

Sustainability Matters

13th Dec, 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.**

A4S Essential Guide to Finance Culture

"The A4S CFO Leadership Network has developed a range of practical guides, with tools, case studies and guidance to support finance professionals with the integration of sustainability into core finance and decision making processes. However, in order to do this successfully, the culture of the finance team needs to be aligned to support the transition.

"This includes the implementation of the *Essential Guide to Strategic Planning, Budgeting and Forecasting* which can be downloaded.

- Highlights the role that finance can take to support the integration of sustainability within the organisation
- Suggests actions required to shift the culture of the finance team and how they can be put into practice
- Sets out how to create an understanding of the reason for the change and enthusiasm for the solution
- Helps to identify what behaviours need to change and what additional competencies may be required in the finance function
- Provides guidance on how to sustain the change and improve over time.

More:

www.accountingforsustainability.org/content/a4s/corporate/finance-culture.html 51 pages, 4.11Mb

Note: Links to a number of short videos

Source: The Prince's Accounting for Sustainability Project, 7th December 2018

Editor: This guide is specifically for finance teams. Page 5: 'We found the finance function was often cited as a barrier when attempting to move the organisation to a sustainable business model. If change is going to be possible, businesses need the support of the finance function to succeed.

We developed this guide to provide practical tools which will help finance teams to develop a culture which embraces sustainable decision making and support the business in creating sustainable value.'

Recommendation: Read page 6. ❖

'Smart' Shipping Box Can Be Used a Thousand Times – Major Savings

"Packaging solutions start-up LivingPackets is launching a sustainable and trackable shipping box, created for e-commerce shipping, which generates almost zero packaging waste and can be used up to 1,000 times. Dubbed The Box, the 'smart' shipping container holds contents of up to 5kg. ... features real-time, environmental monitoring – including location, temperature, humidity, shocks and opening information

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2018/11/178907/

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 27th November 2018. ❖

SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

The 20th December 2001 edition of this newsletter reported;

Preliminary Announcement!

At its meeting on Fri 14th 2001 the Institute's [ICANZ] Executive Board decided that a dedicated **Task Force be established** to investigate and provide thought leadership on the subject of sustainability.

More information is eagerly awaited regarding this very positive and exciting news. ❖

Financing our Future

"The report sets out actions to deliver a global sustainable financial system, with recommendations for all parts of the investment chain.

"Co-written by The Prince's Accounting for Sustainability Project (A4S) and Aviva Investors, the report was first tabled, in draft form, at a Finance Leaders' Summit hosted by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales in July 2018, bringing together more than 60 Chairs, Chief Executive Officers and Chief Investment Officers from global financial institutions.

"The report, also supported by Aon, was launched on Monday 24th September, and first referred to during the 'Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' session at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The report explores opportunities by all across the investment chain to scale up actions taken to build a sustainable financial system capable of supporting achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and putting us on a pathway towards achieving the Paris Agreement.

"The recommendations include building a compelling evidence base and motivating people to act, developing consistent terminology, allocating funds to sustainable outcomes, adopting reporting standards, and pricing externalities. The report also identifies current actions already taken by actors across the financial system and the barriers to progressing further.

"The dialogue that this report – and the Summit – generated will be continued through appropriate platforms, including the High Level Investor Forum hosted by the Government of Argentina and the World Bank Group in the lead-up to the G20 Leaders' Summit in Buenos Aires.

More:

www.accountingforsustainability.org/content/a4s/corporate/en/knowledge-hub/reports/financing-our-future.html 96 pages, 16.19Mb

Source: Editor, 1st December 2018. ❖

Tracking Progress of the One Billion Trees Programme

"Find out about the Government's One Billion Trees Programme and how many trees have been planted so far.

"The Government has set a goal to plant a billion trees in the next 10 years – between 2018 and 2027.

"Initial estimates suggest about half that number will be achieved through existing planting programmes. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) will be helping boost planting rates to achieve the goal.

"It will take a combined effort by government, landowners, commercial foresters, conservation groups, regional councils,

iwi, communities, and others. 'We'll be keeping track of the progress towards the billion trees goal. Te Uru Rākau collects data throughout the year on the sale and distribution of exotic and native tree seedlings. We'll use this data to estimate the number of trees being planted and update this web page regularly. [Graphic and links.]

