacific (excluding Japan) and were shortlisted from over 150 submissions from vendors, local governments and analysts. NZ's total is bested only by China (nine finalists) showcasing the quality of the local projects and the ability to compete on a regional stage.

"Information is now a key driver of innovation and the finalists showcase New Zealand's growing strength in this area', says King. 'If you look at the breadth of industries that these projects are influencing, it illustrates how data and analytics are being used to drive the New Zealand economy.'

"There are clear external benefits to these applications; ranging from more efficient use of public resources to attracting foreign direct investment and skilled employees to New Zealand.'

More: www.idc.asia/IDCSCAPA/finalists.html

Source: IDC New Zealand, 1st June 2017. ❖

India to Make Every [new] Car Electric by 2030 in Bid to Tackle Pollution that Kills Millions

"Every car sold in India will be powered by electricity by the year 2030, according to plans unveiled by the country's energy minister.

"The move is intended to lower the cost of importing fuel and lower costs for running vehicles.

"We are going to introduce electric vehicles in a very big way', coal and mines minister Piyush Goyal said at the Confederation of Indian Industry Annual Session 2017 in New Delhi.

"Comparing the drive to a 2015 initiative in the country to reduce energy bills by promoting LED lightbulbs, he told reporters: 'We are going to make electric vehicles self-sufficient... The idea is that by 2030, not a single petrol or diesel car should be sold in the country.'

"Mr Goyal said the electric car industry would need between two and three years of government assistance, but added he expected the production of the vehicles to be 'driven by demand and not subsidy' after that. ...

"An investigation by Greenpeace this year found as many as 2.3 million deaths occur every year due to air pollution in the country. The report, entitled *Airpocalypse*, claimed air pollution had become a 'public health and economic crisis' for Indians.

"It said the number of deaths caused by air pollution was only 'a fraction less' than the number of deaths from tobacco use, adding that 3% of the country's GDP was lost to the levels of toxic smog. ..

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/india-electric-cars-2030-fossil-fuel-air-pollution-piyush-goyal-climate-change-a7711381.html

Source: 350.org, 27th May 2017. ❖

China's New Environment Minister Urges 'Protracted War' on Pollution

More: <http://in.reuters.com/article/china-politics-appointment-idINKBN19IUQ4>

Source: *eco-News*, 29th June 2017. ❖

Climate-related Financial Disclosures – Task Force Recommendations

"The Financial Stability Board (FSB) welcomed the publication of the recommendations for effective disclosure of climate-related financial risks published today [29th June 2017] by the industry-led Task Force on Climate - related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)

"The Task Force, chaired by Michael R. Bloomberg, was established by the FSB in December 2015 to develop a set of voluntary, consistent disclosure recommendations for use by companies in providing information to investors, lenders and insurance underwriters about their climate-related financial risks. The 32 industry members of the Task Force, who are drawn from a wide range of industries and countries from around the globe, finalised the recommendations after extensive public engagement and consultation, including public consultation on a draft of the recommendations in December 2016.

"The TCFD developed four recommendations on climate-related financial disclosures that are applicable to organisations across sectors and jurisdictions. The recommendations are structured around four thematic areas:

- Governance: The organisation's governance around climate-related risks and opportunities.
- Strategy: The actual and potential impacts of climate-related risks and opportunities on the organisation's businesses, strategy, and financial planning.
- Risk Management: The processes used by the organisation to identify, assess and manage climate-related risks.
- Metrics and Targets: The metrics and targets used to assess and manage relevant climate-related risks and opportunities.

"Speaking about the work of the Task Force, FSB Chair Mark Carney [Governor of Reserve Bank of England] said 'The Task Force's recommendations have been developed by the market for the market. They set out the disclosures that a wide range of users and preparers of financial filings have said are essential to understanding a company's climate-related risks and opportunities. Widespread adoption will provide investors, banks and insurers with that information, helping minimise the risk that market adjustments to climate change will be incomplete, late and potentially destabilising."

"Speaking about the final recommendations, Michael R. Bloomberg said 'Climate change presents global markets with risks and opportunities that cannot be ignored, which is why a framework around climate-related disclosures is so important. The Task Force brings that framework to the table, helping investors evaluate the potential risks and rewards of a transition to a lower carbon economy. We're pleased to see so many businesses and investors around the world support the recommendations of the TCFD and hope others will be encouraged to join our initiative.

"More than 100 firms, with market capitalisations of over \$3.3 trillion and financial firms responsible for assets of more than \$24 trillion, have provided statements of support to welcome the recommended disclosures and encourage take-up of the TCFD recommendations.

