

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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Zero Carbon Bill Hearings

Two hearings have been held so far with the next on Thurs 8th August – all in Wellington.

"In total, more than 15,000 submissions have been made on the Zero Carbon Bill, with oral submissions set to take place over the next few months.

"Submitters at today's [1st August] Environment Select Committee in Parliament have argued the Zero Carbon Bill does not go far enough.

"Generation Zero's James Young-Drew said the bill picked up on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's point that New Zealand needed to hit net zero emissions by 2050, but overlooked the other two key findings of its report.

"One is that our carbon emissions need to peak immediately by 2020, and the other is that the pathway we need to be on involves effectively halving carbon [emissions] by 2030', he said.

"Mr Young-Drew said the date when New Zealand hits net zero was not important, the total cumulative emissions emitted between now and then was.

"Minister for Climate Change James Shaw said given New Zealand's starting point it would be a staggering achievement to meet those other IPCC findings. It's highly unlikely, but the thing I keep saying about all of this is nothing is impossible.

"Farming communities' fears of mass tree planting ran smack into industries with big carbon footprints on the first day of hearings on the government's zero carbon legislation.

"Parliament's environment select committee heard from a brace of heavy-hitting lobby groups, including Business New Zealand, the Insurance Council and Local Government NZ, and two of the country's biggest sources of greenhouse gases, Fonterra and NZ Steel, on the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill.

"The bill proposes carbon-emitting industries should only be able to offset their carbon emissions in New Zealand, making tree-planting on farmland an attractive option in a sector where the government's Billion Trees programme is already snaffling grazing land for new forest planting.

Reports: www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395759/zero-carbon-bill-select-committee-submitters-call-for-more-action plus www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU1908/S00050/farmers-vs-industry-on-day-one-of-zero-carbon-bill-hearings.htm and <http://politik.co.nz/en/content/Environment/1619/The-Zero-Carbon-Bill-the-fine-print-Zero-Carbon-Bill-Select-Committee-Fonterra-Local-Government-NZ-Generation-Zero-Insurance-Council-of-NZ.htm> among others

Videos of the first two days of the hearings; www.facebook.com/environmentSCNZ/videos/2318201635086678/ and www.facebook.com/environmentSCNZ/videos/400020063967381/

Schedule: www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/schedule-of-meetings/

Submissions: Some may be seen by scrolling through pages at www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/

Sources: Various, including *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 1st Aug.

A Week of Major UK Green Policy Announcements

"Defra, the Treasury and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have released a flurry of documents to strengthen approaches to environmental regulation, energy policy and packaging production.

"While one of the key drivers behind the Brexit movement has an enigmatic approach to green policy, a raft of announcements earlier this week has sought to strengthen how the UK delivers long-term legislative frameworks. Here, edie rounds up all of this week's key policy announcements.

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More: www.edie.net/news/11/CCS--food-waste-deposit-return-schemes--Recapping-a-week-of-major-green-policy-announcements/

Source: edie, 25th July 2019

Editor: A lengthy list. Some items of potential interest for current and proposed NZ legislation. Plus more e.g. '£80m pot to decarbonise aviation and road transport' at www.edie.net/news/8/Government-unveils-80m-pot-to-decarbonise-aviation-and-road-transport/

Airport Expansion Stalled on Climate Grounds

"Marseille Provence Airport has been forced to revisit expansion plans, after the environment authority questioned how they fit with France's climate targets.

"Developers were judged to have underestimated the environmental impacts and overestimated the economic benefits of proposed facilities to handle up to 7.5 million extra passengers a year from 2027.

"In a ruling that could have implications for other airport projects, the authority cited the 2050 net zero emissions target adopted by France's national parliament in June.

"It sent developers back to the drawing board, asking them to 'demonstrate the compatibility of the project with France's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050'. This should include details of arrangements to offset any emissions that could not be reduced or avoided, the authority said.

"The [Marseille] ruling shows the importance of setting net zero emissions targets and ensuring they include international aviation', said

"It calls into question plans for a third runway at Heathrow, London, one of the biggest airport projects in the world. In a public consultation, the developers claim an expanded Heathrow would take up only 1.2% of the UK's carbon budget in 2050 – but excluded emissions from international flights, the main source of its climate impact.

