

# Sustainability Matters

26<sup>th</sup> October 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.**

## Like Final Result or not, NZ Democracy Leads World

"The formation of a Labour-led coalition Government will be celebrated by many – and even for those who would have preferred a different outcome, there are grounds for optimism and satisfaction. The new Government may not please everyone, but we can all feel encouraged that democracy in New Zealand worked well and is in good heart. ....

"There will be those who, given the chance, will pull faces and roll their eyes to emphasise their view that the outcome is 'a mess'. One can understand that their disappointment – even anger – at the outcome might lead to such unthinking reactions. But most of us, even those who may have voted for a different outcome, should take comfort from the fact that the good sense of the New Zealand voter and the strength of our political institutions have again prevailed. We remain a country that deserves to head international ratings for the effectiveness of our democracy. Let us all now work together so that we can reap the rewards.

### More:

[www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=11935984](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11935984)

**Source:** *NZ Herald*, page A17, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## Nudging the World Toward Smarter Public Policy

"Some economists spend their professional lives in a cloud-cuckoo-land building abstract models of a rational economy that doesn't exist, never existed, and never will exist. But Richard Thaler, the University of Chicago professor who just won the 2017 Nobel Prize in economics, is that rare academic whose ideas not only address real-world problems but have also been put into effect. In the United Kingdom, for example, a 'nudge unit' (actually, the Behavioural Insights Team) inspired by his work aims to develop policies helping citizens make better choices. It got its nickname from the title of the book Thaler wrote with Harvard's Cass Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, about applying behavioral economics to the functions of government. As Thaler said in a 2011 *McKinsey Quarterly* interview, 'My number-one mantra from *Nudge* is, 'Make it easy'—one of many principles that are no less applicable to business.

**More:** [www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/nudging-the-world-toward-smarter-public-policy-an-interview-with-richard-thaler](http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/nudging-the-world-toward-smarter-public-policy-an-interview-with-richard-thaler)

**Source:** *McKinsey Classics*, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## GRI Facts and Figures at Age 20 Years

A picture is worth a 1,000 words so best to look at the extensive infographics which comprise the bulk of this article! The reach and impact of GRI's work might surprise you. The tool is certainly one which CA ANZ members and others should grasp and use and which especially accounting and business educators should expose students to.

**More:** [www.globalreporting.org/gri-20/Pages/Facts-and-figures.aspx](http://www.globalreporting.org/gri-20/Pages/Facts-and-figures.aspx)

**Source:** GRI, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

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



Announcements in 'due course'. ❖

## Labouratory

By George Monbiot

".... Sustained economic growth on a planet that is not growing means crashing through environmental limits: this is what we are witnessing, worldwide, today. A recent paper in *Nature* puts our current chances of keeping global heating to less than 1.5°C at of just 1%, and less than 2° at only 5%. Why? Because while the carbon intensity of economic activity is expected to decline by 1.9% a year, global per capita GDP is expected to grow by 1.8%. Almost all investment in renewables and efficiency is cancelled out. GDP, the index that was supposed to measure our prosperity, instead measures our progress towards ruin.

"But the great rupture that began in 2008 offers a chance to change all this. The challenge now is to ensure that the new political movements threatening established power in Britain and elsewhere create the space not for old ideas (such as 20th Century Keynesianism) but for a new politics, built on new economic and social foundations.

"There may be a case for one last hurrah for the old model: a technological shift that resembles the Second World War's military Keynesianism. In 1941, the US turned the entire civilian economy around on a dime: within months, car manufacturers were producing planes, tanks and ammunition. A determined government could do something similar in response to climate breakdown: a sudden transformation, replacing our fossil economy. But having effected such a conversion, it should, I believe, then begin the switch to a different economic model.

"The new approach could start with the idea of private sufficiency and public luxury. There is not enough physical or environmental space for everyone to enjoy private luxury: if everyone in London acquired a tennis court, a swimming pool, a garden and a private art collection, the city would cover England. Private luxury shuts down space, creating deprivation. But magnificent public amenities – wonderful parks and playgrounds, public sports centres and swimming pools, galleries, allotments and public transport networks – create more space for everyone, at a fraction of the cost.