More: www.fsb-tcfd.org/publications/ plus www.fsb-tcfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Press-Release-FSB-Task-Force-publishes-recommendations-on-climate-related-financial-disclosures-29-June-2017.pdf and www.fsb-tcfd.org/publications/final-recommendations-report/ 74 pages, 2.835Mb, also <https://phys.org/news/2017-06-global-companies-pledge-transparency-climate.html>

Source: *Carbon News*, 30th June & Ian Edwards 3rd July. ❖

Sustainable Development Goals – Progress and Implications for Business – Webinar CAANZ Sustainability and Environmental Management Discussion Group

"The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a set of 17 'Global' with 169 specific targets. Officially known as *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, formulation of the SDGs has been spearheaded by the United Nations and involved member states as well as business and community groups.

"In this presentation, Monica Richter, Senior Manager, Low Carbon Futures Program, WWF-Australia will discuss the SDGs and how they are relevant to the business community. Her presentation will include:

- The development of the SDGs and specific targets;
- Current progress in SDG implementation, including key successes and challenges;
- The role of the business community in SDG implementation; and
- Business reporting on SDGs-relevant areas (including links between the SDGs and GRI / Integrated Reporting)

"Speaker biography: Monica Richter heads up WWF's Low Carbon Futures Program. She is an economist and Social Ecologist with extensive experience in sustainability and business engagement, with an interest in accelerating the uptake of low carbon technologies. For over 15 years Monica has worked in the not for profit environment sector including at for four years at WWF and 10 years at the Australian Conservation Foundation.

More:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2466221456979549187>

Source: Karen McWilliams and James Hazelton, 13/14th June.

Editor: Although the webinar has 'been and gone' it has been recorded & available for viewing via an eMail to the organiser. You can view the slides and listen to the dialogue. About half the time is Q&A (from 24 minutes) At about 15 minutes there is reference to Australia SDG's Hub for Business. For each goal questions posed are;

- How is this relevant to your business?
- What can business do?
- Find Opportunity

Details at;

www.unglobalcompact.org.au/issues/sustainable-development/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/

Note: It is hoped Australia's 1st [whole of country] Sustainable Development Goals report will be published in 2018 – a world first. ❖

Adani Pushes Ahead with Controversial Queensland Coal Mine

"The chairman of Indian mining giant Adani has given the final investment approval for its multi-billion dollar Carmichael mine in central Queensland's Galilee Basin.

"Adani is yet to confirm finance or whether it has secured a loan for necessary rail infrastructure.

"Despite this Adani chairman, Gautam Adani, said the decision marked the 'official start' of the project.

"We have been challenged by activists in the courts, in inner-city streets, and even outside banks that have not even been approached to finance the project', Mr Adani said. 'We are still facing activists, but we are committed to this project.'

"We are committed to regional Queensland and we are committed to addressing energy poverty in India.'

"The decision was immediately criticised by a number of environmental groups and by indigenous owners who dispute the access to the land.... with pre-construction works starting in the September quarter of this year.

More: <http://econews.com.au/54448/adani-pushes-ahead-with-controversial-queensland-coal-mine/>

Source: *eco-News*, 7th June 2017. ❖

UNESCO Puts Australia on Notice Over Great Barrier Reef

"The United Nations cultural heritage body UNESCO has urged Australia to accelerate efforts to save the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef, saying long term targets to improve its health were unlikely to be met.

"Progress towards achieving water quality targets has been slow, and Australia was at risk of falling short of its 2050 goals, UNESCO warned in a draft assessment of world heritage sites prepared ahead of a meeting in Krakow, Poland, in July.

"The World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that the implementation of the plan will need to be accelerated to ensure the intermediate and long-term targets of 2050 LTSP (Long-Term Sustainability Plan) are being met, in particular regarding water quality', the report said, according to Reuters Newsagency.....

More: <http://economics.com.au/54433/unesco-puts-australia-on-notice-over-great-barrier-reef/>

Source: *eco-News*, 6th June 2017. ❖

The People's Review of Renting

"Building off the success of our crowdfunded, crowdsourced *People's Mental Health Review*, which received wall to wall coverage, and has pushed the issue of mental health rapidly up the election agenda, we want to do something similar for the state of renting.

"Introducing, the [New Zealand] *People's Review of Renting in 2017*.

"During the cold months of winter, we're going to develop a clever digital tool to help us collect hundreds of stories (and photos) of renting in the winter of 2017. These stories will be displayed on an interactive map of New Zealand to highlight the realities of renting in 2017 providing journalists with a valuable resource to push the issue up the agenda.