"As a wave of local authorities declare 'climate emergency', campaigners are questioning the case for airport expansions in cities including Bristol and Manchester in the UK and Wellington in New Zealand.

More: www.climatechangenews.com/2019/07/30/marseille-airport-expansion-stalled-climate-grounds/

Source: *Climate Home News*, 3rd August 2019

Editor: Note reference to Wellington. Same applies to Auckland which is spending '\$1M/day?'

More than 350 million Trees Planted in a Day in Ethiopia

"Ethiopians have planted more than 350 million trees in a single day as part of a campaign to fight deforestation and climate change.

"Getahun Mekuria, Ethiopia's minister of innovation and technology, said 353,633,660 seedlings were planted in 12 hours on Monday. [26th July]

"The planting spree, which surpassed the initial goal of 200 million trees planted in one day, will be a world record officials said.

"Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's ambitious Green Legacy Initiative, launched in May, aims to plant four billion trees across Ethiopia by October.

"Earlier in July, Swiss scientists published a study in the journal *Science* saying the most effective way to fight global warming was to plant one trillion trees.

"The report said over the decades, those new trees could suck up nearly 750 billion tonnes of heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

"That is about as much carbon pollution as humans have spewed in the last 25 years.

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/ethiopia-plants-350-million-trees-day-190730070304536.html plus www.nytimes.com/2019/07/30/world/africa/ethiopia-tree-planting-deforestation.html

Source: Aljazeera, 2nd August 2019. 

Refusing to Give Up on Protecting the Environment: Sustainable Coastlines Founder Sam Judd

"Giving up a law career to launch a charity focused on protecting the environment during the middle of the Global Financial Crisis, Sam Judd was ready for some challenges.

"With some help of some mates – a bunch of Kiwi surfers who volunteered huge hours for more than two years – Sustainable Coastlines was launched aiming to enable people to look after the places that they love.

"Judd and his team do this by creating and providing innovative solutions, then teaching local people how they can apply them through capacity development.

"New Zealanders are the 10th worst in the world when it comes to materials consumption per capita, what sort of work is Sam doing, what does it take to make a difference, and are we doomed if we don't act now?

More: www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2019/07/sustainable-coastline-founder-sam-judd-on-refusing-to-give-up-on-protecting-the-environment.html

Source: LinkedIn, 17th July 2019. 

Eco-packaging Trials Reduce Event Waste

"Nearly 100 tonnes of waste has been diverted from the landfill thanks to Christchurch City Council-led efforts to ensure compostable food packaging is used at public events in the city. ...

"Compostable food packaging is now being used at Council-run events.....

"That means about 75 per cent of the total waste produced at those 43 events ended up either being composted or recycled. ...

"Over the course of the two Composting Food Packaging at Events trials 99 tonnes of waste have been diverted away from landfill and into other waste streams ...

More: www.ccc.govt.nz/news-and-events/newsline/show/3779

Source: *Newsline*, 2nd August 2019. 

Give us Hope. Show us More Solutions – Less Doom and Gloom

"When we asked *Stuff* readers about media coverage of climate change, the chorus of voices implored us to help them see a path to a viable future.

"In June, we surveyed our audience as part of our ongoing Quick! Save the Planet project and received a stunning 15,248 responses.

- Inspire action, not despair
- Make it personal
- Hold the powerful to account
- Focus on farming
- Increase the volume
- Go back to basics
- Forecast the future.

More: www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/113711124/we-asked-about-climate-change-coverage-and-got-15000-responses

Source: *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 17th July 2019. 

Biking with Butterflies

"How about riding your bike 10,000+ miles to chase butterflies? This woman did.

More: <https://orionmagazine.org/article/biking-with-butterflies/>

Source: Orion, 19th July 2019. 

Research to Action: The Science of Drawdown

"Drawdown: 'The point in the future when levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stop climbing and then begin to steadily decline, ultimately reducing global warming.' Over the past five years the Project Drawdown organisation has assembled an international team of researchers to quantify a portfolio of 80 existing climate solutions which together could achieve this goal. It will not come as a surprise that energy efficiency and renewable energy are prominent among the solution set for reversing climate change, but there are also very important roles for agriculture and grasslands, forests, oceans, and other ecosystems...as well the human systems which influence government, industry, and individual decisions.