"Wherever possible, I believe such assets should be owned and managed by neither state nor market, but by communities, in the form of commons....

"And the money the government still invests? To the greatest extent possible, I believe it should be controlled by participatory budgeting. In the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, the infrastructure budget is allocated by the people: around 50,000 citizens typically participate. The results – better water, sanitation, health, schools and nurseries – have been so spectacular that large numbers of people now lobby the city council to raise their taxes. When you control the budget, you can see the point of public investment.

"In countries like the UK, we could not only adopt this model,

but extend it beyond the local infrastructure budget to other forms of local and even national spending. The principle of subsidiarity – devolving powers to the smallest political unit that can reasonably discharge them – makes such wider democratic control more feasible. ....

**More:** [www.monbiot.com/2017/10/13/labouratory/](http://www.monbiot.com/2017/10/13/labouratory/)

**Source:** Malcolm Rands, Facebook share, 15<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2017 ❖

## NZ's Slow-moving Disaster as Sea Level Rises

"Dave Cull [Dunedin's Mayor] calls it a slow-moving disaster.

"That might be a tired *cliche* to describe climate change – a quick Google search will find you more than 300,000 similar references – but Cull can use it with a great degree of candour.

"The Dunedin mayor is already reckoning with the monster. South Dunedin – home to about 10,000 residents, 12 schools, six rest homes and an aged wastewater and stormwater system – sits across a spread of low-lying flats between Otago Harbour and the Pacific Ocean.

"Even just 20cm to 40cm of sea-level rise will mean the suburb's water table will rise, exposing it to flooding after heavy rain that could damage roads, pipes, cables, buildings and parks.

"If you take a situation where there is possible retreat or coastal erosion, and it's affecting privately owned properties – in the case of South Dunedin it's rather a lot of them – then it's not imminent, but it's still kind of like a slow-moving earthquake."

"Other hot spots include ....

**More:**

[www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=11935975](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11935975) – a 12 minute read with photos and graphic

**Source:** *NZ Herald*, Page A6, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## Twelve Questions with Ian Short, Former Lehman Brothers Investment Banker

"Former Lehman Brothers investment banker Ian Short helped lead East London's redevelopment for the Olympics and Europe's shift to a low-emission economy. He's come home to show New Zealand how a joined-up 'systems approach' is the best way to address climate change.

### "4. You left Lehman to redevelop East London for the Olympics. Was the public sector a big change?

"It was a real culture shock. I found the politics so bloody hard. I nearly went back to Lehman several times because it was so satisfying being able to make things happen. You'd lay out a case, get the resources and implement change. Democracy is a hell of a lot slower. It took me a while to realise that the overall impact I was having was worth the day-to-day pain. The other eye-opener was how many smart people work in the public sector for a fraction of the pay. Bankers had bamboozled society into thinking their jobs are so complex they're worth stupid amounts of money but they're not.

### "5. What did you achieve in East London?

"I helped set up an urban development corporation responsible for delivering 40,000 new homes and 28,000 new jobs in a high-deprivation area around Olympic Park. So many Olympic Parks end up as ghost towns but London managed to create a sustainable community by getting the mayor's office, universities and corporates all working together. I learned how much more can be achieved with a joined-up approach rather than just dealing with housing or transport or social needs in isolation. ....

### "10. How do you encourage that kind of collaboration?

"Collaboration is not a natural instinct. People really struggle with it so we look for places where cool integrated stuff is already happening and highlight that to give others the confidence to do it. It's happening in small pockets but not nearly enough. One example is the social investment approach created by the Ministry of Social Development. In 2008 data expert James Mansell analysed a group of 2000 6-year-olds using data from across government departments to work out that 50% of them would cost the state an average of \$1.5 million each. The Government set up a social investment agency in July to get multiple organisations working collectively to help that 50%. It's working well. ....

