

# Sustainability Matters

3<sup>rd</sup> August 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.**

## Action Plan for Sensible Climate Decision-Making

"A Coalition of twenty New Zealand social and environmental NGOs has pulled together an Action Plan for Sensible Climate Decision-Making, to focus discussion ahead of the election under the banner of Climate Consensus Coalition Aotearoa (CCCA). The CCCA hopes that, if Parliament adopts the Action Plan, the next three years bring:

- Adoption of a science-based emissions reduction target,
- A legitimate, honest and coherent process around Parliament's climate change decision making, and
- Political debate focused on how we achieve what the science says is necessary.

"The CCCA is now inviting other NGOs big and small to join them, from around the country. Individuals can encourage any NGO (or similar) they are affiliated with to register their support or register directly themselves. So please distribute this email to your members if you can not sign as an Organisation. ....

"We preferably need to know by 7<sup>th</sup> August, so we can table the Action Plan on your behalf before Parliament rises for the election in mid-August. We will continue to gather support after this date, so if approvals require more time, please still register when you can.

"NGOs which helped develop this Plan include; Forest and Bird, NZ Quakers, Engineers for Social Responsibility, Ora Taiao (NZ Climate and Health Council), Sustainable Aotearoa, Ngati Makino Heritage Trust, ECO, Network Waitangi Otautahi, Coal Action Network, NZ Alpine Club, Congestion Free Wellington, Gen Zero, Pure Advantage, Making a difference for Central Otago, Pacific Institute of Resource Management, Public Issues Methodist Church, Choose Clean Water, Sustainable Wairarapa, Sustainable Energy Forum as well as a number of academics.

"Details of the Plan and other supporters are on the website. Please also pass this on to your contacts and other NGOs by email, Facebook or Twitter.

"Thank you for any support you can give this critically important initiative.

"Sincerely, Sir Alan F. Mark FRSNZ. Chair, Wise Response Society Inc (facilitating the CCCA initiative).

**More:** <http://climateconsensus.nz/>

**Source:** Climate Consensus Coalition Aotearoa, 27<sup>th</sup> July. ❖

## Crush Tax Avoidance

"Oxfam's new global report, *The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index*, ranks New Zealand a shocking 30<sup>th</sup> in the world for our inequality-tackling policies. That's the equivalent of Switzerland in world rugby rankings (which any Kiwi knows is not great!)

**More:** <https://actions.oxfam.org/new-zealand/crush-tax-avoidance/crush-tax-avoidance/> plus [www.oxfam.org.nz/reports/2017](http://www.oxfam.org.nz/reports/2017) 750Kb, 56 pages

**Source:** Oxfam, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

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



Announcements in 'due course'. ❖

## I Know What You Did Last Summer: Risks and Opportunities for Big Data

"Chaired by AUT Adjunct Professor Rod Oram, this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of a series of conversations about the future of Aotearoa New Zealand in a global economy.

"The focus of this event is the risks and opportunities created by the digital revolution, especially what this entails for policy and the shape and nature of government. The panel features Professor Rhema Vaithianathan (co-director of Centre for Social Data Analytics, AUT), Professor Tahu Kukutai (National Institute of Demographic and Economic Analysis, University of Waikato), Roger Dennis (innovation consultant and Strategic Insights Panel) and Keith Ng (investigative data journalist).

**When:** 5:30-7:00pm, **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug 2017**

**Where:** AUT WA224 Conference Centre 55 Wellesley St, Auck

**More:** <https://thepolicyobservatory.aut.ac.nz/events/i-know-what-you-did-last-summer-risks-and-opportunities-for-big-data>

**Source:** SBN, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## The Science, Business, and Education of Sustainable Infrastructure: Building Resilience in a Changing World

"Sustainable development is a decades-old concept based on the goal of creating an economy that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Today, sustainable infrastructure applies this systems thinking to create infrastructure that meets current needs and anticipates the needs of future generations to support growth and prosperity, including access for all in a changing world.

"Sound public policy choices guiding the science, education and training, engineering, planning, and lifecycle management required to create these new infrastructure systems can transform the way people interact with and impact the environment

"Sustainable Infrastructure refers to:

- Natural Infrastructure provides ecological services such as clean air, water, biodiversity, food, and fiber
- Built Infrastructure enables transportation, housing, energy, and communications services
- Cyberinfrastructure supports the data, technology, and transmission to technological advancements and provides technical capacity
- Social Infrastructure enables education, research, and other human services.

