

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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The UN Needs Your Help – Especially If You are a Chartered Accountant!

"In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly launched a set of 17 priorities to improve the world. But three years on, progress has been underwhelming. Can finance professionals help get those Sustainable Development Goals met by 2030? It's time for your organisation to get an SDG strategy.

"The United Nations describes its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a: 'global blueprint for dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future', and this ambitious set of 17 priorities to improve the world includes targets such as No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Gender Equality, and Climate Action, along with 13 others.

"While it was governments that signed up to the goals, there has always been an acknowledgement that achieving them would be impossible without support from business leaders. And, indeed, a number of multinational corporations – such as Unilever – were quick to pledge their support.

"Proponents of the goals say their potential upside for businesses goes way beyond social responsibility, arguing the process of setting strategies against the goals will bring innovation, growth, enhance the reputation and brands of companies, and create new markets and opportunities.

"A 2017 *Better Business Better World* report by the Business & Sustainable Development Commission estimated achieving the goals could create US\$12 trillion in market opportunities in four economic systems: food and agriculture, cities, energy and materials, and health and wellbeing.

"However, in the three years since the SDGs were launched, progress has been underwhelming

"CA ANZ's McWilliams stresses the SDGs are not just for the big end of town. 'Even in a small, local accounting practice there are things you can do', she says. 'Advancing gender equality and ensuring employees and contractors are not overworked to look after their mental wellbeing are a couple of really practical ways even small businesses can target two of the 17 goals.'

"A core point McWilliams makes is organisations need to ensure their engagement with the SDGs is genuine and making a measurable difference – rather than merely making for a better-sounding sustainability update in the annual report.

"What is really important for companies which decide they want to incorporate the SDGs into their strategy is to take it beyond business as usual', she says. 'It shouldn't be about looking at what you are already doing well that can tick a box, but about having a serious look at what else you can do differently. A business-as-usual approach is not going to get us to the goals by 2030.'

"Carrel (EY's partner of Climate Change and Sustainability Services) encourages the business and finance leaders he works with to think more seriously about how they can embed the SDGs in their strategies. I think a lot of clarity can be achieved by remembering, really, what the SDGs are about – the world's grandchildren, our grandchildren'.

More: <https://acuity.partica.online/acuity/acuity-feb-2019/insight/the-un-needs-your-help>

Source: *Acuity*, Feb-Mar 2019, page 32.

First NZGBC Future Thinker of the Year

"We've just launched a search for the very first NZGBC Future Thinker of the Year, and we're now accepting nominations.

"The Future Thinker of the Year will have demonstrated environmental knowledge and leadership. This could be from their participation in activities, research, or their work achievements.

"Who should be nominated? Anyone with an interest in sustainability and a passion for improving the built environment in New Zealand, who is keen to represent a younger voice within the green building and property sector. "You can nominate yourself, or someone else.

"The competition is open to all students from any tertiary organisation, apprentices, and any tertiary graduate within 4 years of graduation. Entrants must be New Zealand residents or NZGBC Future Thinkers and over the age of 18 years.

Entries close: 28th February

More:

www.nzgbc.org.nz/futurethinkers/FutureThinkeroftheYear

Source: NZGBC, 1st February 2019

Vulnerable: Local Government Infrastructure Exposed to Sea Level Rise

"[NZ] councils are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, which have bearing on the prosperity, vibrancy and long-term viability of our communities. Climate change will affect all of us during our lifetimes, and councils are increasingly recognising that resilience to climate change depends in large part on what is being done to adapt to it.

"This report forms part of LGNZ's wider flagship Climate Change project. The project is focused on supporting councils with their adaptation and mitigation responsibilities, and involves ongoing advocacy to the Government on the tools and resources that councils and their communities need to address climate change.

More: www.lgnz.co.nz/our-work/publications/vulnerable-the-quantum-of-local-government-infrastructure-exposed-to-sea-level-rise 52 pages, 1.25Mb, plus www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12199010 plus www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2019/01/the-devastating-cost-of-climate-change-revealed.html and www.interest.co.nz/news/97870/local-government-new-zealand-says-14-billion-local-government-infrastructure-risk%C2%A0rising – numerous comments

Source: *N Z Herald*, page A13, 1st February

Editor: The report does not cover schools, hospitals and other government owned assets, nor private assets such as electricity, telephone and gas, nor the impacts on privately owned property (houses, factories, farms, stadiums, golf courses) and attendant loss of property rating income, nor the loss of cemeteries/urupa, beaches, boat ramps.