More: www.mpi.govt.nz/funding-and-programmes/forestry/planting-one-billion-trees/tracking-progress-of-the-one-billion-trees-programme/

Source: Editor, 6th December 2018. ❖

Time Capsule

"Thursday [6th December 2018] marked 30 years since the UN general assembly adopted its first resolution on climate change, which – among other things – endorsed the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

"When Malta put it on the agenda, few predicted how fraught and protracted attempts to tackle the problem would become.

More: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/43/a43r053.htm> →

This page is a MUST read! Plus www.climatechangenews.com/2018/10/24/time-capsule-30-years-ago-malta-put-climate-un-agenda/

Source: *Climate Home News*, 7th December 2018

Editor: It seems the talking may go on for ever. ❖

Tarrant to Head Green Investment Fund

"Climate Change Minister James Shaw has launched an investment fund to help finance 'low emissions' businesses.

"The fund will take the form of a company established by Treasury – New Zealand Green Investment Finance Ltd – so will operate independently of the Government and look to make a profit.

"This makes it slightly different to the \$3 billion Provincial Growth Fund. The Government has committed to injecting \$100 million into NZ Green Investment Finance Ltd to get it going.

"Shaw expects the return the company will eventually make will mean it can repay the Government and see it stand on its own commercial footing.

"More and more investment dollars are looking for clean, sustainable ventures to invest in', he says.....

"Cecilia Tarrant has been appointed the chairperson of NZ Green Investment Finance's board. She is the chairperson of the Government Superannuation Fund Authority, as well as ArcAngels – an angel investment network that invests in women entrepreneurs. She is also a director on the boards of Seeka and Payments NZ.

"David Woods has been appointed a director. He has experience in international banking, as well as social investment. Among other things, he was the managing director of a large Netherlands-based social financier, Oikocredit International.

"Businessman, Rob Fenwick, has been appointed an 'ambassador' of NZ Green Investment Finance.

"Shaw plans to have a full board established by April, and expects the company to start taking funding applications from mid-2019 (or just after)

More: www.interest.co.nz/business/97221/treasury-sets-company-invest-low-emissions-businesses-possibly-involving-likes plus www.sharechat.co.nz/article/0c62dc50/govt-announces-commercially-focused-100m-green-investment-fund.html and www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/person.asp?personId=30895401&privcapId=423962616&previousCapId=7774540&previousTitle=First%20NZ%20Capital%20Limited

Source: *Carbon News*, 5th December 2018. ❖

Did You Know?

"The African continent has a bewildering scale and complexity – in addition to two very contrasting Congos**, Africa's land area exceeds that of China, Europe, and the United States combined (Exhibit 1). Its 54 countries have a collective population of 1.2 billion. It has over a thousand languages and huge diversity in income levels, resource endowment, infrastructure development, educational attainment, and business sophistication.

** One is the mineral-rich but conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with a population of around 87 million and a land area 80 times that of Belgium, its former colonial power. On the other side of the river is the Republic of the Congo, with a population of just 5 million but a GDP per capita ten times that of its neighbour, reflecting its position as a significant oil producer. [Maps/graphics]

More: www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/middle-east-and-africa/africas-overlooked-business-revolution

Source: *McKinsey Highlights*, 10th December 2018. ❖

In Nigeria, a Green Stove Addresses Health, the Environment and Employment

"Femi Oye was only nine years old when he lost his grandmother, who was also his guardian, to lung cancer, a disease she likely developed after cooking with charcoal and firewood all her life in Nigeria. He says the loss was a turning point for him, and he decided he would do something about it when he grew up.

"In 2010, at 32, Oye founded Green Energy Biofuels (GEB), a company which manufactures and distributes an innovative, smoke-free cook stove. It uses ethanol gel as fuel, a clean energy source made from biomass. He says it took him and his team two years of research and development to come up with two viable products – the stove and the gel – which they launched in 2012.

"The Kike Green Cook stove is a portable, reinforced, enamel-coated metallic stove with a safety regulator and a steel bowl in the middle that serves as a tank for the cooking gel. The gel is 100% organic and made from renewable energy sources – water hyacinth, sawdust, grass, food and agricultural waste. According to GEB, it is safer, cleaner, and burns more efficiently than liquefied petroleum gas, kerosene, firewood or charcoal, which are the popular cooking fuels in Nigeria.....

"Oye says his green cook stoves have reduced CO2 emissions by more than 600,000 tonnes so far, by replacing harmful fossil fuels, such as kerosene, with more than 10 million litres of biofuel cooking gel equivalent.

