

Sustainability Matters

13th Sept. 2018

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.**

We Won't Save the Earth With a Better Kind of Disposable Coffee Cup

George Monbiot

"We must challenge the corporations that urge us to live in a throwaway society rather than seeking 'greener' ways of maintaining the status quo.

"Do you believe in miracles? If so, please form an orderly queue. Plenty of people imagine we can carry on as we are, as long as we substitute one material for another. Last month, a request to Starbucks and Costa to replace their plastic coffee cups with cups made from corn starch was retweeted 60,000 times, before it was deleted.

"Those who supported this call failed to ask themselves where the corn starch would come from, how much land would be needed to grow it, or how much food production it would displace. They overlooked the damage this cultivation would inflict: growing corn (maize) is notorious for causing soil erosion, and often requires heavy doses of pesticides and fertilisers.

"The problem is not just plastic: it is mass disposability. Or, to put it another way, the problem is pursuing, on the one planet known to harbour life, a four-planet lifestyle. Regardless of what we consume, the sheer volume of consumption is overwhelming the Earth's living systems.

"Don't get me wrong. Our greed for plastic is a major environmental blight, and the campaigns to limit its use are well motivated and sometimes effective. But we cannot address our environmental crisis by swapping one overused resource for another. When I challenged that call, some people asked me, 'So what should we use instead?'

"The right question is, 'How should we live?' But systemic thinking is an endangered species.

"Disposable coffee cups made from new materials are not just a non-solution: they are a perpetuation of the problem. Defending the planet means changing the world.

More: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/06/save-earth-disposable-coffee-cup-green

Source: Karen McWilliams, 10th September 2018. ❖

Global Warming Visualisations

"In presentations of global warming, sometimes watching maps morph from blue (cold) to red (hot) grows tiresome. Talented data visualisers are finding new and creative ways to illustrate the warming of the planet. ... Since Saturday, it has been shared 16,000 times on Twitter. It reveals the majority of countries have warmed by at least 1°C, and all but one (Kiribati) have warmed by at least 0.5°C ...

More: www.washingtonpost.com/news/capital-weather-gang/wp/2018/08/28/climate-change-switchboard-shows-every-country-on-the-planet-turning-red-hot/

Source: *SnippETS*, 6th September 2018.

SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

At its meeting on 11th September 2001 Peter Casey reported a team had been created comprising Paul Watkinson, Tony Gray, John Strevens, Leanne Holdsworth and Collin Higgins to develop a remit to ICANZ's forthcoming AGM to form a National Committee which could be a catalyst to develop 'sustainability' within the Institute and throughout its membership. ❖

Global Soft Drink Firms Back Plan to Eliminate Packaging Waste

"Global soft drink companies have made their biggest commitment yet to eliminating the use of throwaway plastic bottles, in an action plan presented to parliament.

"In a report sponsored by the likes of Danone, Suntory and Nestlé, the companies give unequivocal backing to a government-implemented deposit and return scheme. Their ambition is for zero plastic packaging to be sent to landfill or escape into the natural environment by 2030, and for packaging to be made entirely from recycled or renewable materials or both.

"Thursday's report [Towards sustainable packaging: A plan to eliminate plastic packaging waste from UK bottled water and soft drinks], produced by the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, said: "Achieving this vision requires all stakeholders in the bottled water and soft drinks value chain to commit to eliminating plastic packaging waste as a strategic priority."

"It comes as the government considers imposing a tax on single-use plastics that could see plastic straws banned by next year.

"The companies say they will commit to reducing the volume of plastic used in bottled water and soft drinks packaging and ensuring any packaging material used is 100% recyclable or reusable. They say actions to reduce plastic waste require a systemic approach involving business, government and consumers.