### "12. Can New Zealand make the cultural shift?

"It is a significant behaviour change but it's happening quickly. The next generation already think in terms of a shared economy with things like *Spotify*. China has the equivalent of *Spotify* for umbrellas and basketballs in playgrounds. I'm seeing real commitment from Auckland Council and central Government to step up how we deliver this stuff. It's hugely exciting.

**More:**

[www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=3&objectid=11933560](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11933560)

**Source:** *NZ Herald*, pages A28 and A27, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## Seniors Contribution to the Workforce

"Over the next two decades the contribution of seniors in paid and voluntary work will increase dramatically, according to the latest findings in the *Business of Ageing 2017 Update*. ...

"By 2036, the percentage of the workforce that's over 65 is predicted to increase from 7% (2016) to 11%. Over the same period, the actual number of seniors in the workforce is predicted to almost double from 165,700 to 319,000.

"2017 key findings

- More seniors will participate in the workforce
- The economic value of paid and unpaid work by seniors is projected to increase from \$6.5 billion in 2016 to \$17 billion in 2036
- Voluntary work is projected to grow from about \$11 billion a year in 2016 to \$25 billion a year in 2036
- Older people's contribution to tax revenue is projected to increase from a total of \$5.5 billion to \$13.5 billion in 2036
- As consumers, seniors are projected to spend around \$50.5 billion in 2036 – a rise from around \$20.5 billion currently.

**More:**

<http://superseniors.msd.govt.nz/webadmin/html/email/superseniors-october-2017.html>

**Source:** Ministry of Social Development, 18<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2017. ❖

## The Community Resilience Reader: Essential Resources for an Era of Upheaval

"National and global efforts have failed to stop climate change, transition from fossil fuels, and reduce inequality. We must now confront these and other increasingly complex problems by building resilience at the community level. *The Community Resilience Reader* combines a fresh look at the challenges humanity faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the essential tools of resilience science, and the wisdom of activists, scholars, and analysts working with community issues on the ground. It shows that resilience is a process, not a goal; that resilience requires learning to adapt but also preparing to transform; and that resilience starts and ends with the people living in a community.

"From the producers of the award-winning *The Post Carbon Reader* (2010), *The Community Resilience Reader* is a valuable resource for students, community leaders, and concerned citizens

**More:** [www.postcarbon.org/publications/community-resilience-reader/](http://www.postcarbon.org/publications/community-resilience-reader/)

**Source:** Post Carbon Institute, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## Bread Top of the Heap for Wasted Food

"Every hour about 2200 loaves of bread are thrown away in New Zealand – making it our most wasted food item.

"To demonstrate the scale of this wastage, engineering students at the University of Canterbury today built a pyramid made from 2283 loaves of bread.

"The construction was an awareness-raising event organised by Christchurch City Council's Solid Waste Team and another group called Love Food Hate Waste.

"The 2.5 metre high by 2.5 metre wide structure which weighed 1.7 tonnes took about three hours to build....

"Research shows that 16-24 year olds and large households are the groups most likely to waste food so the bread pyramid was chosen as a dramatic way to educate students.

"Stephanie Huet, of the Council's Solid Waste Team, says New Zealanders throw away more than 122,000 tonnes of food a year, including about 20 million loaves of bread. That amount of food (worth about \$872 million) would feed Dunedin's population for two years.

"The message we want to give is don't waste bread, look at how awesome it is as an ingredient." .....

**More:** <https://cccgovt.nz.cwp.govt.nz/news-and-events/newsline/show/2040>

**Source:** *Christchurch Newsline*, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## What's up with the [N.Z.] EPA?

"Rod Oram asked this question a recent column. His answers provide a very interesting insight into the way government agencies go about regulating and making decisions on potentially harmful substances, in this case glyphosate, which WHO has designated as probably a carcinogen.

"The Ministry for the Environment is looking into the way the EPA handled this, and the agency's verdict that glyphosate is ok to use. Rod Oram asks if the EPA is properly fulfilling its statutory obligations to identify and manage the risks in hazardous substances, and reveals some startling conclusions.