**When/Where:** 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Washington, DC

**More:** <https://ncseconference.org/2017/07/26/sustainable-infrastructure-building-our-future/>

**Source:** NCSE, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## UK Green Roof Report 2017

"... Until now there has been no understanding of the value of the green roof market to the industry or the national economy.

This report provides a detailed understanding of how the UK green roof industry is performing in terms of market size. ...

**More:** [https://livingroofs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/AUG\\_FINAL\\_GREEN-ROOF-MARKET-REPORT.pdf](https://livingroofs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/AUG_FINAL_GREEN-ROOF-MARKET-REPORT.pdf) 34 pages, 12.451Mb

**Source:** Russell Bailie LinkedIn, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## Not Green Enough: Local Government, the Resource Management Act & the Environment

"Geoffrey Palmer says the performance of local government in relation to the environment seems to be seriously deficient.

"The Resource Management Act 1991 conferred on local government important responsibilities to protect New Zealand's environment. The Act is all about imposing environmental bottom lines that keep economic development within the capacity of the environment to support it.

"Regional councils, where they exist, have heavy responsibilities to maintain New Zealand's clean and green image. Yet, in many respects they have failed.

"The principles of sustainable management that drive the Resource Management Act can be, and have been, subverted by a number of factors:

- Weak central government leadership in providing the policy guidance the Act entrusts to it;
- political influences on regional councils that attempt to tip the scales against the environment and in favour of development;
- Government policies explicitly designed to encourage the intensification of agriculture by raising primary production export earnings and subsidising irrigation projects;
- Conflicts of interest within regional councils between obligations as environmental regulators compared with development activities undertaken by the council, the most egregious example being the Ruataniwha Dam project in the Hawkes Bay;
- Failure to enforce the law contained in plans and enforce consent conditions, thus going soft on polluters. Dr Marie Brown's recently published research for the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) demonstrates the point.

"The great advantage of the Environment Court in resource management matters flows from its judicial independence.

"The court listens objectively to the evidence, usually based on science, and tests it against the requirements of the Act on sustainable management.

"The court is free from political spin, bias and the influence of special interests.

"Two recent decisions from the Environment Court demonstrate the value of its processes.

"The first is a case the Wellington Fish & Game Council and Environmental Defence Society brought against the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council concerning the Regional One Plan. The issue here was water quality. (Decision [2017] NZEnvC 37.)

"The second was the 11th decision of the Environment Court, an appeal by Federated Farmers and others concerning the scope of intensive farming activities in the MacKenzie Basin. (Decision [2017] NZEnvC 53.)

"Both decisions repay close study for anyone interested in knowing how the environment is faring under the stewardship of local government in New Zealand....

"What inferences can fairly be drawn from this record?

"First, the performance of local government in relation to the environment appears to be seriously deficient.

"It may be reasonably concluded that local government has an obligation to lift its game to protect the environment.

"It must not be pushed around by powerful economic interests whose activities pollute.

"Robust systems that implement the law are required and they must be enforced.

"Expensive trips to the Environment Court should not be necessary if local government does its job properly.

"What is at stake here are the interests of future generations whose interests the Resource Management Act is explicitly designed to protect.

**More:** <http://snippets.energyts.com/snippets/20170727/story8.html>

**Source:** *Snippets*, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## Nearly a Billion People Defecate Outdoors – Here's Why

"Defecating in the open is as old as humankind. As long as population densities were low and the earth could safely absorb human wastes, it caused few problems. But as more people gathered in towns and cities, we gradually learned the link between hygiene and health and, in particular, the importance of avoiding contact with faeces. Today open defecation is on the decline worldwide, but nearly 950 million people still routinely practice it. Some 569 million of them live in India. Walk along its train tracks or rural roads, and you will readily encounter the evidence.

"In 2015 the United Nations called for an end to open defecation by 2030. It's not impossible to make great strides: Vietnam, for example, has all but eliminated the practice over the past few decades. Achieving the global milestone, number six on the UN's list of Sustainable Development Goals, would radically improve public health: Diseases caused by poor sanitation and unsafe water kill more children, some 1.4 million per year, than measles, malaria, and AIDS combined. It also would help alleviate poverty and hunger and improve education. Sick kids miss school, and so do menstruating girls whose schools lack a clean and safe toilet.

"India has been grappling with the problem since before it won independence from Great Britain in 1947. 'Sanitation is more important than independence', Mahatma Gandhi said, urging his compatriots to clean up their act. To some extent they have: The percentage of Indians who defecate in the open has declined substantially in recent decades. But with the population growing rapidly, census data suggest that most Indians now live in places where they are more exposed to others' faeces, not less. .... [Lengthy article].

