

Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children



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New Zealand's 2019 Sustainability Heroes!

"Last Thursday [28th November] the biggest night on New Zealand's sustainability calendar took place, when 700 people gathered at Shed 10 on Auckland's waterfront to find out who would be crowned the most sustainable of them all.

"The NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards recognise the people and businesses leading the change to a more sustainable New Zealand. ...

"In her opening address, the Governor-General of New Zealand, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Dame Patsy Reddy, said: 'My hope is that the NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards will inspire still more New Zealand businesses to become involved. The impact of their work will ripple out into our communities and, ideally, the wider world.'

....

Category winners;

- Sustainability Superstar: Andrew Fisher – Managing Director, EcoStock Supplies
- Communicating for Change: Tauranga City Council
- Hardwired for Social Good: Little Yellow Bird
- Partnering for Good: Auckland Council, TROW Group & Green Way Demolition
- Going Circular: Medsalv
- Efficiency Champion: Sudima Hotels
- Smarter Transport: Fisher & Paykel Healthcare
- Revolutionising Energy: AUT University
- Transforming Food: Chia Sisters
- Restoring Nature: Te Whangai Trust
- Millennial on a Mission: Fraser McConnell – Co-Founder, Squawk Squad
- SUPREME AWARD: Little Yellow Bird

Much more: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/new-zealands-2019-sustainability-heroes/> plus <https://sustainable.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Awards-winners-2019.pdf>

Source: SBN, 3rd December 2019.

The Man Who Made Happiness Count

"Will a bigger TV make you happy? How about a bigger house? Or a boat?

"While the question of what makes us happy is age-old, for many years it was not central to economists' thinking.

"But that's changing.

"The UK statistics department now regularly measures public happiness and New Zealand's Government was the first in the world to pass legislation putting 'wellbeing' at the centre of its economic management.

"Around the world, economists are increasingly questioning the dominance of GDP growth as the measure of social progress.

"This week [30th November] the man who pioneered this new approach almost 50 years ago was in New Zealand to speak at the University of Auckland Business School, as the 2019 Sir Douglas Myers Visiting Professor.

"Richard Easterlin, 93, has been called the father of wellbeing economics.

"In the early 1970s, Easterlin was the first economist to apply the discipline to studies of personal happiness.

In doing so, he discovered an intriguing paradox which puts weight behind the old saying: money can't buy happiness. ...

"I ask Easterlin to what makes him happy.

"The answer is my daughters and sons, my granddaughters and grandsons, dining out with my wife, playing golf with friends', he says.

"Easterlin also seems very happy to be seeing a shift in economic thinking taking place – to see his life's work being put into practice.

"There is still plenty of pushback from more traditional economists, he says.

"On balance, GDP and economic growth still hold sway. But Easterlin is optimistic.

"My feeling is eventually the discipline of economics will come around and there will come a day when happiness is taken as the thing you are looking at when you ask what's going to make people better off, not income or GDP per capita.[long].

More:

www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12289477 plus

<https://www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/weekend-herald/20191130/282385516372353>

Source: *NZ Herald*, page C1, 30th November 2019

Editor: Online text (paywall) and video versions differ from print version.

Recent Climate Reports Underscore Genuine Emergency

"The Wise Response Society is anxious the underlying message in a suite of recent reports about the evolving climate crisis is fully recognised and heeded. While the New Zealand Government has been making big efforts to address national climate risks, what these reports together do is reinforce the need for all sectors of the economy and society to embrace the required changes with utmost urgency and purpose. ...

"Prof Kevin Anderson of the Tyndall Centre offers a possible pathway. He has pointed out the wealthiest 10% in the world are responsible for 49% of the GHG emissions. So if they were to cut their emissions to around 8 tonnes of CO₂e per capita, global emissions would be reduced by one third, even without any change from the other 90%.

"While most NZers will fall outside this highly wealthy category, with a little forethought and planning, halving our current per capita emissions rate from 16 tonnes of CO₂e should be largely painless and potentially very satisfying."