More:

www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/06/global-soft-drink-firms-back-plan-to-eliminate-packaging-waste plus www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/news/news-items/bottled-water-soft-drinks-producers-drive-plan-eliminate-plastic-packaging-waste-2030 and www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/resources/publication-pdfs/towards-sustainable-packaging.pdf 41 pages, 3.03Mb

Source: Carbon Zero, 10th September 2018

Editor: 2030. Hardly ambitious?? Which if any of these drinks do we actually need? My purchases = fewer than 5 bottles of such drinks a year (milk bottles aside). Far simpler and better for most of us to eliminate the industry? ❖

How the World Measures Wellbeing

"When it comes to wellbeing, few people would have a better sense of how the world is faring than Carrie Exton, head of monitoring global wellbeing and its progress in the OECD's Statistics and Data group. Exton is the lead author a for the OECD's flagship well-being publication *How's Life?* and she co-authored the OECD *Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-Being*. She was in New Zealand recently from September 5-7 speaking at the Third International Conference on Wellbeing and Public Policy. Her speech was *'The OECD Better Life Initiative: where are we now, and what's next?'*

More:

www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/sunday/audio/2018661749/carrie-exton-how-the-world-measures-wellbeing Audio 21:14.

Source: Tim Marshall, 10th September 2018. ❖

Europe to Ban Halogen Lightbulbs

More: www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/aug/23/europe-to-ban-halogen-lightbulbs

Source: *Carbon News*, 28th August 2018. ❖

A Plea to Quit Short-term Thinking

Geopolitics, New Zealand and the Winds of Change

“Reserve Bank governor Adrian Orr lamented the dominance of short-term thinking in his first public speech [7th September 2018] since taking over as head of the central bank in March.

“I summarise the key plague on economic society as ‘short-termism’. This is the overt focus on the next day, week, or reporting cycle’, Orr said in a speech to the Financial Services Council in Auckland.

“A short-term focus can be driven by the need to survive from day-to-day. However, it is too often driven by the desire to consume at an unsustainable rate’, he said.

“The desire for instant gratification or reward can often leave behind a trail of unintended consequences.’

“Orr said consequences of short-term thinking could lead to economic growth coming at the expense of a sustainable environment, social cohesion and cultural acceptance.

“While some critics may say the Reserve Bank should focus on inflation and interest rates, Orr said the bank had a strong vested interest in, and influence on, the long-term economic wellbeing of New Zealand.

“The long-term issues are critical to our task of maintaining low and stable consumer price inflation, promoting a sound and dynamic financial system, and meeting the currency needs of the public’, he said.

“While millions of people had been lifted out of poverty in the last couple of hundred years, there remained massive global challenges that were often resolved through financial crises, wars or civil unrest, or at the cost of someone else or something else, such as the environment, Orr said, singling out environmental degradation, mass urbanisation, ageing populations, mass migration and income and wealth inequalities as current challenges.

“In New Zealand, challenges included our environmental impacts, migration and urbanisation, creaking infrastructure, a rapidly ageing population, over-exuberant house prices, low productivity growth and persistent and stubborn unemployment and low incomes, particularly among Pasifika and Māori, he said.

“Still, capitalism could be improved, he said, noting the rapidly growing clusters of global capital concerned with better managing the failures that can arise from ‘short-termism’.

“Hopefully, these efforts will, in part, head off the usual manner in which we ‘reset the clock’, through some kind of crisis or unrest,’ he said.

“Significant global firms, investors, regulators and representatives of civil society are banding together to work hard on resolving the perils of short-termism.’

“New Zealand had the opportunity to lead the globe in positive change if it became more long-term in its economic activity, Orr said. While a small country, the world often looked to places such as New Zealand for leadership, he said.

“The great news is we are small, young of nation, lightly populated, green, kaitiaki [caretaking] of spirit, not dependent on the export of fossil fuels, and have a strong rule of law and sound moral compass,’ he said.

“Significant and bold leadership is in our grasp.’

More:

www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12121365 plus full speech at <https://rbnz.govt.nz/research-and-publications/speeches/2018/speech2018-09-07> 11 pages, 869kb

Source: *NZ Herald*, 8th September, Page C7

Editor: This is a speech all accountants, economists, investment managers and advisors, their teachers, directors and many others should read and act on. ❖

World's Largest Offshore Wind Farm Opens in Irish Sea

“The world’s largest offshore wind farm opened in the Irish Sea on Thursday [6th September], covering an area of 145 square kilometres (55 square miles).

“The 659-megawatt Walney Extension, located approximately 19 kilometres (12 miles) off the coast of Cumbria, England, consists of 87 turbines and is capable of generating enough renewable energy to power almost 600,000 UK homes.