**More:** [www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/08/toilet-defecate-outdoors-stunting-sanitation](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/08/toilet-defecate-outdoors-stunting-sanitation)

**Source:** *National Geographic*, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017. ❖

## A Tale of Two Countries: Why This Expert Thinks NZ Should Copy UK's Climate Change Policy

"The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment wants climate change targets embedded into law, with 'carbon budgets' for expenditure set 12 years ahead of time.

"The recommendation is the main thrust of commissioner Jan Wright's final report before retirement, released on Thursday afternoon. [27<sup>th</sup> July 2017]

"It calls for New Zealand to make much bolder and more specific plans for how to reach our emissions targets.

"A new report says New Zealand has no plan to meet its current climate change targets.

"Currently, Wright has no confidence that New Zealand will meet the target it signed up to in Paris, let alone its one for 2050.

"There is no direct link between New Zealand climate policy and reaching the Paris target.'

"There has been a lot of debate around what our targets should be. But I'm much more interested in how we are actually going to achieve them.'

"The Paris target, signed up to by the current Government in 2015, commits New Zealand to reducing our net emissions of harmful gases to 57.7 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year. The target for 2050 32.3 million tonnes per year. [See graphs]

**More:** [www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/95158809/climate-change-commissioner-calls-for-nz-to-make-climate-targets-law](http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/95158809/climate-change-commissioner-calls-for-nz-to-make-climate-targets-law) plus [www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/07/27/40266/politicians-told-to-sit-down-and-cap-the-carbon](http://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/07/27/40266/politicians-told-to-sit-down-and-cap-the-carbon) and [www.pce.parliament.nz/media/1714/stepping-stones-final-web.pdf](http://www.pce.parliament.nz/media/1714/stepping-stones-final-web.pdf) 38 pages, 3.254Mb *Stepping stones to Paris and beyond: Climate change, progress, and predictability*

**Source:** TVNZ, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## Sustainable Future Collective

"The Sustainable Future Collective (SFC) is a group of students from all faculties of UoA (University of Auckland) interested in a sustainable future. Our goal is to promote conversation around all aspects of sustainability, from reducing our personal environmental impact to exploring how sustainability can be incorporated into our courses and professions. We bring a fresh, contemporary perspective towards these issues and take sustainability beyond tree-hugging. We are a place for likeminded people to come together in working towards a better University of Auckland, and a better world. Whether you are a University of Auckland student or not, become an official member of SFC by signing up.

"University of Auckland club Sustainable Future Collective asked Auckland Council to join the battle against plastic packaging at a meeting on March 14.

"The call comes after Christchurch Council started trialling its own blanket rule in February.

"In the trial food vendors at Christchurch's Night Noodle Markets, Sparks in the Park and the Lantern Festival had to use pre-approved compostable packaging.

"SFC spokeswoman Isabel Gunn said Christchurch Council's decision would have diverted thousands of single-use packaging items from landfills.

"Christchurch is leading the way, there is simply no reason why Auckland cannot follow suit," Gunn said.

"According to Recycle.co.nz Auckland produces 1.5 million tonnes of waste per year, and it predicted within the next 10 years that would increase to 3 million tonnes per year. ....

**More:** <https://nz.linkedin.com/company/the-sustainable-future-collective> plus [www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/central-leader/90470480/Calls-for-blanket-compostable-packaging-at-Auckland-events](http://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/central-leader/90470480/Calls-for-blanket-compostable-packaging-at-Auckland-events) and [www.facebook.com/sustainablefuturecollective](http://www.facebook.com/sustainablefuturecollective)

**Source:** Green Drinks, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017

**PS:** Green Drinks – Brothers Brewery, 5 Akiraho St, Mt Eden, Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August from 5.30pm – go to [www.greendrinks.org//Auckland](http://www.greendrinks.org//Auckland). ❖

## Consumer or Citizen? – New Citizenship Programme

"New Citizenship Project explores what impact the false and limiting idea of 'the consumer' is having; to envision what it might look like to root our work in a bigger, more truthful idea of humanity; and to discover how we as individuals and organisations might act differently right now to create the future we want.

"This report offers a new way of understanding the current period of intense societal change, conceptualising it as the Citizen Shift: the shift from Consumer to Citizen as the dominant idea of the role of the individual in society.