The Microscopic Wonder of Herbs

See the microscopic wonders of herbs. A photographer reveals the intricacies of kitchen herbs. The result is otherworldly.

More: www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/future-of-food/macro-photos-of-kitchen-herbs

Source: National Geographic, 4th February 2019.

PhD Scholarships in Accounting - Manchester

“Two full-time PhD research scholarships, including stipend and tuition fee costs, are available for September 2019. The two PhD students will conduct research as part of the Alliance Research Grant funded project ‘*Reconfiguring institutional investment and corporate governance: standards, commercialisation, indexation and the shifting jurisdictional authority of accounting and finance professionals and professional practice*’. ...

“The two PhD projects will build on ongoing work at the Alliance Manchester Business School in the Accounting and Finance Division by Professor Chris Humphrey and Professor Brendan O’Dwyer, which seeks to significantly enhance our understanding of how the professionalisation of new fields by accounting professionals is emerging in three key areas: the development of standards in sustainability reporting and assurance; the processes through which Big 4 professional services firms are professionalising the area of human rights; and the jurisdictional power and consequences of indexation in different domains.....

Applications close: 3rd May 2019.

More: www.jobs.ac.uk/job/BOV142/phd-scholarship-in-accounting-reconfiguring-institutional-investment-and-corporate-governance

Source: CSEAR, 31st January 2019.

Packaging Design Challenge

“We [Smurfit Kappa] want to help create a world where packaging helps, not harms the world around us. We believe this can only be done by being open and working with others across and beyond our industry – open to new thinking, new solutions and new inspiration.

“The inaugural Design Challenge is one of many Better Planet Packaging Initiatives and is open to anyone to participate.

“The goal of our Better Planet Packaging Design Challenge is to find paper-based alternatives to every day non-biodegradable packaging. We have set two specific challenges and submissions can be made for either one or both!

- Challenge 1 - Pallet Stretch Wrap Alternative
- Challenge 2 - Paper-based parcel with thermal protection

Registration: Required

Prize: €8,000 (9x2)

Entries close: 29th March 2019

More: www.smurfitkappa.com/innovation/design-challenge plus www.environmentalleader.com/2019/01/packaging-giant-challenges-designers-and-engineers-to-develop-creative-solutions/

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 31st January 2019.

\$36 million Investment Approved to Tackle NZ Regional Erosion

“Te Uru Rākau (Forestry New Zealand) has announced funding of almost \$36 million through the Hill Country Erosion Fund (HCEF) to enable much-needed erosion control in the regions. The annual cost associated with hill country erosion is estimated to be between \$100 million and \$150 million through lost soil, nutrients and production, and damaged infrastructure and waterways. Over 4 years, the funds for specific programmes will result in more than 13 million trees being planted and treatment of more than 21,000 hectares of land. These plantings will contribute to the Government’s One Billion Trees Programme, and deliver environmental and a range of other benefits across the country.

More: www.teururakau.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/36-million-investment-approved-to-tackle-regional-erosion/

Source: *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 30th January.

A Gift Received

Over Christmas/New Year the Editor was given some reusable string bags made from organic cotton and which he had not come across before. They were from home-based Grey Lynn, Auckland business of Lisa Cohen-Smith. These advertising-free bags could be of interest to Kiwis and Aussies alike.

“Our bags are Certified Organic, made from sustainable, unbleached Indian cotton. 100% Biodegradable.

“Organic certification is issued by Control Union in compliance with GOTS, (Global Organic Textile Standard) and meets strict ecological and social requirements in order to provide a credible assurance for the end consumer.

The types of bags include; Reusable Fresh Produce Bags, Bulk Bin Bags, Sheeting Bags, thick durable Canvas Bags, String Bags and Star Net thick crocheted reusable shopping bags.