“To compare, the 175-turbine London Array – now the second largest offshore wind farm in the world – has a 630-megawatt capacity, or enough to power about half a million homes. ...

“The wind farm features 40 MHI Vestas 8-megawatt turbines and 47 Siemens Gamesa 7-megawatt turbines, the first project to use wind turbines from two different manufacturers. That’s less than half the number of turbines used at the London Array, but Walney’s turbines are more powerful. ...

“MHI Vestas turbines stand 195 metres tall, and are the most powerful being used globally....

More: www.ecowatch.com/offshore-wind-farm-largest-2602538337.html

Source: Editor, 7th September 2018

Editor: Excellent 3:57 video. ❖

Technology Key for Energy Resilience

“Vector is backing a more holistic approach to energy resilience amid mounting evidence that new technology will play an ever-increasing role in meeting customers’ evolving energy needs.

“The country’s largest energy distribution company has today released a paper ‘*Working Together on Resilience*’. This paper follows on from Vector’s Electric Vehicle network integration paper published in March 2018.

“The paper outlines how climate-change models are predicting a higher instance of extreme weather events, and how this will impact energy resilience across New Zealand’s energy supply chain – all the way from generation to transmission, to distribution, right through to the home or business.

“Vector is promoting a more informed discussion on the different ways to deliver resilience, and how new technology can offer innovative solutions to solve some traditional investment choices. This will help consumers better understand the trade-offs between costs and quality and the role that consumers, Government and the industry can collectively play. ...

More: www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU1809/S00058/consumer-centric-technology-a-key-factor-in-energy-future.htm plus <https://blob-static.vector.co.nz/blob/vector/media/vector/working-together-on-resilience.pdf> 40 pages, 56.29Mb

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 6th September 2018. ❖

Strengthening Communities

“The Strengthening Communities Hui is a collaboration between Environment Hubs Aotearoa, the Community Energy Network and Zero Waste Network where our members and stakeholders will meet to discuss how we can improve our impact to make our communities stronger.

“Our members sit in the interface where national and systemic issues are played out locally. The theme ‘Showing Community Leadership’ will explore how our members can and are positioning themselves as leaders within their communities and some of the key trends that will define our sector in the future.

When/Where: 17-18 October 2018, Wellington

More: <https://events.humanitix.co.nz/strengthening-communities-hui>

Source: *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 29th August 2018. ❖

Why the Topic of Modern Slavery is Coming to the Fore

"In 2015 the United Kingdom introduced a Modern Slavery Act 2015, now the government of NSW has followed suit. For many countries similar legislation is in the pipeline.

"Join us for a 30 minute 'Straight from the Horse's Mouth' webinar on what this might mean for businesses and supply chains.

"Barbara Nebel of thinkstep will set the scene and cover what modern slavery is.

"Libby Staggs, Principal Consultant at Sustainability Business Matters will give an overview of what may be required from your business in terms of compliance, highlight problem areas and offer suggestions on how to be ready to meet the requirements under the new legislation.

"We'll discuss topics such as:

- What is modern slavery?
- Why is it important and who will be affected by the new legislation?
- The NSW Modern Slavery Act (2018)
- The pending Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act
- The differences between the Commonwealth and NSW Modern Slavery Bills
- How will it affect your business
- What good practice should look like

When/Where: Thurs 20 Sept, 1:00 - 1.30pm AEST (Sydney, Melbourne) and 3:00 - 3.30pm NZST (New Zealand)

More:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6723121471461228291>

Source: Matthias Nebel, 6th September 2018. ❖

An Environmental Ethic

In his lengthy discourse Dr Robert Howell discusses ethics and particularly ethics pertaining to environmental issues. Includes human-human and human-Earth aspects. In the context of the code of ethics of a major Australian owned bank he develops a draft environmental ethic (pages 10-11). Robert then discusses this in the context of the financial sector and in particular banks. He goes on to suggest: 'If Australian and New Zealand banks adopted an environmental ethic along the lines of the above proposal, it will involve a profound and major cultural and organisational change.'

He then posits [page14]; 'One suggestion to get started [is to] appoint at a very senior level, a Nature Ombudsman, or Spokesperson for Nature, with access to the Board, who can advocate and assist in how to implement an environmental ethic.'