"GEB's marketing model operates through an open, mentor-driven network. It distributes its products to final consumers through more than 27,000 agents and distributors who earn commissions on each sale. The company has also franchised distribution shops called Green Centres. This social marketing model provides income to independent distributors while helping the business to grow on a local scale. 'GEB has empowered some 38,000 women entrepreneurs across its 28 distribution centres, created 1,054 direct jobs and some 45,000 indirect jobs', says Oye.

More: <http://venturesafrica.com/in-nigeria-a-green-stove-addresses-health-the-environment-and-employment/>

Source: Editor, 6th December 2018. ❖

'Our Leaders are Like Children,' School Strike Founder Tells Climate Summit

"Action to fight global warming is coming whether world leaders like it or not, school student Greta Thunberg has told the UN climate change summit, accusing them of behaving like irresponsible children.

"Thunberg began a solo climate protest by striking from school in Sweden in August. But more than 20,000 students around the world have now joined her. The school strikes have spread to at least 270 towns and cities in countries across the world, including Australia, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the US and Japan.

"For 25 years countless people have come to the UN climate conferences begging our world leaders to stop emissions and clearly that has not worked as emissions are continuing to rise. So I will not beg the world leaders to care for our future', she said. 'I will instead let them know change is coming whether they like it or not.'

"Since our leaders are behaving like children, we will have to take the responsibility they should have taken long ago', she said. 'We have to understand what the older generation has dealt to us, what mess they have created that we have to clean up and live with. We have to make our voices heard....

More: www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/04/leaders-like-children-school-strike-founder-greta-thunberg-tells-un-climate-summit

Source: *Carbon News*, 5th December 2018. ❖

Sightlines: A Conversation with the Natural World

Winner of the 2014 Orion Book Award for Nonfiction.

More: www.indiebound.org/book/9781615190836 plus www.goodreads.com/book/show/13818573-sightlines

Source: *Orion Magazine*, 8th May 2014. ❖

Ministry for the Environment Awarded CEMARS Certification

“Enviro-Mark Solutions is delighted to award the Ministry for the Environment with certification to the Certified Emissions Measurement And Reduction Scheme (CEMARS®).

“Enviro-Mark Solutions Chief Executive Dr Ann Smith says the Ministry for the Environment are demonstrating leadership in their commitment to playing their part in reaching our national carbon reduction goals, and transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

“CEMARS is a rigorous, science-based programme. Not only has the Ministry’s carbon footprint and reduction plan now been certified to the highest international standards, but it ensures they will continue to set new targets to consistently reduce their carbon footprint.’

“The certificate of achievement was formally presented by Dr Ann Smith to Ministry for the Environment Chief Operating Officer Claire Richardson, at an all-staff meeting in Wellington yesterday [6th December], attended by the Minister for the Environment, Hon David Parker, and Chief Executive Vicky Robertson. ...

“Their carbon footprint and plans to reduce these emissions have been independently audited and certified against international best practice (ISO 14064-1).

“The Ministry for the Environment joins the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) in being CEMARS certified.

More: www.mfe.govt.nz/news-events/walking-our-talk-transitioning-low-emissions-economy plus www.enviro-mark.com/our-members

Source: Enviro-Mark, 7th December 2018

Editor: There are over 100 other certified entities. ❖

From High Above, A New Way of Seeing Our Urban Planet

“The world’s cities are expected to grow by another 2.5 billion people by 2050. A new collection of satellite images starkly illustrates the sheer size and imprint of the world’s urban centres and their vulnerability in the face of population growth and climate change.

“Driven by rapid economic expansion and global trade, the world’s urban population has more than quintupled since the mid-20th century, from 751 million people in 1950 to 4.2 billion today. Centuries-old cities have pushed upward and outward to accommodate the influx of people, and entirely new megacities, home to tens of millions, have sprung up.

“Nowhere can this swift urban growth be seen as vividly as from space. In their new book *City Unseen*, geographers Karen C. Seto and Meredith Reba, experts in urbanisation and global change, offer a collection of satellite images from all seven continents that exhibit the massive imprint these cities have on the landscapes around them.

“If you look at images of Las Vegas and Lagos and Shenzhen, you see how much land it takes to house billions people, and it’s astonishing’, Seto, a professor of geography and urbanisation science at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, says. ‘But the impact of urbanisation is not only the direct land these people live on. It’s all these other non-urban places where we need to extract resources to house and electrify, to operate these cities. That’s part of the story too.’