More: <https://rethink.nz/>

Source: Editor, 31st January 2019

Enviro-Mark Solutions Now B Corp Certified

“Enviro-Mark Solutions is proud to announce we are now an officially Certified B Corporation®, joining an international community of more than 2,500 companies that use the power of business to build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

“B Corps™ are businesses which meet the highest verified standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.

“Enviro-Mark Solutions’ Chief Executive Dr Ann Smith says: ‘Adding B Corp certification to the suite of independent endorsements we already have, was the next natural step for Enviro-Mark Solutions. We are always striving for improvement in how we operate as a business, as well as for our members.

“B Corp status shows that we are all-rounders. We achieved good standards and scored well on governance, workers, customers, and the environment, with our highest score for how we look after our customers.’

“Our next steps are to look at areas where we can improve our score, which we’ll be assessing with our Board, and at the organisation-wide level at our all-staff conference in March.’

“Enviro-Mark Solutions’ own rigorous and science-based certification programmes scored highly in the B Corp assessment process. CEMARS, carboNZero, Enviro-Mark and Energy-Mark are complementary to B Corp certification. They help organisations take a deep dive into carbon, environmental or energy management, by providing certification to the highest international standards and best practice. ...

More: www.enviro-mark.com/news-and-events/news/taking-action/we-are-a-certified-b-corporation

Source: Nadine France, Enviro-Mark Solutions, 30th January

Editor: enviro-Mark joins about 19 other NZ entities which have this international certification; see <https://bcorporation.com.au/>

Charities Act Review – Community Meetings

“As you may know, the Government is reviewing the Charities Act 2005 to ensure it is effective and fit for purpose.

“The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has today [1st Feb] announced a series of community meetings in March and April 2019 about the review. Anyone interested in the review is welcome to attend the meetings, which will be held in 21 locations.

More: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/charitiesreview>

Source: Charities Services, 1st February 2019

Editor: Considerably more information about the meetings and the review as a whole at the web site.

Putting Carbon Back Into Soil

"In a world having too much carbon in the atmosphere and obsessed about expensive and dangerous technologies for its removal, it is comforting to know a form of charcoal has now been accepted by the IPCC as a useful tool in the fight against climate change.

"Biochar is charcoal which can be used to lift productivity in agriculture and as a long-lived carbon store in soils. It can be used to enhance water quality and as a bioremediation tool for contaminated soils. The production of biochar can also deliver secondary bioenergy benefits and deal with many types of 'liability' biomass. Biochar has attracted worldwide attention as a Negative Emissions Technology (NET) in the latest IPCC report, presented at COP24. Biochar has been identified as having positive impacts on 12 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

"A growing number of New Zealand farmers are becoming interested in making and using Biochar, leading to a new organisation being formed, Biochar Network New Zealand (BNNZ), which will have its Inaugural General Meeting in Pukekohe on 14th February 2019.

"BNNZ is planning to promote and support activities that provide widespread awareness, understanding and acceptance of Biochar in New Zealand, leading to a diverse range of production and application scenarios for the benefit of New Zealand's agriculture, industry and environment.

"The BNNZ IGM will take place at 10am on 14th February 2019 at the Reid Anderson Lounge, 18 Wesley Road, Pukekohe.

"If you wish to attend, or participate via remote access, please email your request to: BNNZ@soilcarbon.org.nz

More: <http://soilcarbon.org.nz/biochar-what-is-it-and-why-does-it-matter/> Plus a recent presentation at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/sw2xvvek4sexspa/Miles%20NUS%20E2S2%20CREATE%20Biochar%2001%2016%202019r.pdf?dl=0>

Source: Trevor Richards via Simon Millar of Pure Advantage, 25th January 2019

Editor: A potential industry in NZ, including export? 

The Hauraki Gulf and You

"Today [29th January 2019] SBN launches GulfX, our major new marine restoration programme. To kick things off we surveyed the region's business people. We asked them about their relationship with Tikapa Moana, the Hauraki Gulf. What did they tell us?

"The good news is there's a lot of love for the Gulf out there. Three quarters of our 300 respondents agreed with the statement: 'I love living near the Hauraki Gulf and have a strong connection with it'. Most others said they like living near the water. Our respondents said they visit, swim, kayak and fish, among many more activities.