In conclusion Robert draws on a Union of Concerned Scientists 1992 paper; '*A new ethic is required – a new attitude towards discharging our responsibility for caring for ourselves and for the earth. We must recognise the earth's limited capacity to provide for us. We must recognise its fragility. We must no longer allow it to be ravaged. This ethic must motivate a great movement, convincing reluctant leaders and reluctant governments and reluctant peoples themselves to effect the needed changes.*' And adds 'It is now time for all individuals and organisations in the public, private and civil society sectors to adopt an environmental ethic that respects and cares for our world, and that can contribute to a future that has some hope for humanity.'

More: <http://a-resilient-world.blogspot.com/> 16 pages, including 59 citations

Source: Robert Howell, 4th September 2018

Editor: Set aside some quiet time to read. ❖

A Blueprint for Solving NZ's Waste Problem

"For 18 years, Raglan has been not just thinking about recycling, and thus lowering emissions, but doing something about it. Now the residents are fully on board with recycling and 75% of all waste is diverted from the landfill. Some other Councils are replicating the model... just imagine if all Councils would do the same! This article gives many good ideas on where to start.

More: www.stuff.co.nz/environment/106063136/a-blueprint-for-solving-new-zealands-waste-problem

Source: *SnippETS*, 6th September 2018. ❖

Two Job Vacancies

- Environmental & Sustainability Advisor - (America's Cup) with Downer NZ Infrastructure Projects; Auckland
- Sustainability Manager, with Synlait Milk Limited; Rakaia

More: LinkedIn Jobs

Source: LinkedIn, 11th September 2018. ❖

Unlocking the Inclusive Growth Story of the 21st Century: Accelerating Climate Action in Urgent Times

"The growth story of the 21st century can unlock unprecedented opportunities of a strong, sustainable, inclusive economy. The benefits of climate action are greater than ever before, while the costs of inaction continue to mount. It is time for a decisive shift to a new climate economy.

"Report Summary: We are on the cusp of a new economic era: one where growth is driven by the interaction between rapid technological innovation, sustainable infrastructure investment, and increased resource productivity. This is the only growth story of the 21st century.

"The New Growth Agenda: We are entering a new era of economic growth. This approach can deliver growth that is strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive. It is driven by the interaction between rapid technological innovation, sustainable infrastructure investment, and increased resource productivity.

"Key Economic Systems: Implementing the new growth agenda must happen in each country at the national and sub-national level and in five key economic systems, namely: Energy, cities, food and land use, water, and industry. These are the areas where we see the greatest potential for growth, as well as the greatest potential to reduce the risks of harmful climate change.

"Energy: Effective policies are needed, both to incentivise private investment in low or zero-carbon innovation, such as carbon pricing, as well as to directly fund research, development, and demonstration of clean energy technologies, sometimes in partnership with the private sector.

"Cities: Cities, with their concentration of people, economic activity, and infrastructure, offer unique opportunities to reduce poverty, deliver greater prosperity, and tackle climate change.

"Food and Land Use: Recent analysis has shown developing sustainable food and land use-business models could be worth up to US\$2.3 trillion and provide over 70 million jobs by 2030. The transition to sustainable food and land use systems represents an opportunity which no country, nor indeed the world, can afford to ignore.

"Water: Flowing through every part of our economy, water is a fundamental necessity for lives and livelihoods. Yet the world is not managing water well. The existing challenges include inadequate access, poorly managed risks and increasing competition for water resources.

"Industry: Our economies are the heirs of the first industrial revolution, driven by the use of hydrocarbons. The coming industrial transformation must take us beyond the era of fossil fuels and develop sustainable solutions to feed, house, and provide access to clean water, employment, and industrial goods to 10 billion people by 2050.

More: <https://newclimateeconomy.report/2018/> or https://newclimateeconomy.report/2018/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/09/NCE_2018_FULL-REPORT.pdf 208 pages, 11.81Mb with 46 pages and 1212 endnotes

Source: *Climate Home News*, 5th September 2018

Editor: Former NZ Prime Minister Helen Clark is one of the Commissioners of the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate. A key theme of the report is 'growth' especially 'economic growth'. A definition does not seem to be provided, nor an explanation of why growth is important. ❖

People Fighting to Save the Planet

"Here in New Zealand we are of course fortunate that we do not face death threats, violence or indeed are murdered for standing up for the environment.

