

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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An Alternative Measure of Progress to GDP

"A new, ground-breaking report from Massey University shows New Zealand is only half as well-off as indicated by conventional measures like Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"Lead author and ecological economist Professor Murray Patterson says the report is based on an alternative economic model that offers a reality check, as the country waits for the Government's first Wellbeing Budget.

"Overall, on a per capita basis, since 1970, the GDP increased by 91%', Professor Patterson says. 'whereas the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), which gives a more accurate measure of the nation's wellbeing, only increased by 53%.'

"*Beyond Gross Domestic Product: The New Zealand Genuine Progress Indicator to Measure the Economic, Social and Environmental Dimensions of Well-Being from 1970 to 2016*, is comprehensive 204-page report, compiled from data collected over nearly five decades, presents a sobering picture of how our society has developed under a range of 21 indicators. These include the traditional measure of personal consumption, as well as additional areas of income inequality, unemployment, public services, commuting, crime, biological pests, air pollution, ozone depletion, greenhouse gases and loss of wetlands, indigenous forests and soil.

"When you look at personal consumption of goods and services, we've done very well – tracking up steeply, as the GDP. But when you take away the costs, you get this different picture which is not quite so rosy', Professor Patterson says.

"In terms of economic management it shows from 1970 to 1992 the country went backwards when you look at all the costs and benefits, then from 1990 onwards, we got the economy basically right. People were consuming lots of goods and services as reflected in the GPI. So we got the economy right but we got everything else wrong.'

"And though some are better off financially since the 1990s compared with the previous 20-year period, the environment has suffered considerably. The report conservatively costed overall deterioration of the natural environment at \$18.3 billion for 2016.

"The most significant environmental cost was air pollution with an economic cost of \$5.1 billion for 2016, based on air pollution causing premature deaths and restricted activity days, as well as negative health effects such as respiratory and cardiac illnesses.'

"Other key environmental impacts include human-induced soil loss and erosion, resulting in the loss of productive land, increasing flood severity and damage to property, cost \$3.5 billion for 2016.

"More report highlights:

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Water pollution
- Other environmental costs....
- Consumption (under GPI)
- Time poor population

The report, the culmination of 10 years' of work, is a wake-up call for citizens and politicians alike, its authors say. ...

More: www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/news/article.cfm?marticle_uuid=B7BC6F27-DE80-42CA-8E23-2171CB31BF62 plus www.voxy.co.nz/business/5/339433 and www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/the-press/20190605/281921659538813 and www.massey.ac.nz/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uuid=8581767A-167D-4E43-A520-3862512B319D 208 pages, 8.85Mb

Source: Garry McDonald, 31st May 2019. Garry has been involved with this project since inception in 2003. He notes 'Arguably it is the most comprehensive study of its type undertaken in NZ to date' and he hopes through various fora a wider critical debate will follow.

No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference

The collected speeches of 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, who began the worldwide school strike for the environment in 2018 was published on 6th June as a £2.99 paperback.

No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference, is a selection of 11 of Thunberg's key speeches, all written by her. The first speech was given three weeks after her first climate strike in August 2018, the most recent in the UK parliament in April.

"Penguin described her as 'the voice of a generation facing the full force of climate catastrophe ... quiet, angry and unafraid, speaking truth to power.'

"My name is Greta Thunberg. I am 16 years old. I come from Sweden. And I speak on behalf of future generations', the teenage Nobel peace prize nominee told MPs. 'We children are not sacrificing our education and our childhood for you to tell us what you consider is politically possible in the society that you have created ... We children are doing this to wake the adults up. We children are doing this for you to put your differences aside and start acting as you would in a crisis. We children are doing this because we want our hopes and dreams back.'

More: www.theguardian.com/books/2019/may/02/greta-thunberg-speeches-published-no-one-is-too-small-to-make-a-difference plus www.goodreads.com/book/show/45450258-no-one-is-too-small-to-make-a-difference

Source: Editor, 28th May 2019.

The Fracking of Rachel Carson – *Silent Spring's* Lost Legacy, Told in Fifty Parts

"VIDEO [9:26]: Sandra Steingraber, who is at the forefront of efforts to halt fracking across the Marcellus Shale deposits, reads excerpts from her essay about the fiftieth anniversary of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, accompanied by a full portfolio of fracking photos by Nina Berman.