"This understanding frames a radically different question which we can all work with: rather than thinking of people as Consumers, which leads us to ask only what we can sell to 'them' (whoever 'they' are), this approach prompts us to think of ourselves instead as Citizens, and to ask what it is we can all participate in and contribute to. The core proposition is that this shift in thinking provides a far more generative platform for ideas, innovation, social and environmental justice, and indeed economic prosperity.

"As such, the report has two functions, and is split into two sections in order to address them: the first establishes the concept of the Citizen Shift; the second helps you figure out what it means for you.

**More:** <http://radar.sustainability.com/issue-14/what-i-have-learned-john-alexander-new-citizenship-project.php>, plus [www.citizenshift.info](http://www.citizenshift.info) and <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0swicN11uhbWEJSeDRFeGNMaF/viewview>, 36 pages 8.52Mb

**Source:** SustainAbility's *Radar* Magazine. Issue 14: Summer 2017, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## World Needs 'Revolution' in Mental Health Care – UN Rights Expert

"The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Dainius Pūras, has called for a sea change in mental health care around the world, urging States and psychiatrists to act with courage to reform a crisis-hit system built on outdated attitudes.

"We need little short of a revolution in mental health care to end decades of neglect, abuse and violence", Mr. Pūras said after presenting his latest report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva [6<sup>th</sup> June 2017].

"Mental health is grossly neglected within health systems around the world. Where mental health systems exist, they are segregated from other healthcare and based on outdated practices that violate human rights.

"I am calling on States to move away from traditional practices and thinking, and enable a long overdue shift to a rights-based approach. The status quo is simply unacceptable."

"He added: 'Mental health policies and services are in crisis – not a crisis of chemical imbalances, but of power imbalances. We need bold political commitments, urgent policy responses and immediate remedial action.'

"Mr. Pūras said there was a 'grossly unmet' need for rights-based care and support. Progress was being hindered by huge power imbalances in the systems currently used in policymaking, service provision, medical education and research. Other major obstacles included the dominance of the biomedical model, with its overdependence on medication, and the 'biased' use of evidence, which was contaminating knowledge about mental health.

"There is now unequivocal evidence of the failures of a system that relies too heavily on the biomedical model of mental health services, including the front-line and excessive use of psychotropic medicines, and yet these models persist", Mr. Pūras said.

"This pattern occurs in countries across the national income spectrum. It represents a failure to integrate evidence and the voices of those most affected into policy, and a failure to respect, protect and fulfil the right to health."

"In his report, Mr. Pūras warns power and decision-making in mental health are concentrated in the hands of 'biomedical gatekeepers', particularly those representing biological psychiatry. ....

**More:** <http://drleaf.com/blog/mental-health-news-june-2017/> plus 21 page, 312kb report at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/076/04/PDF/G1707604.pdf> and [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21689&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21689&LangID=E)

**Source:** Craig Skinner, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017. ❖

## Supermarkets Under the Spotlight

"There is no doubt that supermarkets dominate the grocery sector. Their convenience and cheap prices make it hard to avoid them. In this [UK] report, we find that it's their suppliers and farmers who are often paying the price for such budget pricing.

**More:** [www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalreports/supermarketssectorreport.aspx](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalreports/supermarketssectorreport.aspx) plus Groceries Code Adjudicator at [www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalreports/supermarketssectorreport/supermarketssupplychains.aspx](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalreports/supermarketssectorreport/supermarketssupplychains.aspx) and Supermarkets: ethics under the spotlight at [www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/food/supermarkets.aspx](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/food/supermarkets.aspx) --> In India, the introduction of GM cotton has been linked to spiralling farmer debt and a huge wave of suicides – over the last 20 years 290,000 farmers have committed suicide. Co-op, Marks & Spencer and Tesco now all have policies not to source from Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. Waitrose says its produce 'comes from internationally recognised (pre-1967) borders' but the position of John Lewis Partnership is unclear. There's much more.

**Source:** CSEAR, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017, page 10. ❖

## Social Enterprise World Forum Christchurch 2017

"The theme for SEWF 2017, 'Ka koroki te manu – Creating our tomorrow', is an invitation to create a global legacy of positive change and to take an active role in shaping the world's future. Just as the first birdsong welcomes the potential of tomorrow, SEWF 2017 is a chance to come together and explore the endless possibility in ours.

"The Social Enterprise World Forum 2017 is an international event for social enterprises from all over the world to come together, share wisdom, build networks and discuss how to create a more sustainable future. The event attracts social enterprise practitioners, social entrepreneurs, policy makers, community leaders, investors, activists, academics and more from all across the globe. We want to invite you to join in on the conversation.