"This is not the reality for many in other parts of the world. Often these campaigns are part of standing up for the rights of indigenous peoples. Some have inherited their struggles from elders who have themselves been murdered. The Guardian has been gathering up these stories and you can read about some of them here.

"Let's take a moment to think about and honour these brave defenders of the planet.

More:

www.theguardian.com/membership/2018/aug/09/defenders-activists-earth-risking-lives-protect-environment

Source: *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 5th September 2018. ❖

Record Numbers as Finalists Announced for 2018 Sustainable Business Network Awards

"Judges for the 2018 NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards have announced the finalists after another record year of entries.

"CEO of the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) Rachel Brown says the record numbers are a sign of growing business confidence in sustainability.

"It's hard to find a business now that isn't talking about the role it can play – or is already playing – to improve environmental or social performance. Our youth is screaming for action now from all sectors.

"Government has stepped up, seeing the economic opportunity if business leads on climate change, the circular economy and employment conditions. We are seeing a rapid growth in SBN's membership. Businesses really want to build their capability so they can reap the rewards of embracing sustainability.

"Our Awards are a fabulous way of showcasing the growing leadership here in Aotearoa. The eyes of the world are looking at the winners with interest. It's exciting times for sustainable, restorative business."

"The finalists include small businesses, corporates and not for profits, showing all types of organisations can make a success out of sustainability. The quality of entries has been extremely high, so making the final round of judging is a considerable achievement.

"Garry Taylor, Executive General Manager of NZI, the Principal Sponsor of the Awards, says they serve an important purpose. "The impact that business is having on our environment and communities, and their increasing impact on business, is becoming more apparent and a more urgent issue to address. What the Awards do is encourage those businesses which are actively doing something about it to come forward and have their efforts recognised. ...

"The finalists for the 2018 NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards are: [Long list!]

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Awards-finalists-2018.pdf>

Source: SBN, 4th September 2018. ❖

Scotland's Floating Turbine Smash Tidal Renewable Energy Records

"Scotland is at the forefront in 'blue energy' technology and has developed a new marine turbine system which is proving to be a formidable option for producing energy from tidal flows. In its first year of testing, it smashed previous records and set the benchmark for the industry. This technology appears as though it might be an important part of the future energy mix.

More: www.energyts.com/single-post/2018/09/06/SnippETS-for-6-September-2018 with link to www.independent.co.uk/environment/scotland-floating-turbine-tidal-power-record-sr2000-scotrenewables-ofgem-a8503221.html plus video of launch and more at www.opusenergyblog.com/floating-tidal-turbine-off-orkney-islands-breaks-generation-records/

Source: *SnippETS*, 6th September 2018. ❖

Earth Photo 2018 Shortlist – In Pictures

"The inaugural Earth Photo exhibition presents 50 stunning images and films that document the Earth in all its diversity, from remote tribes to our changing climate.

More:

www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2018/sep/05/earth-photo-2018-shortlist-in-pictures

Source: Clean Planet, 7th September 2018. ❖

Act Now to Achieve Low-emissions Future

"The Productivity Commission today [4th September] released its final report on how New Zealand can transition to a low-emissions economy.

"The Commission found early action on key policy reforms is needed if New Zealand is to achieve its emissions reduction goals. Chair of the Productivity Commission, Murray Sherwin said "The period to 2050 will pass quickly. Delaying action is likely to make the transition costlier and more abrupt and limit viable and cost-effective mitigation options in the future."

"Amongst the numerous changes required across the economy – some disruptive, some less obvious – three shifts must happen for New Zealand to achieve its low-emissions goals:

- We stop burning fossil fuels and switch to using electricity and other low-emission energy sources. This means a rapid and comprehensive switch of the light vehicle fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) and other very low-emissions vehicles, and a switch away from fossil fuels in providing process heat for industry;
- We undertake substantial levels of afforestation to offset New Zealand's remaining emissions. This will require sustained rates of planting over the next 30 years (mostly on land currently used for sheep and beef farming), potentially approaching the highest annual rate ever recorded in New Zealand; and
- We make changes to the structure and methods of agricultural production. This will include diversification of land use towards more horticulture and cropping, and greater adoption of low-emissions practices on farms.