"Sandra Steingraber narrates a slide show about the fracking of Rachel Carson's home-ground.

More: <https://orionmagazine.org/article/the-fracking-of-rachel-carson/>

Source: Orion, 1st June 2019

Editor: Has 50 paragraphs of text, plus numerous comments 2012 to 2014. Rachel was the founder of environmental science and renowned for her book published in 1962.

What Next? Season 2, Episode 3

TV [44:17] Tuesday 4th June. 80% of New Zealanders said profit shouldn't be the only priority of business, but what would that look like? Nigel Latta visits companies that are trying new ways of working to find out.

More: www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/what-next/episodes/s2-e3 plus *Nigel Latta asks what's next for the economy* at www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/112935788/nigel-latta-asks-whats-next-for-the-economy

Source: Editor, 4th June 2019.

Editor: Excellent programme; merits attention and more. 🌱

Green Speak Waikato

"NZGBC is committed to reducing national carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, but how will we measure this and how will we get there? The New Zealand Green Building Council is soon to launch a new standard for buildings, find out what this will mean at this month's *Green Speak* event. ...

"Mix and mingle with the green building gurus of the Waikato.

"Net zero carbon buildings Aotearoa: Alongside our friends at Enviro-Mark Solutions, we're developing a framework to shift our buildings to net zero carbon. Progress report from the recent consultation process.

"He waka eke noa, Highlights from Green Property Summit 2019: If you missed this summit we'll bring you a taster of this influential event.

More: www.nzgbc.org.nz/Event?Action=View&Event_id=771

Source: NZGBC, 6th June 2019. 🌱

Survey: How Should *Stuff* Cover Climate Change?

"*Stuff* [NZ] launched *Quick! Save the Planet* in November 2018, with the goal of making climate change feel tangible, urgent and unignorable. Since then, we've greatly increased the quality and quantity of our climate crisis journalism.

"We're committed to ongoing coverage, and we want to make sure it's relevant and meaningful to New Zealanders.

"So, we're asking for your feedback on better climate change coverage. We'd be grateful if you'd answer a few questions in our survey to help guide our future coverage.

"Take the survey now.

More: www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/113231978/survey-how-should-stuff-cover-climate-change

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 6th June 2019. 🌱

Sustainability Failed. The Future is Just Climate

"Its quite provocative, in that the author is suggesting a focus on climate change action and dropping (for a while) much emphasis on all other sustainability challenges, but the main point about government/business/NGOs/public achieving more by focusing on fewer issues is a good one.' – Brian Johnston

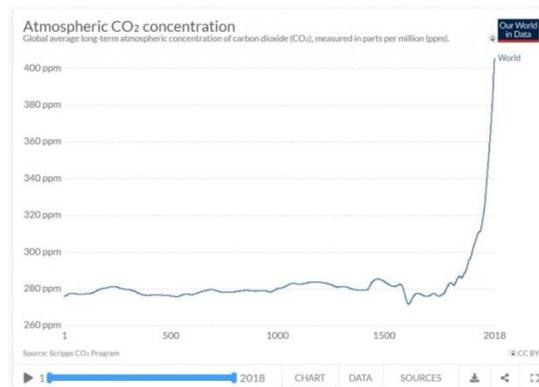
"My success, part of it certainly, is that I have focused in on a few things.' – Bill Gates.

"Let's be honest. We are not going to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees C. That target is a bust. We are already two thirds of the way towards 1.5 degrees, having reached one degree of warming this year.

"The IPCC has told us that to stop at 1.5 degrees, we need to reduce emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and reach 'net zero' around 2050. Well, we are no longer at 2010 levels. CO2 emissions are running at about 2010 levels plus 10%. So that's something like 55% less CO2 emissions in the next twelve years, we need to achieve. And that's not going to happen.

"Hell, it takes that long just to build a railway link across

London or LA. Imagine the power generation infrastructure, smart grids, efficient production processes, and transport systems we'll need, worldwide, to cut our global emissions in half. Not to mention reforestation, changes in diet and agriculture and a carbon tax on international aviation. And all of this pales into insignificance compared to the political dialogue needed to coordinate activity between and within countries. Twelve years is just three terms of the American presidency. What chance America ceases to be the great bad actor? ...