"So if you are exploring, operating, funding or supporting social enterprises and the environment they operate in, join us in Christchurch, New Zealand 27<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> September for SEWF 2017!

"Social enterprise plays an important role in building healthy communities – they reduce poverty, build food systems, celebrate diversity, promote Indigenous culture, meet health needs, create employment opportunities for those with barriers, deliver community owned energy and address environmental issues, economic inequality and social exclusion. If you concerned with similar issues, and are using business models to re-build communities, then SEWF 2017 is an opportunity to find wisdom, inspiration and support in your endeavours.

"We use our worldwide forum to provide the tools to enhance your knowledge and skills, build a supportive public policy environment, and create a generous network of collaboration and sharing. We examine transferrable strategies, systems and models that have worked in the past, while also turning toward the future to explore emerging market opportunities in the long-term.

"Social enterprise is our tool to build healthy communities and vibrant local economies – and SEWF 2017 is the global platform to share your story, learn from others and celebrate progress together. We hope to see you there!

**When/Where:** 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Christchurch.

**More:** <http://sustainable.org.nz/sustainability-news/social-enterprise-good-business-medicine-from-sir-ray-avery> plus [www.sewf2017.org/](http://www.sewf2017.org/)

**Source:** SBN, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

**Editor:** Huge line-up of speakers – over 70! ❖

## Fortune 500 Companies Accelerating Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency Efforts

"While the US administration may be questioning its climate commitments, American businesses certainly are not. New research out in April showed that Fortune 500 companies saved \$3.7 billion reducing emissions last year, the equivalent to decommissioning 45 coal-fired power plants. Meanwhile, the Energy Transitions Commission's zero-carbon roadmap tells us that cutting emissions in half by 2040 is well within reach. The evidence is clear: the scales have tipped on the low-carbon transition and the only way is forward.

"..... The report highlights the financial benefits companies receive from their clean energy investments: Nearly 80,000 emission-reducing projects by 190 Fortune 500 companies reporting data showed nearly \$3.7 billion in savings in 2016 alone. .... Praxair, IBM and Microsoft are among the companies saving tens of millions of dollars annually through their energy efficiency efforts. ....

"The report includes key recommendations for companies, policymakers and investors to continue to scale clean energy efforts; .....

**More:** [www.cdp.net/en/articles/climate/power-forward-3-0-press-release](http://www.cdp.net/en/articles/climate/power-forward-3-0-press-release) plus link to the report (very long URL) 86 pages 10.327Mb

**Source:** CSEAR, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017, page 16. ❖

## Climate Change on the Corporate Governance Landscape

"Climate change is no longer just an ethical environmental issue. It has fast become a matter of corporate governance, with regulators both here and abroad increasing oversight and pressure on greater corporate disclosure of climate change risks.

"At the same time, litigation against companies and their boards on climate change exposures has accelerated pace.

"As a result, the implications of climate change on the personal liabilities of company directors are increasingly apparent. Against this changing landscape, this paper examines what protection for climate change exposure can be offered under current directors and officers (D&O) policies, where potential gaps in cover exist, and how a policy is likely to respond in the event of a regulatory investigation, shareholder litigation or the threat of an adverse outcome. ....

"Canvasses;

- D&O [Director and Officer] policies — personal asset protection
- The gaps in D&O cover
- Third party vs first party cover
- Regulatory investigations
- Importance of notification

**More:** [www.marsh.com/au/insights/research/climate-change-on-the-corporate-governance-landscape.html](http://www.marsh.com/au/insights/research/climate-change-on-the-corporate-governance-landscape.html) 1.357Mb 10 pages (4 pages in *Chartered Secretary*, Dec. 2016)

**Source:** Ian Edwards, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017. ❖

## Sustainability Key to Award-winning Design for Next Generation of Medium Density Housing

"An innovative multi-unit development featuring a WA-first construction system, outstanding sustainability credentials and adaptable apartments has set the bar for the future of medium density housing in Perth, after being revealed as the winner of LandCorp's *Step Up Housing Design* Competition.

"The winning design [using passive haus system], by Fremantle-based David Barr Architects, will be built at LandCorp's Shoreline development in North Coogee with a strong focus on liveability and sustainability.

"The *Step Up Housing Design* project will be WA's first apartment building to achieve an average 9-star NatHERS rating, meaning significant cost savings for residents.