"It seems this love is also getting expressed in other ways. Eighty percent of respondents said they either frequently or occasionally pick up litter. Two thirds said they were using their car less to cut pollution. Top priorities for conserving the Gulf were water quality (40%) and fish and fish stocks (just under a third).

"But only about one in five of respondents said they had done a beach clean or planted trees along waterways. Many businesses are getting their people into action.

"But there may be more to concern us in people's perception of the Gulf.....

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/the-gulf-and-you/> plus <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/introducing-sbns-new-major-programme-protecting-and-restoring-the-hauraki-gulf/>

Source: SBN, 29th January 2019. 

DiCaprio Study: Achieving Paris Targets Possible & Cheap

"Tax payers are subsidising the fossil fuel industry internationally at \$5 trillion a year. Changing to 100% renewable energy will cost \$1.7 trillion a year. Save our children's lives and save money. Vested interests are holding us back and robbing us blind.

Source: Malcolm Rands, Facebook post 25th January 2019

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"The world can meet the Paris climate targets at about a quarter of the cost of current subsidies for fossil fuels, according to a new climate study funded by the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation.

"The study, entitled *Achieving the Paris Climate Agreement*, is the culmination of a two-year scientific collaboration with 17 leading scientists at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), two institutes at the German Aerospace Center (DLR), and the University of Melbourne's Climate & Energy College.

"It was funded by the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation and released by the scientific publisher *Springer Nature*. The model produced by the authors, called *One Earth*, offers a roadmap for surpassing the targets set by the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement,

"According to Karl Burkart, Director of Innovation at the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, the *One Earth* climate model 'is groundbreaking in that it shows the 1.5°C can be achieved through a rapid transition to 100% renewables by 2050, alongside land restoration efforts on every continent which increase the resilience of natural ecosystems and help to ensure greater food security.' [Graph]

More: <https://cleantecnica.com/2019/01/22/dicaprio-study-achieving-paris-targets-possible-cheap/> plus www.leonardodicaprio.org/one-earth-climate-model/ 

United Nations Backs Seed Sovereignty in Landmark Small-scale Farmers' Rights Declaration

"On 17th December, the United Nations General Assembly took a quiet but historic vote, approving the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas by a vote of 121-8 with 52 abstentions. The declaration, the product of 17 years of diplomatic work led by the international peasant alliance La Via Campesina, formally extends human rights protections to farmers whose 'seed sovereignty' is threatened by government and corporate practices.

"As peasants we need the protection and respect for our values and for our role in society in achieving food sovereignty', said Via Campesina coordinator Elizabeth Mpofo after the vote. Most developing countries voted in favour of the resolution, while many developed country representatives abstained. The only 'no' votes came from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Hungary, Israel and Sweden.

"To have an internationally recognised instrument at the highest level of governance that was written by and for peasants from every continent is a tremendous achievement', said Jessie MacInnis of Canada's National Farmers Union. The challenge, of course, is to mobilise small-scale farmers to claim those rights, which are threatened by efforts to impose rich-country crop breeding regulations onto less developed countries, where the vast majority of food is grown by peasant farmers using seeds they save and exchange.

More: www.greenbiz.com/article/united-nations-backs-seed-sovereignty-landmark-small-scale-farmers-rights-declaration

Source: *SnippETS*, 31st January 2019

Editor: Why on earth did NZ vote AGAINST the resolution? 

New International Standard for Accommodation Providers

"Tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economic sectors, with billions of people travelling each year – and numbers are expected to grow by 3.3 % annually until 2030. Tourist accommodation is one of the biggest players, meaning its potential impact on sustainable development is huge. New international guidance for accommodation facilities to help them improve their impact has just been published.

"Not only is tourism growing by the day, it is an industry that promotes understanding and peace between countries and cultures, provides millions of jobs and is ideally placed to contribute directly to many of the United Nations' 17 sustainability goals.

"Accommodation facilities are central to any tourism activity and therefore hold immense potential for improving their impact on the environment, promoting social exchange and contributing to local economies in a positive way. But despite the many sustainable tourism programmes in existence worldwide, put forth by travel operators or other organizations with commercial interests, there has never been a truly impartial International Standard dedicated to accommodation. Until now.