**More:** [www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/10/07/52025/rod-oram-chief-scientist-concerned-about-epa](http://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/10/07/52025/rod-oram-chief-scientist-concerned-about-epa)

**Source:** *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## Beyond Biodiversity: A New Way of Looking at How Species Interconnect

"In 1966, an ecologist at the University of Washington named Robert Paine removed all the ochre starfish from a short stretch of Pacific shoreline on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. The absence of the predator had a dramatic effect on its ecosystem. In less than a year, a diverse tidal environment collapsed into a monoculture of mussels because the starfish was no longer around to eat them.

"By keeping mussel numbers down, the starfish had allowed many other species to thrive, from seaweed to sponges. Paine's research led to the well-known concept of keystone species: The idea that some species in an ecosystem have prevailing traits — in this case preying on mussels — whose importance is far greater than the dominant traits of other species in that ecosystem.

"Now, a half-century later, researchers are taking the study of traits much farther, with some scientists concluding that understanding the function of species can tell us more about ecosystems than knowing which species are present — a concept known as functional diversity. This idea is not merely academic, as scientists say that understanding functional diversity can play an important role in shaping conservation programs to enhance biodiversity and preserve or restore ecosystems.

"The trait perspective is very powerful", says Jonathan Lefcheck, a researcher at the Bigelow Marine Lab in East Boothbay, Maine who studies functional diversity in marine environments. "Some species in an ecosystem are redundant, and some species are very powerful."

"Much about the concept is also unknown. One case study is taking place along the Mekong River, a 2,700-mile waterway that serves as a vital fishery for millions of people in Southeast Asia. While the fishery is healthy now, widespread changes in the ecosystem ..... could mean that key fish species might not be round to carry out important functions .....

"Researchers in Jena, Germany established the Jena Experiment to follow up on this work. They found there are plants, such as wild tobacco, that emit 'messenger molecules' when they are under assault by herbivores to attract predators from miles away that eat their enemies. This trait not only benefits the tobacco, but other species in the neighbouring plant community.

"Experts say these findings could also help agriculture rely less on pesticides by understanding the right mix of plants to maximise predator defences. 'Varying the expression of just a few genes in a few individuals can have large protective effects for the whole field', says Meredith Schuman, a researcher on the Jena Experiment at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology.

"It's an economically tenable way to recover the lost benefits of biodiversity for the vast expanses of land that have already been converted from natural, biodiverse habitats into agricultural monocultures."

"These new approaches to ecology show how limited the science has been. Many researchers welcome the change. 'Ecology has moved from counting species to accounting for species', says Cadotte.

**More:** <http://e360.yale.edu/features/beyond-biodiversity-a-new-way-of-looking-at-how-species-interconnect>

**Source:** *Yale Environment 360*, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## Numbers – Correct, Misleading or Wrong?

"A recent story about 621 coal-fired power plants being built globally was played up in various media – but the figure is way off the mark.

"This is a story about how misinformation can take hold. It's not always down to dishonesty. Sometimes it's just a lack of time, a headline and the multiplying power of ideological certainty.

"Last week [2<sup>nd</sup> week October], China announced it was stopping or postponing work on 151 coal plants that were either under, or earmarked for, construction.

"Last month, India reported its national coal fleet on average ran at little more than 60% of its capacity – among other things, well below what is generally considered necessary for an individual generator to be financially viable.

"Neither of these stories gained much of a foothold in the Australia media. But one story on global coal did: that 621 plants were being built across the planet.

"The line was run in print, repeated on national radio and rippled out on social media among likeminded audiences. Some politicians and commentators claimed it showed it was strange, maybe even ridiculous, that MPs, financiers and energy companies said new coal power stations had no role to play in Australia.

"But the figure is wrong. Way off, in fact. According to the most recent data, there are 267 coal stations under construction. More than 40% of those are not actually new ones, but expansions of existing generators. ... [Table]

"While the stations/units confusion is relevant, it is not the main issue. The 621 is incorrect, however you cut it. ....