"Leading sustainability strategies have shaped the building's design and ensured it meets key benchmarks including the One Planet Living matrix, Life Cycle Assessment, and NatHERS ratings system.

"The climate-responsive design has also been strategically positioned on-site to maximise winter sunlight while screens and battens moderate solar heat gain, allowing energy generated onsite to be used onsite and reducing peak demand by 30%.

"The project will be a Zero Energy Building, which will produce more energy than it consumes annually.

"A shared underground rainwater tank and above-code water efficiency measures will give an estimated 60% reduction in average water use, and cut up to \$180 from household water bills.

"The *Step Up Housing* project also enables reduced carbon emissions by limiting the use of concrete and ensuring each apartment is structurally air-tight, resulting in lower energy consumption.

"The modular design features a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments, which feature flexible space able to adapt to changing living requirements over time.....

**More:** [www.ecovoice.com.au/sustainability-key-to-award-winning-design-for-next-generation-of-medium-density-housing/](http://www.ecovoice.com.au/sustainability-key-to-award-winning-design-for-next-generation-of-medium-density-housing/) plus <https://stepup.landcorp.com.au/innovation/winning-design>

**Source:** *EcoVoice*, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## 16<sup>th</sup> Australasian CSEAR Conference – CALL FOR PAPERS

"The conference will provide an important forum for interaction between academicians and practitioners, in order to enhance understanding of social and environmental accounting issues in various countries.

"The theme is 'Accountability, Climate Change and Social Enterprise'. All submissions must be received by 31<sup>st</sup> Aug.

"We invite ..... presentations on any aspect of social and environmental accounting. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to: ...

**Where/When:** Denarau, Fiji, 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

**More:** [www.usp.ac.fj/acsear](http://www.usp.ac.fj/acsear)

**Source:** Carol Tilt, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming

By Paul Hawken, Penguin

"Drawdown maps, measures, models, and describes the 100 most substantive solutions to global warming. For each solution, we describe its history, the carbon impact it provides, the relative cost and savings, the path to adoption, and how it works. The goal of the research that informs Drawdown is to determine if we can reverse the buildup of atmospheric carbon within thirty years. All solutions modeled are already in place, well understood, analysed based on peer-reviewed science, and are expanding around the world.

"The subtitle of *Drawdown – The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* – may sound brash. We chose that description because no detailed plan to reverse warming has been proposed. There have been agreements and proposals on how to slow, cap, and arrest emissions, and there are international commitments to prevent global temperature increases from exceeding two degrees centigrade over pre-industrial levels. One hundred and ninety-five nations have made extraordinary progress in coming together to acknowledge that we have a momentous civilisational crisis on our earthly doorstep and have created national plans of action. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has accomplished the most significant scientific study in the history of humankind, and continues to refine the science, expand the research, and extend our grasp of one of the most complex systems imaginable – climate. However, there is as yet no roadmap that goes beyond slowing or stopping emissions.

"To be clear, our organisation did not create or devise a plan. We do not have that capability or self-appointed mandate. In conducting our research, we found a plan, a blueprint that already exists in the world in the form of humanity's collective wisdom, made manifest in applied, hands-on practices and technologies. Individuals, communities, farmers, cities, companies, and governments have shown that they care about this planet, its people, and its places. Engaged citizens world over are doing something extraordinary. This is their story.

**More:** [www.resilience.org/resources/drawdown/](http://www.resilience.org/resources/drawdown/)

**Source:** Post Carbon Institute, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017. ❖

## Running Dry: Seeking Solutions to South Asia's Looming Water Crisis

"In the e360 interview, New York University climatologist Sonali McDermid discusses a looming, two-pronged threat to agriculture in India and Pakistan: the steady depletion of aquifers for irrigation, and climate change. McDermid explains that so much underground water is being poured onto South Asian fields that the increased moisture is actually altering the region's monsoons.

"The solution, says McDermid, is to rein in a system of subsidised pumping of aquifers and to diversify the region's crops so they are better adapted to a hotter, drier world. Read the interview.

**More:** <http://e360.yale.edu/features/running-dry-seeking-solutions-to-south-asias-looming-water-crisis>

**Source:** *Yale Environment 360*, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. ❖

## Why Your Grandchildren Hate Your Refrigerator

"My graduation from Babson College this past spring was in most ways a typical one. The grass was green and neatly trimmed. The sun was out. Smiles simultaneously signaling nervousness and excitement lined everyone's faces. And of course, there were plenty of caps in the air and gowns in the wind. But there was one equally common part of the picture that may not seem quite as obvious: refrigerators.