"Implementation of this portfolio of climate solutions would have many corollary benefits for both people and the environment, and thus provides a compelling case for the policies, financing, and infrastructure required. This article is an invitation for you and your institution to become part of a worldwide community of scholars and educators focused on positive, empowering climate solutions.

"I want to personally encourage you to come to the conference, learn more about Project Drawdown, share your own expertise, and help us organise the Drawdown USA Research Association., I am confident you will find this conference to be a breath of fresh air. Too often news about our environment is dire, depressing, and even overwhelming...for us and especially for our students. The power of making a positive impact is contagious and empowering, and is important to both experience and to share. I hope you will engage with NCSE and Project Drawdown, come to the conference this September, and do whatever-else you can to help NCSE – and your students – create the world that we all want to live in!

More: www.ncseglobal.org/ncse-essays/research-action-science-drawdown

Source: National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), 26th July 2019

Editor: When you read the other segments of this article you should be very encouraged. 

Humans Will Never Colonise Mars

This lengthy article outlines challenges for the human species to eventually live on planets such as Mars. It ends up suggesting we would be far better off making sure Earth – the only habitable planet we know of – remains that way i.e. habitable and applying our energies to it.

More: www.gizmodo.com.au/2019/07/humans-will-never-colonize-mars/

Source: Gerda Kuschel, 2nd August 2019. 

Following Up on *Forget Shorter Showers*

The 25th July edition of *Sustainability Matters* included an item *Forget Shorter Showers* by Derrick Jensen. A reader has subsequently brought attention to his two-volume work *Endgame* published in 2006, which argues civilisation is inherently unsustainable and addresses the resulting question of what to do about it.

Wikipedia says 'Jensen begins with a list of 20 premises, the most concise encapsulation of his ideas published to date. However, the bulk of the work is not written in such a highly structured, academic style. As in his previous books, *A Language Older Than Words* and *The Culture of Make Believe*, Jensen uses the first-person, interweaving personal experiences with cited facts to construct his arguments. His books are written like narratives, lacking a linear, hierarchical structure.

More:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endgame_\(Derrick_Jensen_books\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endgame_(Derrick_Jensen_books))

Source: Ken Ross on 30th July 2019. He adds; 'If you haven't read *Endgame*, it is a good but disconcerting read, and he justifies each premise adequately. He is also a brave man. Caution – it may lead you to blow up your nearest dam!' 

Mint Innovation is Making e-Waste Less Wasteful

'A NZ biotech start-up is recovering valuable metals from electronic waste, and thus helping minimise the leaching of heavy metals into waterways from e-waste in landfills. The pilot phase of the operation is completed and they are moving ahead in NZ and plan to go global in the longer term.

More: www.energyts.com/single-post/2019/08/01/SnippETS-for-1-August-2019

Source: *SnippETS*, 1st August 2019. 

Shaping Our [NZ] Low Emissions Future

'Back in May, three of us from Energy TS made it to the 2019 EMANZ Conference.

'There were some big-name speakers such as internationally renowned sustainability expert, Bob Willard, Minister for Climate Change, James Shaw, Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Simon Upton, and many more.

'Because there was so much information covered over the course the 2-day event we thought we'd write up a recap so that anyone who was unable to make the event could still get some core takeaways and learnings from the event.

More: www.energyts.com/single-post/Shaping-Our-Low-Emissions-Future

Source: Energy and Technical Services, 5th August 2019. 

Defusing Southeast Asia's e-waste Timebomb

'Special Report: 18 months after China banned waste imports, Southeast Asia has become the new dumping ground for the world's waste – including the most toxic kind: electronic waste.

'With internet-of-things devices, wearables and gadgets increasingly creeping into our offices and homes, a new tsunami of e-waste is set to hit the region. In the first comprehensive report of its kind, Eco-Business explores the impact mounting piles of discarded electronics have on people and the environment in Southeast Asia, and what can be done to fix the problem. [A must read.]