"More coal-fired capacity is still being built than closed each year, though the gap has narrowed significantly. [Graph]

"But, crucially, coal stations are not being used as much. The amount of electricity produced across the planet by burning coal has fallen each year since 2013.

"A distinction needs to be kept in mind between capacity and electrical output', Nace says. 'Even though there are more power plants, the actual production of electricity from those plants – and likewise the amount of coal used worldwide – has fallen every year since 2013, with a small drop in 2014 and larger drops in 2015 and 2016.'" [Graph]

"As in so many things, the extraordinary story in coal comes from China. It still uses a stack of it, and is still building plenty of power stations. But according to a breakdown of the latest cancellation data announced last week by Simon Holmes à Court, senior adviser at the University of Melbourne's energy transition hub, it stopped construction at 33 sites in the past three months alone.

"It means that since July, the number of new coal stations being built in China has fallen from 103 to just 74. There has also been a slight decrease in the number being expanded, down to 46. The reason? A glut in the Chinese electricity market. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis found its coal fleet ran at only 47.5% capacity last year.

"India is the other big player, with 45 power stations under construction – 19 new plants and 26 being expanded. While debate continues to rage over whether the Australian government should subsidise Adani's planned giant export coal mine in outback Queensland, existing Indian coal plants – including those owned by Adani – are struggling.....

"What does all this mean for Australia? In terms of the political debate, probably very little. Given the modern aversion to the persuasive power of evidence, misinformation will find a way.

"But don't let yourself be kidded into thinking only local investors are leaving coal behind.

**More:**

[www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/16/world-going-slow-coal-misinformation-distorting-facts](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/16/world-going-slow-coal-misinformation-distorting-facts)

**Source:** *Carbon News*, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## A Guide to the Top Social Enterprises in NZ Right Now

"The Social Enterprise World Forum in Christchurch may be over, but the conversation continues on The Spinoff, with a list of the coolest Kiwi social enterprises selected by those in the know .... [Seven case studies provided.]

**More:** <https://thespinoff.co.nz/business/05-10-2017/a-guide-to-the-top-social-enterprises-in-nz-right-now/>

**Source:** SBN, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## 'Those Who Do Not Learn History are Doomed to Repeat It' – Are You Ready for the Next Crash?

It is now a decade since the last banking crash which ushered in never-ending austerity and misery for many. Has there been any substantial change? 'Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it' – Are you ready for the next crash?

"Banks and major companies continue to pile into derivatives. These are essentially clever bets on the movement of interest rates, price of commodities, exchange rates and everything else. Well, we know that all financial horses can't win all of the time and someone will sooner or later have a great fall. 25 major banks have total assets of around \$1.8 trillion, but their exposure to derivatives is about \$222 trillion. To put this in perspective, global gross domestic product (GDP), or the total market value of all final goods and services produced in all countries, is about \$78 trillion. This rush for speculative profits won't have a happy ending. ....

"George Santayana once said 'Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it'. The difficulty here is that the price of indulging the financial sector will continue to be paid by innocent people.

**More:** <https://leftfootforward.org/2017/08/those-who-do-not-learn-history-are-doomed-to-repeat-it-are-you-ready-for-the-next-crash/>

**Source:** CSEAR, Page 10, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017. ❖

## How NZ Could Be a World Leader in Sustainability

New Zealand needs a massive shift of thinking, interacting, consuming and culture if we want to lead the world change towards a sustainable future, writes sustainability consultant Nick Morrison.

Why is New Zealand not leading the world in sustainable living and sustainable business practices? Why is New Zealand not leading the world in the transition to the circular economy? Why does New Zealand rank last in the OECD for the amount of waste we throw in landfills per person every year? Why are New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions increasing?

Why aren't we 100% Pure? It makes no sense to me.

We are literally dirtying our own nest, biting the hand that feeds us, killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Why?