"Yes, black mini fridges outside of residence halls are as clear in my memory as the black gowns we all wore stepping out of them. It's no secret that almost every college student has a mini fridge in their room, but it also doesn't seem to get brought up as the problem it is. Other than, of course, my friends complaining about having to walk all the way downstairs from my room to get to a fridge. It's tough living in collegiate America.

"What few realise, myself included for a time, is that these ~\$30 mini fridges from convenience heaven are one of the biggest threats to a future climate hell. It seems crazy and innocuous, or even dramatic, but it's really just the simple truth. Paul Hawken and his team recently released a groundbreaking book that highlights this problem: *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*. The book ranks 80 ways humans can definitely reverse global warming over the next 30 years, and places refrigerants as #1. Refrigerants are hardly ever brought up in the climate fight, and perhaps this is why it is currently such a big problem.

"Refrigerators and A/C units use hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) to absorb and release heat, thereby cooling food and buildings. Unfortunately, despite how much we love cooling everything, HFCs are incredibly dangerous for the climate. HFCs warm the atmosphere 1000-9000x more than carbon, which is not an estimate – it's an actual range that depends on the type of HFC in use.

"Fortunately, 200 nations agreed to ban HFCs through the Kigali Deal in 2016. John Kerry, who pioneered the deal, called tackling the problem: 'the biggest thing we can do [on climate] in one giant swoop.'

"However, despite this monumental global commitment, there are still, of course, an incredible amount of HFC powered fridges and A/C units in use. In addition, Project Drawdown projects 700 million more A/C units will come online by 2030, and the Kigali Deal allows many of them to be HFC powered during its phase out process. Finally, here's the kicker that makes this an important issue at the college student level: the danger of HFCs is not in their use – it's in their disposal. According to Project Drawdown, 90% of refrigerant emissions occur at end of life. ....

"So why did I go through all of college without buying a mini fridge, and why did I spend an entire day lugging a giant abandoned one to my girlfriend's house? Well, weirdly, those were each the single biggest actions I've ever taken on the most important issue of our time – and I've taken many. I didn't know they were as big as they were when I did them. I just simply saw waste and wanted to reduce it. This is what we all need to do to reach Drawdown, and this is what SaveOhno makes easy and empowering. For more on how SaveOhno tackles big climate problems at an individual level (and how your future/current grandchildren play into this), check out my last blog post on SaveOhno's spring activity.

"When I think back to my graduation I do not garner inspiration from the boilerplate speeches about ambition and success. I do not look back at a gown and see profound opportunity. But, weirdly, I do look back at a sea of mini fridges and think of all of that and more. These are the kinds of issues we need to seek out today – the boring ones that matter. The no-brainers receiving less than zero thought. If we continue to consume and improperly dispose with reckless abandonment, it almost does not even matter how effective our leaders are in the climate fight. And if you haven't heard, their effectiveness is on a pretty steep decline.

**More:** <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-your-grandchildren-hate-refrigerator-dylan-husted>

**Source:** *LinkedIn Pulse*, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## **Sick of Too Many Cows: How Intensive Livestock Farming Could be Endangering Our Health**

"The problem? We have too many cows. And Government-backed irrigation schemes are set to expand and intensify industrial dairying even further.

"Today [28<sup>th</sup> June] we covered Parliament lawn with a herd of mock dairy cows. They took our message straight to MPs: That we are literally 'Sick of Too Many Cows'. Now, it's a public health priority to stop the expansion and intensification of dairy.

"New Zealand has one of the highest reported rates of diseases passed from animals to humans (known as zoonoses) in the developed world. Our rates of cryptosporidiosis are higher than in Australia, the UK, Germany and the USA. Public health experts are also really concerned about the rise in Shiga toxin producing E.coli3, a very serious pathogen.

"But despite increased dairy cow density being associated with a rise in some of these illnesses, the Government continues to fund big irrigation schemes that will lead to yet more dairy intensification.

"And that means more cows and more contaminated water flowing back into our lakes and rivers....

"This Greenpeace report examines the potential connections between livestock farming, water pollution and public health.

"New research has heightened concerns that intensive livestock farming could increase risks to human health. In order to maintain a healthy population, we need to understand how livestock farming could affect our health. These risks must be carefully weighed, especially at a time when the Government is preparing to spend millions of taxpayer dollars to expand the dairy industry through irrigation.