"These needed changes are unlikely to happen at the scale and pace required unless the Government prioritises action to:

- Establish a comprehensive and durable climate change policy framework, including separate legislated long-term targets for short- and long-lived gases; a series of successive emissions budgets; and an independent Climate Change Commission
- Reform the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme and apply some form of emissions pricing to methane from agriculture and waste; and
- Devote significantly more resources to low-emissions innovation and technology, to account for the long timeframes involved in bringing innovative ideas to fruition.

"The report also recommends a suite of other policy reforms to help drive the transition. These include introducing emissions standards for newly registered vehicles, a feebate scheme to accelerate the uptake of EVs, and mandatory climate-related financial disclosures.

"The Productivity Commission's final report makes 173 findings and 78 recommendations to Government.

More: www.productivity.govt.nz/inquiry-content/3254?stage=4 Full report, 8.37Mb, 620pages, plus www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1809/S00020/act-now-to-achieve-a-low-emissions-future.htm and per page 507: Shifting to a low-emissions trajectory will critically depend on political leadership and fortitude. Inertia and resistance to change can be expected ... meeting this challenge will likely be futile without broad agreement across the political spectrum on both the need and means to make the transition.

Source: Editor, 4th September 2018. ❖

Sustainable Footwear Brand, Allbirds

"The eco-friendly shoe brand has received investment from Leonardo DiCaprio the Oscar-winning actor.

"Allbirds, a San Francisco-based shoe company, use a number of sustainable materials to make their shoes. They have three different types of material:

"The Wool shoes are sourced from sheep in New Zealand, this uses 60% less energy than materials used in typical synthetic shoes.

"The Tree shoes are sourced from South African farms which minimise fertiliser and rely on rainwater. This means, compared to traditional cotton materials, manufacturing uses 95% less water.

"The Sugar shoes are sourced from Southern Brazil, the sugar cane is a renewable source which grows quickly, removing carbon from the atmosphere in the process. It is a self-sufficient material that is transformed into their SweetFoam shoe sole.

"They use recycled plastic bottles for the shoelaces, castor bean oil for the soles and their packaging is made from 90% recycled cardboard.

"The shoes will set you back around \$95, but they have a 'confidence in comfort' scheme where you can trial the shoes for 30 days and if you are not happy with the product you can return them and get your money back.

"The brand was founded by native New Zealander, Tim Brown. After years of research he was joined by Joey Zwillinger, an engineer and renewables expert. They have three stores located in San Francisco, New York and Toronto.

More: www.climateactionprogramme.org/news/leonardo-dicaprio-invests-in-sustainable-footwear-brand-allbirds plus <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allbirds>

Source: *Carbon News*, 3rd September 2018. ❖

A New Blueprint for Business

"..... New ways of doing business will also be on the agenda. New business models are emerging every day, and financial and reporting models are in the midst of transformative change. Sustainability features more and more in product innovation; new purpose-driven companies are emerging each week with sustainability at their core. And, of course, new technologies and communication tools are radically reshaping the ways companies can understand and engage with their ever-shifting array of stakeholders.

"What exactly is business's role in a time of transformational change? What should the business voice be when issues surrounding race, gender, migration, and refugees roil the communities around us? What is the role of the CEO in expressing her voice on topics like climate change? How can business appropriately influence policy frameworks to ensure that the social contract adapts to 21st-century realities?

When/Where: 6th – 8th November, New York, USA

More: <https://mailchi.mp/reportalert/dont-miss-the-most-important-sustainability-event-of-the-yearbsr18-a-new-blueprint-for-business?e=71b4616d8c>

Source: ReportAlert, 11th September 2018. ❖

India's Largest City: Ban on Plastics Faces Big Obstacles

"Mumbai-based journalist Vaishnavi Chandrashekar examines the launch of the western Indian state of Maharashtra's sweeping ban on single-use plastics – one of the world's toughest – and the chaos that ensued. As Chandrashekar reports, the lobbying, backtracking, and confusion which has beset Mumbai since the ban took effect two months ago show how difficult it is to restrict a material that has become so deeply embedded in the modern economy

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/as-indias-largest-city-shows-banning-plastics-is-easier-said-than-done>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 31st August 2018

Editor: Useful insights for NZ's emerging quest to go 'plastic-free'. ❖

New Guidance Reporting Impact on the Sustainable Development Goals

"A 'Practical Guide' to enable companies to better measure and report on their impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was released today [1st August] by the Global Reporting Initiative and the United Nations Global Compact.