"Together, we'll highlight the dire state of renting in 2017 and push the next Government to implement stronger regulations for dodgy landlords. Are you able to chip in so we can pull it off?

"About half the New Zealand population now rents. Yet renters are still treated like second class citizens by many dodgy landlords. It's time we changed that.

"(2013 Census figures show 49.8% of people aged 15 years or over owned or partly owned the home they lived in. Meaning over half the people aged over 15 are renting or homeless.)

More: https://contribute-actionstation.nationbuilder.com/people_s_review_of_renting

Source: Action Station, 31st May 2017. ❖

Nepal Earthquake: 2 Years On

"Over two years since the devastating Nepal earthquakes, World Vision has been able to provide over 526,000 people with help rebuilding their lives. Thanks New Zealand for your support! This work has included renovating health clinics, building homes and classrooms, fixing water systems, and providing healthcare. Our work is ongoing and we're helping Nepalese families to build back stronger and be better prepared for the future.

"Thanks to the amazing support of generous Kiwis, World Vision has been able to provide over 526,000 people across the 10 hardest hit areas with aid to help rebuild their lives. We were on the ground from day one distributing immediate food, water and shelter to those impacted by the quake.

"We are still working in Nepal to help communities take ownership of their recovery and support the continued efforts to improve livelihoods, shelter, water and sanitation.

More: www.worldvision.org.nz/projects/emergencies/nepal-earthquake-response

Source: World Vision NZ, 31st May 2017. ❖

Did You Know?

ActionStation (in New Zealand) has a growing community which has now reached 170,000 people. Did you know that?

You can be part of this grassroots New Zealand action group getting action within New Zealand on matters which matter to New Zealanders, to make New Zealand more like a New Zealand most New Zealanders want.

In a 1st July eMail they say 'Like us, we imagine what you want is a society, democracy, and economy that puts everyday people and Papatūānuku (Mother Earth) first.

"Whether we're campaigning to get multinationals to contribute their fair share of taxes, clean up our rivers or save Radio New Zealand – what all our issues share is a broad commitment to fairness and the common good.

"This budding movement is a broad tent of fair-minded people who want to get things done. It's our shared values, plus a willingness to act, that makes someone an 'ActionStation kind of person'. Not your age, income, postcode, party politics or ethnic background.

"You might not have a lot of spare time or a huge bank account, but here you learn you don't need those things to make a big impact. When we all come together to do what we can, the result adds up to far more than the sum of its parts.

They then outline nine (9) initiatives which they have worked on during May and June; all helping to lead to a new New Zealand.

More: <https://medium.com/@laura.oc.rapira/nine-reasons-to-be-hopeful-%EF%B8%8F-448b10e5ad88> plus www.actionstation.org.nz/

Source: ActionStation, 1st July 2017. ❖

Landmark Supreme Court Decision on Environmental Rights – Pennsylvania

"In a landmark environmental decision, a majority of Pennsylvania's Supreme Court justices established a broad interpretation of the Environmental Rights Amendment to the state constitution Tuesday [20th June], cementing in place the commonwealth's role as trustee for public natural resources. The move is a victory for environmental advocates, and a defeat for the state and industrial polluters, who had argued that granting a wider interpretation could deter economic development.....

"The Commonwealth (including the Governor and General Assembly) may not approach our public natural resources as a proprietor, and instead must at all times fulfil its role as a trustee', wrote Donohue. 'Because the legislative enactments at issue here do not reflect that the Commonwealth complied with its constitutional duties, the order of the Commonwealth Court with respect to the constitutionality of 1602-E and 1603-E is reversed, and the order is otherwise vacated in all respects.'

"It clearly mandates the Commonwealth can no longer treat our natural resources as government property', said Childe. 'The only right the Commonwealth has is to act as trustee of our natural resources. The Court has specifically determined that that duty requires compliance with all legal fiduciary requirements of a trustee.'

"Just like the government can't take action that would deprive you of your free speech rights, or the right to bear arms, or private property rights, the same holds true for your environmental rights', said Yeager.

"He says any unreasonable environmental degradation resulting from permitting or legislation, could now be challenged in court on constitutional grounds.

More: <http://enviropoliticsblog.blogspot.co.nz/2017/06/a-landmark-decision-on-environmental.html>

Source: Frank Brill, Environmental Consulting Professionals, LinkedIn, 30th June 2017. ❖

Contributions and feedback are welcomed.

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