"ISO 21401, Tourism and related services – Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments – Requirements, specifies the environmental, social and economic requirements for implementing a sustainability management system in tourist accommodation. It addresses issues such as human rights, health and safety for employees and guests, environmental protection, water and energy consumption, waste generation and the development of the local economy.

"... there are many initiatives in the market which accommodation providers could use to help them improve their environmental practices, but none which integrate the social and economic aspects as well, or are free from commercial interests.

More: www.iso.org/news/ref2366.html

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 2nd February 2019

Editor: There is probably no such thing as 'sustainable tourism'. There are ways however to mitigate the downsides of this burgeoning sector. 

All It Took to Clean Up This Beach was a Fish Sculpture Named Goby

"As some rumours swirl around the internet that there will be more plastic than fish by 2050, there are also some great stories about local recycling, like this one about Goby The Fish.

"This local beach decided to do something simple, instead of just placing a ton of boring old garbage cans around the beach, they made a giant see through fish out of some barbed wire and mesh, and added a sign to it that said 'Goby loves plastic, please feed him'.

"The key to the success was that kids had no pleasure in recycling plastics into those old crusty blue bins, but when it turned into a game where they had to 'feed' Goby it just took off.

"Goby to this day is constantly being fed, and most of the times he actually gets more than he needs for a day's meal. He's usually taken away by the city overnight to empty all his plastic that he's eaten, and then brought back the next morning with an empty stomach so people can continue to feed him again and again.

"My question is, why is there not a Goby on every single beach in this country!?"

More: <http://yupthatexists.com/goby-plastic-beach-fish/>

Source: Craig Skinner, Facebook, 31st January 2019

Editor: 'Stunning' pic. 

Consultation on Proposed Government Procurement Rules 4th Edition

"Low emissions/waste procurement for Govt?"

"MBIE is consulting on a new draft of the Government Procurement Rules. The suggested rules include supporting better conditions for workers, as well as low-waste and low emissions goods and services.

"Summary

"Government procurement can and should be used to support wider social, economic and environmental outcomes that go beyond the immediate purchase of goods and services.

"The New Zealand Government spends approximately \$41 billion each year buying goods and services from third-party suppliers and providers.

"The Government Rules of Sourcing (the Rules) support good practice for procurement planning, approaching the supplier community and contracting.

"Government departments, NZ Police, NZ Defence force and most Crown entities must follow the Rules if procurement is worth more than \$100,000 (or \$10 million for new construction works). All other government agencies are encouraged to follow the Rules.

"In 2018 Cabinet agreed government contracts could be more explicitly leveraged to support the Government's economic strategy and broader outcomes, and the Government Rules of Sourcing should be updated to enable this.

Submissions close: 5th March 2019.

More: www.mbie.govt.nz/have-your-say/consultation-on-proposed-government-procurement-rules-4th-edition/

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 31st January 2019.

Editor: If your entity is a supplier to the Government or a supplier to any such supplier then this is relevant to you! 

Head of Sustainability

"Countdown Supermarkets, Auckland. Woolworths New Zealand owns and operates 180 Countdown supermarkets, four distribution centres, one meat processing plant and one seafood processing plant. We are one of the largest private sector employers in the country with over 18,400 employees. Over 3 million Kiwis shop with us each week.

"Over the last couple of years, we have accelerated our commitment to protect and enhance Aotearoa's unique environment, support the local communities we operate in and create a safe, supportive and progressive workplace.

"We have an exciting opportunity for a Head of Sustainability, where the right person will add significant value to the future of our business, our customers and New Zealand.

More: www.linkedin.com/comm/jobs/view/1071717752

Source: LinkedIn, 30th January 2019. 

Advisor - Sustainable Value

"KPMG New Zealand, Auckland. KPMG New Zealand is part of the international KPMG network and is passionate about providing the best audit, tax and advisory services to clients.

"The Advisory division of KPMG is a significant supplier of advisory and consulting services. Our advisors combine extensive knowledge of a wide variety of businesses and sectors to provide clients with a service which adds recognised value.

"Sustainable Value is within the Advisory division and has focus on services to support clients with achieving low-emissions, climate resilient futures, strategy, health & safety, integrated reporting and sustainable value for investors and society.

More: www.linkedin.com/comm/jobs/view/1086987381

Source: LinkedIn 30th January 2019. 