**More:** [www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/en/reports/sick-of-too-many-cows/](http://www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/en/reports/sick-of-too-many-cows/), 20 pages, 3.728Mb plus [www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/en/press/Too-Many-Cows-Could-Make-Us-Sick---New-Greenpeace-NZ-Report](http://www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/en/press/Too-Many-Cows-Could-Make-Us-Sick---New-Greenpeace-NZ-Report) and <http://business.scoop.co.nz/2017/06/28/too-many-cows-could-make-us-sick/>

**Source:** Greenpeace, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017. ❖

## **Freshwater Rescue Plan**

"ECO is one of the supporters of the Freshwater Rescue Plan which was launched in June. A total of 16 major organisations with a collective membership of over 1 million people have now signed up to support the Plan;

1. Utilise world leading research to establish strict and enforceable water quality standards based on human and ecosystem health.
2. Withdraw all public subsidies of irrigation; currently \$480 million is earmarked for investment into irrigation schemes.
3. Redirect the irrigation funding to an agriculture transition fund to diversify to more environmentally friendly farming.
4. Begin decreasing cow numbers immediately.
5. Instigate a national 'polluter pays' policy in which those who produce pollution pay to clean it up.
6. Require quarterly reports from the Ministry for the Environment around consent breaches and monitoring by regional councils.
7. Take on board the OECD's recommendation to begin an all of government effort to transition to a low carbon economy.

"So far, the Government has rejected the FRP, and ignored requests for meetings with the Plan's supporters. The Government is not taking the degraded state of our rivers and lakes seriously.

**More:** [www.freshwaterrescueplan.org](http://www.freshwaterrescueplan.org) plus [www.freshwaterrescueplan.org/the-plan](http://www.freshwaterrescueplan.org/the-plan)

**Source:** Tieke: *ECO Alerts & Events*, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## **Accounting Standards Informs Sustainability Disclosure**

"It took 40 years for US GAAP and financial accounting standards to take hold, from five generally accepted principles of accounting presented by the American Institute of Accountants in 1932 to the founding of the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) in 1973.

"Today, we face a similar need for corporate reporting to evolve. The markets need standardised sustainability information in the same way they needed standardized financial information after the Great Depression. As SASB codifies its 79 industry standards in Q1 2018, how can the adoption of financial accounting standards inform sustainability disclosure?

"Join Robert Herz, former FASB Chair, Marc Siegel, FASB board member, and Jeffrey Hales, member of the FASB's Financial Accounting Standards Advisory Council (FASAC) and Vice-Chair of SASB, to learn more about:

- How the development of financial accounting standards restored investor confidence and improved market efficiency, providing a model for sustainability disclosure
- How changing investor interests have led to an ongoing evolution of accounting standards that will continue into the future
- How the adoption of a market standard for sustainability disclosure can benefit companies, investors, and regulators.

**When/Where:** Webinar 10:00am PST, 21<sup>st</sup> August

**More:** <https://registration.sasb.org/webinar/register.jsp>

**Source:** SASB, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## **7th Annual European Biomass to Power**

"Building up on the success of its six previous editions, the conference will give updates on the European biomass market and its new developments, as well as focus on sustainability and commodity challenges. Over the two days, the event will give you in-depth look into case studies giving practical examples of planning, finance and technology strategies utilised for biomass co-generation projects.

"Four site visits.

"Key Conference Topics Include:

- Global Biomass Market Developments
- Policy & Regulation
- Finance & Investment
- Sourcing & Sustainability of Supply
- Biomass Handling & Storage
- Biomass to Power Projects in Europe – Case Studies
- Breakthrough Technologies for Biomass to Power.

**When/Where:** 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in Aarhus, Denmark

**More:** [www.wplgroup.com/aci/event/european-biomass-to-power/](http://www.wplgroup.com/aci/event/european-biomass-to-power/)

**Source:** ACI (Europe) - Active Communications International Ltd, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017. ❖

## **Declare Ecolabel in New Zealand**

"The *Declare* eco-label NZ program is up and running led by Fiona Caulfield. Similar to a food ingredients label we aim to help 'consumers' avoid worst in class toxic chemicals through the manufacturing and procurement supply chain.

"There are 13 New Zealand Manufacturers representing 34 *Declare* certified products: ..... The *Declare* Database can now be filtered by selecting from the filter options available or can be searched using keywords. See the website to check out the *Declare* products available in New Zealand.

**More:** <https://living-future.org/declare/?location=New%20Zealand>

**Source:** Living Building Challenge, 24<sup>th</sup> July 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)