"The new publication, *Integrating the SDGs into Corporate Reporting: A Practical Guide*, helps companies of all sizes to prioritise SDG targets to act and report on, set related business objectives, and measure and report on progress.

"The 17 SDGs are anticipated to generate over US\$12 trillion worth of business opportunities by 2030, which makes thousands of small and large companies around the world well incentivized to work towards achieving the goals. But until now, the lack of a uniform methodology for measuring and reporting on their contributions to the Global Goals had become a stumbling block.

"Developed with support from Shift and PwC – and as part of the Action Platform on Reporting on the SDGs – this new Practical Guide completes a toolkit that aims to boost and improve businesses' reporting on the Global Goals and their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

"It discourages businesses from selecting SDGs and related targets based on what is easiest for them to report on. Rather, companies should focus on what accounts for the highest priorities and, therefore, is material for their business. The report calls for companies to report on both their positive and negative impacts on the SDGs.

More: www.globalreporting.org/information/news-and-press-center/Pages/New-guidance-for-companies-to-report-their-impact-on-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals.aspx plus www.globalreporting.org/resource/library/GRI_UNGC_Reporting-on-SDGs_Practical_Guide.pdf 32 pages, 966kb

Source: GRI, 31st August 2018. ❖

Practice of Destroying Finished Luxury Products to End

"Burberry's CEO Marco Gobbetti announced the luxury fashion brand will stop destroying finished products. The company had been widely criticised in July for the burning unsold products to protect their intellectual property.

"Over the summer, reports came out that Burberry had burned goods worth more than £28 million (\$36.68 million) in the previous 12 months, and more than £90 million (\$117.89 million) over the last five years. Environmentalists, politicians, and even the company's own shareholders slammed the practice.

"Now the company is changing its policy. Burberry released a statement on 6th September saying it will stop destroying unsaleable products, effective immediately.

"This commitment builds on the goals that we set last year as part of our five-year responsibility agenda and is supported by our new strategy, which is helping tackle the causes of waste', the company's statement read. 'We already reuse, repair, donate or recycle unsaleable products and we will continue to expand these efforts.'

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2018/09/burberry-finished-luxury-products/

Source: Environmental Leader, 11th September 2018. ❖

How to Solve Our Paradox of Poverty and Plenty

"Rod Oram is hopeful we can solve our paradox of being rich in natural capital, but being a poor performer economically and environmentally. He proposes a way forward. ...

More: www.newsroom.co.nz/2018/08/04/177680/how-to-solve-our-paradox-of-poverty-and-plenty

Source: Tim Marshall, 6th August 2018

Editor: This lengthy 'must read' article is an abridged version of Rod's essay in *The Big Questions: What is New Zealand's Future?* ❖

World Green Building Week 2018

"This year, the week is all about making our homes better, and the team here at the New Zealand Green Building Council has an array of events across Aotearoa to help the shift to warmer, drier, more efficient homes for everyone in our beautiful country.

"New Zealand homes aren't good enough. Over 700,000 of our homes are poorly insulated. And 40% of our homes are damp and mouldy. Besides being bad news for our health, unhealthy homes are also bad news for our bank balance, as they cost more to heat.

"But this is changing. Tens of thousands of new family homes are now set to be safer, healthier, happier places to be, after being built better. And the New Zealand Government now has a chance to build thousands of new homes, through KiwiBuild, to the standards New Zealanders deserve.

When: 24th to 30th September 2018

Where: Events nationwide, plus Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Christchurch, throughout World Green Building Week, and everyone is welcome.

More: www.nzgbc.org.nz/events/wgbw2018

Source: NZGBC, 7th September 2018. ❖

Fighting Fire with Fire: California Turns to Prescribed Burning

"Buffeted by historic drought and a century of fire suppression, the Sierra Nevada is becoming a tinderbox of dead wood. More than 127 million trees sit dead and dry on 9 million acres across California, fueling more intense and persistent wildfires. This week at *Yale Environment 360*, journalist Jane Braxton Little reports on how forest managers in California and elsewhere are increasingly setting prescribed fires to burn the dead timber and ward off catastrophe. 'If we do nothing we're going to have much more severe fires, more smoke, and potential damage', one scientist tells Little. 'There isn't a no-fire option.'