More: www.eco-business.com/news/defusing-southeast-asias-e-waste-time-bomb

Source: eco-Business.com, 6th August 2019. 

The Bizarre, Peaty Science of Arctic Wildfires

'Here's a sentence for you: The Arctic is burning. Yes, that Arctic – the traditionally cold and wet one, large swaths of which are being consumed by an astonishing number of wildfires, from Russia to Greenland to Alaska.

'Arctic fires – the combination of these two words is still an unusual term in my field of fire science', says Guillermo Rein of Imperial College London. 'Arctic fires are rare, but they're not unprecedented. What is unprecedented is the number of fires that are happening. Never before have satellites around the planet seen this level of activity.'

'Unprecedented, yes, but not unexplained. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet, leading to the desiccation of vegetation, which fuels huge blazes. Fortunately for us, these wildfires typically threaten remote, sparsely populated areas. But unfortunately for the whole of humanity, so far this year Arctic fires have released some 121 megatonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere, more than what Belgium emits annually. That beats the previous Arctic record of 110 megatonnes of CO₂, set in 2004 – and we're only in June.

'What we're looking at, then, is yet another complicating factor in the massive complexity that is climate change: When peat burns, it emits lots of CO₂, and when peatlands aren't healthy, they don't capture any. The extent to which this is affecting climate change, though, is not yet clear. Nor is how bad exactly the situation will get in the Arctic. But the problem is supremely urgent: Peatlands cover 1.3 million square miles around the world, storing the same amount of carbon you'd get from burning fossil fuels for 60 years.

'The underlying and inevitable problem is uncertainty. Even one component of climate change – peatlands – demands far more research, to say nothing of the dizzying number of other components which interact with each other to form the whole Earth system. Models are getting better and better, though, and incorporating more sources of natural emissions, in addition to the CO₂ we humans are pumping into the atmosphere.

'Meanwhile, the Arctic is burning. Which is not the last time you'll read that sentence.

More: www.wired.com/story/the-bizarre-peaty-science-of-arctic-wildfires/ plus <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/145380/arctic-fires-fill-the-skies-with-soot>

Source: Editor, 1st August 2019. 

UK Lawmakers to Count Environmental Cost of Mass Tourism

'British lawmakers said on Thursday [18th July] they would count the environmental cost of mass tourism amid warnings which leisure trips pose an ever greater threat to the planet.

'Fast-growing tourism accounts for about 5% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide while floods of visitors are damaging a host of hot spots, said the Environmental Audit Committee, which scrutinises the impact of government policy on the environment. ...

More: www.eco-business.com/news/uk-lawmakers-to-count-environmental-cost-of-mass-tourism/

Source: eco-Business.com, 24th July 2019. 

This Zero-waste Restaurant Generates Literally No Trash

'In Helsinki, Restaurant Nolla worked with suppliers to deliver food without packaging, serves a set menu so it doesn't order too much food, and sends its customers home with house-made compost.

More: www.fastcompany.com/90380672/this-zero-waste-restaurant-generates-literally-no-trash

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 26th July 2019. 

First Step is All about Mindset Shift

"In this final instalment of Forum for the Future's eight-part blog series on the Future of Sustainability, chief executive Sally Uren** warns against business leaders box-ticking for sustainability, and calls for a full-blown mindset shift instead.

"..... systems can only truly change when our mindsets change. Only by having a mental attitude that enables us to first accept that the current way of going about our everyday lives is locking in deeply unsustainable systems, and then to accept that we need to do things very differently in order for a new, more sustainable pattern of operating to emerge, do we stand any chance at all of meeting the Paris climate targets and fulfil the global promises underpinned in the SDGs.

"Of course, changing the way we see things is not easy, and especially when it means letting go of deeply-held belief systems. But I firmly believe having the right mindset is the holy grail of sustainable leadership which we must all strive for. With it, everything is possible.

**Dr Sally Uren OBE is Chief Executive at Forum for the Future

More: www.edie.net/blog/Forget-ticking-boxes-the-first-step-in-saving-the-world-is-all-about-mindset-change/

Source: edie, 25th July 2019. 