[<https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>]

"Take a look at a typical company sustainability report. The contents list will include a long list of environmental and social issues, each with its own set of sub-headings, metrics, targets and highlight examples. All wrapped in a viscous layer of management process. Not quite ready to set an absolute CO2 target? Oh well, let's feature volunteering this year. And so it goes on. Doing some good here and there, but not conclusively dealing with the problem threatening our existence. Can you name the companies which have cut their absolute carbon footprint while growing their business? These should be our role models.

"By trying to tackle everything at once we're diluting our impact, giving too much weight to secondary issues and too little to the really big one.

"We must stop talking about water, plastic, diversity, workers' rights, and volunteering. These are housekeeping issues. Just get on and do them quietly. We need all our energy, resources and focus on climate change. Talk about nothing else, to your board, investors, political connections and customers. Measure your success in \$ and tons CO₂. If we beat climate change, we will automatically make many of the other problems better, and we will have re-established a collective belief that we can act to save our common future. Don't tell me if we can cut global CO₂ emission by half, we can't fix packaging.

"With all our commercial, political, and popular energy behind climate change – exclusively – we might just stop it running away with itself, causing untold human misery and damage to nature. If I was thinking of starting a family now, I'd think pretty hard.

More: <https://contextsustainability.com/sustainability-failed-the-future-is-just-climate/>

Source: Brian Johnston, 30th May 2019. 🌱

Tackling Climate Change? Governor Jay Inslee Has a Plan for That

Discusses why USA efforts to impose a carbon tax in his state failed and how to 'easily' achieve the outcomes a carbon tax would achieve without having a carbon tax.

Source: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/tackling-climate-change-governor-jay-inslee-has-a-plan-for-that>

More: *Yale Environment 360*, 30th May 2019. 🌱

ISO Twenty-Four-Hundred

"ISO 20400 is a global standard for sustainable procurement that was published in May 2017. Action Sustainability Community Interest Company (ASCIC) is a Not for Profit organisation. Following the completion of the ISO 20400 standard it was suggested by the ISO committee (Australian delegation) that a platform was needed to promote the new standard globally and for free, Via LinkedIn and Twitter we are encouraging followers to share experiences of using the ISO standard, both positive and negative, to promote and enhance to use of the standard globally at ISO20400.org

More: www.linkedin.com/in/iso-twenty-four-hundred-45216613a/ plus www.actionsustainability.com/our-uk-story/

Source: LinkedIn message received 24th May 2019. 

From Fringe to Mainstream – Sustainable Business Council Celebrates 20th Anniversary

"On World Environment Day, the Sustainable Business Council (SBC) celebrated its 20th anniversary of helping businesses be the best for New Zealand – and the world.

"In the past 20 years, we have seen sustainability go from being an add-on to now being central to the strategy of New Zealand's leading businesses'....

"The buzzwords may have changed from corporate social responsibility and triple-bottom-line reporting to purpose, foresight and integrated reporting – but sustainability in business is still about making a positive difference to the society and the environment you operate in, now and for the long-term, as well as continuing to grow your business.'

"Over the past 20 years our membership has expanded from 30 to more than 100 businesses, all committed to reducing their emissions, adopting sustainable procurement policies, and regularly reporting on their sustainability activities'

"I believe we are very close to achieving our goal of mainstreaming sustainability in New Zealand businesses. For instance, the Climate Leaders Coalition arose last year from within our membership because business leaders wanted to work together to reduce their emissions and call on other businesses to do the same. The Coalition is growing by the day and will celebrate its first anniversary in July.'

"It is also pleasing to see many businesses embedding the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for their sustainability activities. Our members are at the forefront of helping New Zealand meet its commitments to the Goals.'

"Looking ahead, sustainable procurement will be the next big lever for change, as our members are customers of many of New Zealand's other businesses. Asking their suppliers to address modern slavery, emissions, and other environmental and social issues will have a ripple effect throughout New Zealand.'

More: www.sbc.org.nz/news/2019/from-fringe-to-mainstream-sustainable-business-council-celebrating-20th-anniversary

Source: *Carbon News*, 5th June 2019. 