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/from-high-above-a-new-way-of-seeing-our-urban-planet> plus <https://www.amazon.com/City-Unseen-Visions-Urban-Planet/dp/030022169X> and <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300221695/city-unseen> and <http://time.com/longform/infrared-images-city-unseen/>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 7th December 2018. ❖

The Democratic Party Wants to Make Climate Policy Exciting

“After years of infighting, the Democrats may finally have found an environmental consensus in the Green New Deal.

“On Monday [3rd December], speaking at a town hall led by Senator Bernie Sanders, Representative-Elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez framed her chosen climate policy – the Green New Deal – through the lens of gallant American exceptionalism. ‘This is going to be the New Deal, the Great Society, the moon shot, the civil-rights movement of our generation’, she said.

“The Green New Deal aspires to cut U.S. carbon emissions fast enough to reach the Paris Agreement’s most ambitious climate goal: preventing the world from warming no more than 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100. In a blockbuster report released in October, an international group of scientists said that meeting this goal could skirt the worst climate effects, such as massive floods, expansive droughts, and irreversible sea-level rise.

“To actually make the target, though, the world must start reducing its carbon pollution immediately, and cut it in half by 2030. And we’re nowhere close. Global emissions levels just hit a record high, and even the Barack Obama administration’s most breakneck climate policy did not put the United States close to making its part of the goal.

“The Green New Deal aims to get us there – and remake the country in the process. It promises to give every American a job in that new economy: installing solar panels, retrofitting coastal infrastructure, manufacturing electric vehicles. In the 1960s, the U.S. pointed the full power of its military-technological industry at going to the moon. Ocasio-Cortez wants to do the same thing, except to save the planet. ... [Long article]

More: www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/12/ocasio-cortez-green-new-deal-winning-climate-strategy/576514/

Source: Malcolm Rands, Facebook shared link, 9th Dec. ❖

Analysis: Which Countries Have Sent the Most Delegates to COP24?

“COP24 is widely considered to be the most important UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) international climate negotiations since the Paris COP in 2015. The latest talks come before an end-of-year deadline to produce a ‘rule book’ to flesh out the detail of the Paris Agreement, such as how the ratchet mechanism will work for ramping up ambition on emissions reductions.

“At Paris, there was a provisional list of around 15,000 participants present on behalf of a particular country, or ‘party’ – plus another 8,000 unofficial delegates – while at last year’s COP in Bonn, there were around 11,300 participants.

“So, how many are present in Katowice? *Carbon Brief* dives into the data to find out.

“According to the provisional list (pdf) published by the UNFCCC, there is a grand total of 22,771 registered participants at COP24. This includes 13,898 people representing specific parties, 7,331 from observer organisations – such as scientists, business groups and various non-governmental organisations – and 1,541 journalists.

“At just under 14,000, the total number of party delegates is smaller than in Paris, but larger than in Bonn last year.

“As in recent years, the largest delegations tend to be sent by African countries, with the Top 3 largest delegations from COP23 in Bonn also featuring in the Top 5 this year.

“Leading the table at COP24 is Guinea with 406 delegates. ...

More: www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-countries-sent-most-delegates-cop24

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

Editor: There is a complete list of ALL delegates including those from NZ and Tokelau. ❖

SBN's 2018 in Numbers

SBN has clocked up impressive numbers during 2018. Among those is NZ's largest corporate, Fonterra, becoming a member. Read why Fonterra is impressed and has taken this step.

More:

<https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/our-year-in-numbers-2018/> plus <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/fonterra-why-new-zealands-biggest-business-has-joined-the-sustainable-business-network/>

Source: SBN 11th December 2018. ❖

The Netherlands has Become the World's 2nd Biggest Food Exporter

"..... Borne's production numbers testify to the power of this 'precision farming', as it's known. The global average yield of potatoes per acre is about nine tons. Van den Borne's fields reliably produce more than 20.

"That copious output is made all the more remarkable by the other side of the balance sheet: inputs. Almost two decades ago, the Dutch made a national commitment to sustainable agriculture under the rallying cry 'Twice as much food using half as many resources.' Since 2000, van den Borne and many of his fellow farmers have reduced dependence on water for key crops by as much as 90%. They've almost completely eliminated the use of chemical pesticides on plants in greenhouses, and since 2009 Dutch poultry and livestock producers have cut their use of antibiotics by as much as 60%.