TCFD- 2019 Status Report

On 1st June 2019 Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures: Status Report.

".... Based on a recent report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a global group of climate scientists convened by the United Nations, urgent and unprecedented changes are needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. The report warns limiting the global average temperature to a maximum of 1.5°C 'require[s] rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure [systems] (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems.' In fact, according to a recent United Nations Environment Programme report on emissions, global greenhouse gas emissions have to peak by 2020 and decline rapidly thereafter to limit the increase in the global average temperature to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. However, based on current policies and commitments, 'global emissions are not even estimated to peak by 2030 – let alone by 2020.' As a result, governments and private-sector entities are considering a range of options for reducing global emissions, which could result in disruptive changes across economic sectors and regions in the near term.

"In addition, the Task Force conducted a survey on companies' efforts to implement the TCFD recommendations as well as users' views on the usefulness of climate-related financial disclosures for decision-making. While the Task Force found some of the results of its disclosure review and survey encouraging, it is concerned not enough companies are disclosing decision-useful climate-related financial information. This could be problematic for financial markets if market participants do not have sufficient information about the potential financial impact of climate-related issues on companies.

"Overall, the Task Force found signs of progress in implementing the recommendations among companies traditionally engaged on climate-related issues.

More: www.fsb-tcfid.org/publications/tcfid-2019-status-report/ and www.fsb-tcfid.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-TCFD-Status-Report-FINAL-053119.pdf 144pages, 7.95Mb

Source: Editor, 5th August 2019. 

Meridian Energy Releases Climate Change Risk Report

"Meridian Energy has released New Zealand's first corporate report disclosing risks to its business resulting from climate change.

"Prepared in accordance with guidance from the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), the report lays out the physical risks Meridian faces from a rise in global temperature, as well as the impacts of transitioning to a low carbon future.

"Chief Financial Officer Mike Roan says climate change has urgent implications for companies and investors, and the time has come for businesses to be open and honest about the risks they will face.

"Globally, markets and investors have woken up to climate risk. There's a growing movement to reconsider investments in companies and sectors which are heavily exposed, whether that's from sea level changes, industry disruption, the uptake of new technology or public policies and legislation.

"Being a strong corporate advocate for climate action means understanding and acknowledging our risks and encouraging others to do the same. It's the ethical and responsible thing to do for our investors and all New Zealanders', says Roan.

"TCFD reporting also requires companies to report their governance oversight of climate risks, the expected impacts on their business strategy, and targets they use to manage the risks.

"Roan says understanding and reporting climate risk will be an ongoing commitment from Meridian and is integral to the company's work on reducing emissions, supporting accelerated action on renewables and decarbonisation, and engaging staff and suppliers to improve sustainability.

"Risk reporting is now a key part of our broader climate action programme and we're ready to help others understand the very real risks climate change poses for businesses and organisations.

"The more New Zealand businesses understand the climate risks they face and report openly about them, the better equipped and capable investors are to make sound decisions', Roan says.

More:

www.meridianenergy.co.nz/assets/Sustainability/e93f942ead/Meridian-Climate-Disclosures-TCFD-Report-FY19.pdf

Source: Meridian Energy, 22nd July 2019. 

Editor: Meridian proposes to update the report annually

Tough Line on Plastics Taken at Airport

"In order to reduce San Francisco Airport's impact on the environment, and to advance their Zero Waste Goal, SFO has banned the sale of plastic water bottles.

"SFO is expanding upon its Sustainable Food & Beverage program, as well as the City and County of San Francisco's Plastic, Litter, and Toxics Reduction Law, by:

"According to a notice on the airport's website, this new standard requires tenants to use reusable or BPI certified-compostable food service ware and accessories, which can be recovered and composted in domestic markets. In addition to reducing the impacts on the natural environment, this transition will make food service ware safer for use and simplify and improve the passenger dining experience.

More: www.environmentalleader.com/2019/08/sfo-bans-the-sale-of-plastic-water-bottles-throughout-airport/

Source: Environmental Leader, 6th August 2019

Editor: Provides much more detail. Something for NZ airports and sea ports to consider? 