Creating Healthy Communities and Ecosystems for a Resilient Future

"Hosted by SCION, the 2nd Oceania Ecosystem Services Forum (OESF) will build on the success of the first in Brisbane, Australia in 2017, which raised the profile of the value of ecosystems in decision-making in the Oceania region. OESF 2019 aims to bring together policy-makers, businesses, community leaders and researchers with the aspiration of 'Creating healthy communities and ecosystems for a resilient future'.

When/Where: 2nd – 6th September 2019, Christchurch

More: <https://oceaniaesforum.com/oceania-ecosystem-services-forum-2019/>

Source: Living Future New Zealand, 20th May 2019. 

Want to Read Up on Sustainability But Don't Know Where to Start? SBN CEO Rachel Brown Shares her Top Six

"With the growing sense of urgency around the sustainability challenges we face, knowing how to inform yourself can be a daunting task. There are a plethora of articles, reports, podcasts, TED Talks, and books tackling some of the social and environmental issues of our time. But where to begin?

"Rachel Brown, CEO of the Sustainable Business Network, says: 'Sustainability is the biggest issue of our times. It's transforming the way we live and the way we run our businesses. So it's important to understand what it's all about to help you make informed decisions.

"I've put together a list of some of my favourite books, articles and videos. Some of the information out there can be really depressing, so it's important to include some inspiring, solutions-based information in your learning too.' Here are Rachel's Top Six: Where to Start on Sustainability.

1. For some inspired reading.
2. For an urgent call to action on climate and biodiversity.
3. For a great Web reference on the global environment.
4. For some values based learning.
5. For leadership in sustainability.
6. If you're looking for some frameworks.

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/want-to-read-up-on-sustainability-but-dont-know-what-to-start-ceo-rachel-brown-shares-her-top-six/>

Source: SBN, 4th June 2019. 

EMBARC: Achieving Low Emissions Together

"A day dedicated to connecting organisations with low emissions solutions products, providers and services. Embark will enable attendees to take positive action to reduce emissions in their organisations.

"Attendees will hear from businesses which have signed up to the Climate Leaders Coalition about how they measure and report their emissions, set a public emissions reduction target, and implement projects to reduce emissions.

"There will also be practical 'how to' advice on setting meaningful targets, writing transition plans, financing and offsetting.

"Businesses will also share the quick wins and why doing this work has been beneficial to their bottom line, brand and reputation.

"The event will directly connect businesses with solutions providers – so you'll leave knowing what your next steps are, and who can help you take them

When/Where: 7:30am – 5:30pm, Wed. 24th July, Auckland

More: www.embark2019.nz/home

Source: SBN, 30th May 2019. 

There's More to Seaweed than Just a Superfood

"The potential for seaweed to contribute to solving the management of emissions is huge. Seaweeds are the world's fastest growing plants – growing 30-60 times faster than land-based plants and absorbing up to 5 times more CO₂. Seaweed also does not require soil, fertiliser, fresh water or pesticides to grow and actually improves the environment in which they flourish. If just 9% of the world's oceans were converted to seaweed farms, it would sequester the equivalent of all our present emissions at more than 40 Gigatons per year.....

More: www.energyts.com/single-post/2019/06/06/SnippETS-for-6-June-2019

Source: *SnippETS*, 6th June 2019. 

Crazy-Town – Band-Aid Town

“With equal parts humour and in-depth analysis, Asher Miller, Rob Dietz, and Jason Bradford safeguard their sanity while probing crazy-making topics like climate change, overshoot, runaway capitalism, and why we’re all deluding ourselves.

“Pop quiz! A friend of yours has just had an unfortunate chainsaw accident and cut a femoral artery: do you (a) make a tourniquet with your t-shirt, or (b) stick a Band-Aid on the wound? If you picked (b), congratulations! You’ve followed the instruction manual for humanity’s pathetic response to climate change. In this final episode of season, Asher, Rob, and Jason consider the psychology behind both inaction and effective action in these times of crisis. And for the very practical-minded, they also cover when to prescribe tobacco poultices and whiskey shots – good fun for the whole family.’ Says the intro to the 13th podcast in a series created by Post Carbon Institute.

“Lucky number 13 marks the final episode of *Crazy Town’s* first – and possibly last – season. If you’ve been listening, then you probably noticed that Jason, Rob, and Ashely had some fun creating this podcast. Hopefully you had some fun, too, listening, and even learned some things along the way.

Each podcast is about 45 minutes with each accompanied by a list of resources.