"One thing's for sure' he added, 'the science is telling us failure to re-stabilise climate will deliver our children a painful hospital pass which surely none of us would want knowingly, to be part of.'

More: www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1911/S00401/recent-climate-reports-underscore-genuine-emergency.htm

Source: Robert Howell, 30th November 2019.

Competition for Market Driven Sustainable Finance Business Models

"With the UN estimating that nations must raise ambition by five times to meet the 1.5°C target, it is clear that rapid global action is needed.

"Teams will be asked to create new and innovative financial products, solutions or mechanisms that scale up sustainable financing. Entries must be commercially viable while generating tangible environmental and/or social benefits.

"Models should aim to overcome the challenges and barriers that the financial community is facing in finding viable, smart models which consider ESG (environmental, social and governance) factors. These challenges include demonstrating additionally, measurability and consistency of impact, and high upfront costs.

"The financing solutions must be helping to deliver/fund/increase flows of finance towards sustainable business models and innovations which will make a tangible difference on climate change and/or the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Models must be market – not policy – driven, scalable and have a measurable impact on key sustainability outcomes.

Entries by: 25th January 2020

Presentation: Toronto, March 2020

More: <https://a4sicc.com/> plus <https://a4sicc.com/case> and <https://a4sicc.com/faq>

Source: CSEAR, 7th December 2019. 

Freshwater – Controller and Auditor General's Reports

The Office of the Controller and Auditor General issued three reports in September 2019 regarding freshwater;

- Crown investment in freshwater clean-up. We examined how the Ministry for the Environment administered four Crown freshwater clean-up funds for improving lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands. Our primary objective was to assess whether Crown funding was being used effectively to improve freshwater quality.
- Our observations on Waikato River Authority's freshwater restoration operations. We looked at the operational approach of the Waikato River Authority to restoring and protecting the Waikato and Waipā Rivers for additional insight into how different entities manage Crown funds.
- Managing freshwater quality: Challenges and opportunities. In 2011, we published a report on how effectively Waikato Regional Council, Taranaki Regional Council, Horizons Regional Council, and Environment Southland managed the effects of land use on freshwater quality in their regions. We found the effectiveness of the four regional councils' approaches was variable. In this report, we assess the progress they have made since 2011.

These reports provide water-specific insights and insights to practice useful for other topics and entities.

More: www.oag.govt.nz/2019

Source: Waikato River Authority, 2nd December 2019. 

After a 40-year Struggle, Indigenous Guardians of Forest Gain Rights Over Land

"The Dayak Iban community of Sungai Utik has long fought to protect the forest and their place in it. After nearly half a century, they are now owners of over 10,000 hectares of customary land. ... [Very long article.]

More: www.eco-business.com/news/after-a-40-year-struggle-indigenous-guardians-of-indonesian-forest-gain-rights-over-their-land/

Source: eco-buiness.com, 27th November 2019. 

Leadership in Sustainable Business

"The SBN *Leadership in Sustainability Course* is built on 15+ years' experience enabling sustainable business in Aotearoa. It provides direct access to the SBN team's expertise. It includes input from top experts from our network of more than 550 organisations.

"Outcomes:

- A deep connection to the most pressing environmental and social issues of our time
- Access to the latest expert thinking and inspiring leaders in sustainable business
- The knowledge, confidence and commitment to lead personal and professional change

"After completing the course you will be able to:

- Identify new opportunities for impact, investment, innovation and collaboration
- Know and demonstrate your business case
- Communicate and influence effectively to make change happen

When/Where: Auckland except 1st session at Waiheke Is.
Course One: 4-5 March, 1-2 April and 6-7 May.
Course Two: 16-17 Sept, 14-15 Oct and 11-12 Nov.

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/leadership-sustainable-business-course/>

Source: SBN, 3rd December 2019. 