Our biggest export market is tourism. Tourists come from far and wide and spend millions to experience New Zealand's beauty and 'purity'. They come to see our unique wildlife, walk our great walks, swim at our beaches and fish in our rivers.

Yet 71 of our bird species are 'threatened', with a further 107 'at risk', 21 of our freshwater fish species are 'threatened' with 19 species 'at risk', and the World Wildlife Fund estimates there are now only 55 Maui dolphins left. Just 55 left. What is going on New Zealand?

"Further to the killing of our native species we are turning our waterways (both urban and rural) into drain pipes.

Contaminating them and sucking them dry. Hardly the 'pure' water I'd be paying big bucks to travel and experience.

"So why aren't we doing everything we possibly can to restore and protect our environment, to strengthen our clean green brand, and to guarantee that it stays for future generations?

"At the moment, we are doing quite the opposite. ....

**More:** [www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/10/05/51808/how-nz-could-be-a-world-leader-in-sustainability](http://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/10/05/51808/how-nz-could-be-a-world-leader-in-sustainability)

**Source:** SBN, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017. ❖

## Brian Fallow: Rising Sea Level Will Cost Us All

"One challenge awaiting the next [current!] Government is how to address - and especially, how to fund - the need to adapt to climate change.

"A timely paper on this by Jonathan Boston, professor of public policy at Victoria University of Wellington, and Dr Judy Lawrence, of the university's Climate Change Research Institute, makes sobering reading. Lawrence is a former head of the Ministry for the Environment's climate change office, and chairs a technical working group on climate change adaptation which is due to report next year.

"The picture of the status quo that emerges is one of myopia, muddle and moral hazard.

"Sea level rise is not the only climate change impact we have to worry about, but when so much of the population and so much critical infrastructure hugs the coastline, adapting to a rising sea level is fundamentally important.

"The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (Niwa) calculates that there are 44,000 dwellings housing 133,000 people within 1.5m of mean high water at the highest tides each month, as of the 2013 census. In all, 68,000 buildings worth more than \$20 billion, as of 2011, are that close to sea level, along with five airports, 46km of railway and 2100km of roads.

"So we are talking about the 'managed retreat' from quite a lot of built-up land.

"The political questions, and they are daunting ones, are ....

**More:**

[www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=3&objectid=11932227](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11932227) plus <http://igps.victoria.ac.nz/publications/WP/WP17-05-Climate-change-adaptation.pdf> 44 pages, 1.021Mb

**Source:** NZ Herald, The Business, page 15, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct.

**Editor:** A topic accountants/business advisors in N.Z. should take notice of. Does not explicitly discuss the impact of salt water intrusion into agricultural land, nor the economic or other impacts on wetlands. ❖

## Global Study of Children: More Trees, Less Disease

"A global study says children living in river basins whose watersheds have greater tree cover are less likely to experience diarrhoeal disease, the second leading cause of death for children under the age of five.

"Published in *Nature Communications* today [9<sup>th</sup> October], the University of Vermont-led study, supported by the Luc Hoffmann Institute, is the first to quantify the connection between watershed quality and individual health outcomes of children at the global scale. It looked at 300,000 children in 35 countries.

"Looking at all of these diverse households in all these different countries, we find the healthier your watershed upstream, the less likely your kids are to get this potentially fatal disease', says Taylor Ricketts of UVM's Gund Institute for Environment.

"The team predicts a 30% increase in upstream tree cover in rural watersheds would have a comparable effect to improved water sanitation such as the addition of indoor plumbing or toilets.

"This suggests that protecting watersheds, in the right circumstances, can double as a public health investment', says Brendan Fisher of UVM's Gund Institute and Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. 'This shows, very clearly, how healthy ecosystems can directly support human health and welfare.'....

**More:** <http://luchoffmanninstitute.org/2017/10/global-study-of-children-more-trees-less-disease/> plus [www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-00775-2](http://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-00775-2)

**Source:** eco-Business.com, 11<sup>th</sup> October 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)