"One more reason to marvel: The Netherlands is a small, densely populated country, with more than 1,300 inhabitants per square mile. It's bereft of almost every resource long thought to be necessary for large-scale agriculture. Yet it's the globe's number two exporter of food as measured by value, second only to the United States, which has 270 times its landmass. How on Earth have the Dutch done it?

More: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rh7BAOIsi08> 1:04 plus www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/09/holland-agriculture-sustainable-farming/ and www.quora.com/How-is-the-Netherlands-the-second-largest-food-exporter

Source: Craig Skinner, Facebook share, 8th December. ❖

Ports of Auckland Plans Hydrogen Plant to Cut Carbon Emissions

"The port has partnered with KiwiRail, Auckland Council, and Auckland Transport which will invest in hydrogen fuel cells vehicles, port equipment, buses and cars as part of the project.

"Ports of Auckland chief executive Tony Gibson said the project is in a planning phase.

"The council-owned port company would start a stakeholder engagement process before applying for resource consent in early 2019.

"The facility is planned to be operational by the end of next year.

"Gibson said the port had set an ambitious emission target. In order to meet that target we need a new renewable and resilient power source for heavy equipment like tugs and straddle carriers, which are difficult to power with batteries', he said in a statement.

"Hydrogen could be the solution for us as it can be produced and stored on site, allows rapid refueling, and provides greater range than batteries', he said.

"Ports of Auckland will fund the construction of a facility which will produce hydrogen from tap water. ...

More:

www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12170504 plus www.poal.co.nz/media/ports-of-auckland-to-build-auckland%E2%80%99s-first-hydrogen-production-and-refuelling-facility

Source: NZ Herald, 4th December 2018. ❖

New Tool Helps NZ Farmers Gauge Carbon Footprint

"Meridian Energy and Westpac NZ are proud to support a new carbon calculator that gives [sheep, beef, dairy, deer] farmers a guide to the size of their carbon footprint.

"The tool has been developed by Lincoln University's Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU) and Agrilink NZ, with financial assistance from Meridian Energy and Westpac NZ.

"Alison Howard, Head of Sustainability at Meridian Energy, is welcoming the release of the calculator.

"We know a lot of our farming customers are going to a lot of effort to run their operations in a sustainable way, and are worried how a zero carbon target for the country might affect them.

"This calculator gives them a quick way to find out their impacts. We know farmers are always looking for ways to contribute positively to the future of New Zealand and this is just a small way we thought we could help.'

"Westpac NZ Head of Commercial and Agribusiness, Mark Steed, wants farmers to know they are supported in making better choices, both for their farms and the country.

"We know farmers care about climate change. Farming is a long-term business and the changing climate is already having an impact.

More: www.westpac.co.nz/who-we-are/newsroom/media-releases-2018/04-december-2018/ plus www.lincoln.ac.nz/PageFiles/31990/CarbonCalculator.html

Source: SBC Weekly Pānui, 6th December 2018

Editor: Currently the tool does not include forestry, cropping, fruit, wine, soil types, or climate zone; perhaps they will be added in due course. ❖

NZ Rowing a Sustainability Award Finalist

"World Rowing endeavours to safeguard the environment in which rowing takes place and we want to recognise those members in the world of rowing who are working to protect and preserve their local environment.

"The World Rowing Sustainability Award will be awarded annually to a national federation, club, event organising committee or other rowing organisation that has implemented an innovative project or initiative delivering a clear and positive sustainability impact, or that is demonstrating sound sustainability practices on an ongoing basis. The project should have been implemented within the past 12 months and should have already demonstrated meaningful impact. [First year of award = 2018.]

"Nominations for this award were narrowed down to three finalists;

- Pushing for a Clean Sweep - Great Britain's National Schools Regatta; first bottled water free event in the UK and reduction in waste to landfill
- Rowing NZ partnership with the Waikato Water Authority – Implement various initiatives to protect the Waikato River and specifically Lake Karapiro,
- Love Where You Row (United States) – clean up and maintain the Schuylkill River, focussing on the stretch housing the famous 'Boathouse Row'.

"Winner – USA.

More: www.worldrowing.com/news/world-rowing-award-sustainability-practices plus www.worldrowing.com/news/creating-better-rowing-environment-the-2018-sustainability-awards and www.worldrowing.com/news/celebration-marks-2018-world-rowing-awards

Source: Waikato River Authority Newsletter, 6th Dec. ❖

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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