Tell Us What You're Doing, Investors Tell Governments

"Institutional investors will either stay away or demand higher returns in New Zealand and Australia if their governments don't produce credible, long-term climate investment strategies, a new report says

"Climate change is a systematic risk to investment returns, financial stability, communities and economies.

"A managed transition to net zero emissions and actions to build resilience to the impacts of climate change will reduce the cost of climate change and open up investment opportunities. Long-term investors have a critical role in delivering this more prosperous future and are increasingly changing their investment practices to align with a net zero emissions economy.

"However, investors can't do this alone. To strengthen investor confidence, it is vital that governments deliver credible and continued support for action to achieve a net zero emissions and climate resilient economy.

"Institutional investors have a fiduciary duty to pursue sustainable, long-term returns on their investments. Lack of credible, durable and predictable policy frameworks mean investors will either choose to defer investment in local economies, invest in other countries where policy is more predictable, or factor in higher risk premiums on investments to hedge against policy risk. Put simply, the absence of credible long-term climate policy has a negative impact on the economy and investment decisions.

"The development of credible and investable long-term strategies will improve investors' ability to assess climate-related risks and opportunities, to measure and disclose portfolio exposure to the low carbon transition and to further invest in opportunities to support the transition to a zero carbon, climate resilient world.

"The Investor Group on Climate Change looks forward to engaging further with the Australian and NZ Governments.

More: https://igcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/IGCC_Policy-Briefing_LongTermStrategy_FINAL.pdf 13 pages, 842Kb

Source: *Carbon News*, 2nd December 2019

Editor: Although not stated it seems the report is shaped to some extent by TCFD. 

Climate Justice Report on Loss and Damage

"A group of organisations has produced the Climate Change Equity Review and was presented at the 25th Climate Conference of the Parties in Madrid on the 4th of December.

"The report 2019 is entitled *Can Climate Change fuelled Loss and Damage ever be fair?* Downloadable from <http://civilsocietyreview.org/report2019/> [PDF 2.8 Mb]

"The report series focuses on equity and fairness in the international efforts to address the climate crisis. It provides interesting analysis and assessment of issues associated with the loss and damage debate, in the context of climate justice, equity and fair shares. They highlight the central justice-related points, indicate the scale of the problem, show how a fair shares analysis can be applied to some aspects of the loss and damage issue and they make recommendations for adoption at COP25 and by countries.

"Pacific Island states and many others including NGOs want to see funds available to those who suffer loss and damage from climate and ocean destabilization. ...

More: <http://civilsocietyreview.org/> 20 pages, 2.57Mb

Source: Tieke: *ECO Alerts & Events*, 4th December. 

Should We Sacrifice Our Skies for 5G Service?

"I'll admit it: I'm a space geek who has never seen a meteor shower in person. I'm a city girl who'd rather go to a midnight movie than go stargazing in the countryside. But I know I'm missing out on spectacular views by spending so much time under a haze of light pollution. That's why I was alarmed to see videos showing a recent meteor shower being photo-bombed by satellites.

"As Spaceweather.com reports, dozens of spacecraft in the new Starlink constellation dove through the recent (and rare) outburst of the Alpha Monocerotids, creating bright trails that sometimes outshone the meteors. The incident has astronomers and stargazers worried, since parent company SpaceX plans to launch even more of these satellites in a bid to deliver global internet service. Our hunger for more, faster internet may also damage a more common activity: checking the weather forecast. As our Alejandra Borunda reports, next-generation 5G service threatens to drown out key data about water vapour in the atmosphere, potentially undercutting forecast accuracy.

"As much as I love my smartphone, I'm hoping the right folks are paying attention to these warning signs and will make sure that tomorrow's technology won't come at too high a price.

More: www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2019/11/will-5g-wreck-out-weather-forecasts/

Source: National Geographic, 5th December 2019. 

What is Water Risk? And Why Should Investors Care?