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/fighting-fire-with-fire-california-turns-to-prescribed-burning>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 7th September 2018

Editor: It has been long known that preventing forest fires has been a poor policy; California and other USA places awoken. For the future huge planting plans in NZ, has consideration been given to fire and disease risks? ❖

Seeing a Future in Improved Land

"Sir David Fagan has overseen significant planting on his dairy farm near Te Kuiti as a means to making his property more environmentally sustainable.

"He might have made his name as a world champion shearer but now Sir David Fagan has his sights set on sustainable dairy farming.

"His 200 hectare property is in a priority catchment and has attracted funding assistance from both the council and the Authority.

"Sir David says he has been keen to front foot environmental issues since owning the farm.

"We want to make the property more sustainable and we have made a tremendous start with the help received from both the council and the Waikato River Authority," he says.

"After year one of a three year project, the Fagan dairy farm has retired 12 hectares from grazing, made up of steep banks and gullies.

"In total so far, there have been 22,500 mixed native species planted on the property, including 17,500 manuka. Other accomplishments include eight kilometres of fencing to exclude stock from plantings.

"Sir David says retiring and planting land unsuitable for grazing has already produced a win/win, with no loss of farm production.

More: www.waikatoriver.org.nz/newsletter-september-2018/

Source: *Waikato River Authority Newsletter*, 11th Sept. ❖

Court Quashes Trudeau's Approval of Trans Mountain Pipeline

"The [Canadian] Federal Court of Appeal has quashed the federal government's approval of the troubled Trans Mountain expansion project, ...[but its' not over yet.]

More: www.nationalobserver.com/2018/08/30/news/court-quashes-trudeaus-approval-trans-mountain-pipeline

Source: SumOfUs and *Climate Weekly*. 1st September. ❖

Wide-Ranging Outcomes of Impact Investing

"Recently the Waikato River Authority invited leading Waikato trusts, the Tindall Foundation, River Iwi and Waikato Regional Council to a presentation of the work we have been leading on Impact Investment in the Waipaa catchment. Impact Investment is the socially responsible investment of funds which generate environmental and social outcomes through interventions that also deliver a measurable return on investment.

"Our work in the Waipaa catchment based on potential farm purchases shows an IRR of 8-10% while generating 40-45% reductions in e.coli, sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, and greenhouse gas emissions. This would be achieved by transitioning traditional dairy farms to organic milk supply, with environmental impact achieved by reducing stocking rates, changing pasture types, riparian planting, afforestation, sediment control, and wetland creation.

"Achieving Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato will not be a straight-line linear journey. It requires bold, ambitious, and transformative thinking along the way to complement the tools of policy and clean-up funding. Impact Investment is one such opportunity, says Bob Penter, the Authority's Chief Executive.

More: www.waikatoriver.org.nz/newsletter-september-2018/

Source: *Waikato River Authority Newsletter*, 11th Sept. ❖

New Reporting Standard Offers a Holistic Approach to Water Stewardship Across the Value Chain

"*GRI 303: Water and Effluents Reporting Standard*, provides a comprehensive and concise framework for collecting and communicating information about an organisation's water use, the associated impacts, and how it addresses them.

"The standard allows companies to measure and communicate on the following:

- Key interactions with water across the value chain, from withdrawal, to consumption and discharge – impacts that have been consistently underreported....
- How water is managed as a shared resource and how impacts are managed at a local level. These impacts can have wider social and economic consequences for local communities.
- Impacts in areas with water stress, to help organisations prioritise action in the most sensitive locations.
- Water consumption, to measure water that is no longer available for use by ecosystems or local communities.
- Water discharge information, including the quality of water discharges, substances of concern present in effluents
- Facility level information for water withdrawal and water consumption.

More: <https://ceowatermandate.org/posts/know-your-impact-water-reporting-standard/> plus www.globalreporting.org/standards/media/1940/gri-303-water-and-effluents-2018-presentation.pdf 24 pages 376kb

Source: GRI, 31st August 2018. ❖

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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