More: www.postcarbon.org/crazytown/

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 5th June 2019. 

Businesses Say They Are Climate Resilient – but Most Don’t Actually Have a Plan

“A majority of US business leaders – 59% – say their companies are climate resilient, and an equal percentage views climate change as a priority, yet just 29% have actually assessed the risks of climate change to their organisation and only 38% say they have a plan to respond to climate change-related events, according to a new survey from AT&T.

“About one in four business leaders say their company has experienced negative financial impacts from extreme weather in the past five years. Fifty-three percent of respondents say their businesses are already taking steps to adapt to climate change, including updating emergency response plans, investing in physical updates, and enhancing disaster recovery procedures. However, the survey also reveals opportunities for businesses to improve preparedness and climate resilience, as 71% have not yet assessed the risks of climate change to their business. ...

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2019/06/businesses-say-they-are-climate-resilient-but-most-dont-actually-have-a-plan/

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 6th June 2019. 

Net Zero Carbon Buildings Aotearoa

“The NZ Green Building Council is holding public events around Aotearoa to listen to everyone who wants to help make our buildings better, and slash climate change emissions. Join us and share your thoughts.

“Buildings in New Zealand belch out around 20% of our climate change pollution. With your help, we’re going to fix that. ...

When/Where: Auckland, 3.30pm - 7.30pm 18th June
Dunedin, 3:30pm-7:30pm 20th June

More: www.nzgbc.org.nz/Event?Action=View&Event_id=767
and www.nzgbc.org.nz/Event?Action=View&Event_id=766

Source: NZGBC, 6th June 2019

Editor: Events were held in Christchurch and Wellington 11th & 13th June. 

A Nod to NZ: What Can We Make of the Advice from the UK’s Committee on Climate Change?

“The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) spoke firmly: the UK should legislate as soon as possible for a net zero economy by 2050. When the target is set in concrete, it’ll be, by some distance, the most purposeful climate commitment in the industrialised world. Those who don’t think our Zero Carbon Bill goes far enough – and those that do – should take note.

“If you hadn’t heard of net zero, you have now. The turning off of the greenhouse gas emissions tap is finally receiving the media attention it’s been so desperately waiting for. In the UK, the environment has just edged past immigration in a survey of public concerns. In Australia, a poll of more than 100,000 voters found that the environment was issue number one for most respondents. Forget the lemmings-off-a-cliff UN reports or the effects of climate change, thank the confluence of young and old – and the glue of a rebellion.

“Greta Thunberg, Sir David Attenborough and Banksy have all played their part in the UK. But it’s been the eyebrow glueing tactics and overton-window-moving toil of Extinction Rebellion that’s been getting people talking over their garden fences. Extinction Rebellion’s demand of net zero by 2025 is patently absurd. But their media-grabbing tactics haven’t been about a date, they’ve been about a target. And a level of government commitment to honour that target. [Much more]

More: <https://pureadvantage.org/news/2019/05/22/a-nod-to-nz-what-can-we-make-of-the-advice-from-the-uks-committee-on-climate-change/>

Source: Pure Advantage, 22nd May 2019. 

The Guide to Going Circular

“Your circular economy initiative could be a winner in New Zealand’s most prestigious business sustainability awards.

“The NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards have been running for 17 years. Today its 700 seat gala dinner has become a ‘must attend’ event for leading business people, government ministers and more.

“So do you want your work on the circular economy to shine on the biggest platform for it in the country?

“Enter now, or check out our new Guide to find out more about how your project could be an award winner.

“The Going Circular category of the Awards is now in its third year, and has become one of our most popular. The award is sponsored by Auckland Council and judged by an independent panel of experts. The Award goes to an organisation making demonstrable progress towards going circular.

“Previous winners were Ethique and Wishbone Design Studio.

“In partnership with the [Auckland] Council, SBN has also created a new Guide for category entrants. It will help you place your work in the emerging circular economy.

“We want to encourage as many organisations as possible to enter. The Awards spread good ideas. They create the connections and collaborations we need to transform our economy.

“The entry process is easy and quick. Entries close 14th June.

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/the-guide-to-going-circular-download/> 20 pages, 5.37Mb

Source: SBN, 5th June 2019

Editor: Even if you are too late to enter the awards this is an excellent resource for informing your thinking. 