"Our water future is at risk. Droughts are commonplace, cities are running dry, and climate change, if left unchecked, will only continue to make things worse. And as water supplies dwindle, pressures on this precious natural resource will only get more extreme.

"In fact, the U.N. projects that global water demand will increase by 20-30% by 2050. The \$5 trillion food and ag sector already relies on 70% of the world's fresh water to grow crops, feed livestock, and process ingredients. These companies are not only at risk due to water scarcity, they are partially responsible for it. Agriculture is rapidly draining aquifers in many regions of the world, and meat production is one of the biggest polluters of watersheds globally. Water risk is an undeniable environmental and economic threat.

"That's why we developed the *Ceres Investor Water Toolkit* – the first comprehensive resource for institutional investors to evaluate and act on water risks in investment portfolios. This guide includes links to resources, databases, case studies and other tools for investors from all asset classes to use and apply.

More: www.ceres.org/resources/toolkits/investor-water-toolkit 62 pages 2.27Mb

Source: Ceres, 6th December 2019

Editor: Chapter 1 of the kit could be of use to those reliant upon water and not solely institutional investors. 

How to Change the World: A Practical Guide to Successful Environmental Training

"Clare Feeney wrote the first edition of this book to save others from making expensive mistakes or to allow them replicate our carefully-planned success. She had just written her second conference paper on environmental training and her client's organisation was about to undergo one of the most far-reaching political re-organisations in her country's history – and she wanted to tell the story of its training programmes in case the knowledge dispersed with the inevitable diaspora of staff that would – and did – follow.

"As Clare wrote she realised more and more clearly the world of training and the world of environmental management have such a lot to offer each other and the everyday world we all live in.

"Friends and colleagues asked Clare if the second edition was trying to do something bigger than environmental training. She's so grateful to them: they helped her articulate that it's not that the book is trying to be something bigger than it is, but environmental training is so much bigger than people realise. She wholeheartedly believes environmental trainers really can help to save the world.

"With this second edition of the book, Clare aims to elevate workforce training to its highest status: a powerful way of helping people to solve the serious environmental issues facing humanity, while at the same time solving their associated social, cultural and economic problems. ...

More: <https://esst.institute/clare-feeneys-books/howtochangetheworld/>

Source: Clare Feeney, LinkedIn 3rd December 2019 upon the launch of her Environment and Sustainability Strategic Training Institute. 

Are Companies Facing Up To Climate Risk?

"We look at the potential impacts of activist hedge fund TCI's warning to vote against directors if they do not implement the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. As support for the TCFDs had grown to 909 companies, up from 513 in September 2018, we ask whether the TCFDs are prompting companies to adopt more sustainable business models. We also have portage on how TCFD adoption is only one example of Japan's emerging climate leadership, both at a corporate and government level.

"The second briefing within this month's brings attention to our class of 2019 disruptors include Marilyn Ceci of JP Morgan, Schneider Electric's Xavier Houot, WWF's Pavan Sukhdev, Siemen's Jürgen Maier, Gabrielle Ginér of BT, Edward Mason of the Church of England Pensions Board, Lucas Joppa of Microsoft and Mindy Lubber of the US environmental NGO Ceres.

More: <https://events.ethicalcorp.com/reports/docs/329875/E-C-Magazine-Demember-2019.pdf> 52 pages, 31.63Mb

Source: Ethical Corp, 6th December 2019. 

Group to Tackle the End-of-life Issue for NZ's Lithium-ion Batteries

"Battery Industry Group (B.I.G), a cross-industry collaboration that will design reuse and recycling solutions for large batteries, commonly found in electric vehicles or in stationary energy storage.

"The aim of B.I.G. is to design a 'circular' product stewardship scheme for large batteries. B.I.G. will create safety guidance and explore second-life options and innovative end-of-life solutions that help create a circular economy for large batteries.

"Along with industry funding from Vector and the Motor Industry Association of New Zealand (Inc), the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA) is funding a year long project for B.I.G. to research and develop a co-designed framework for a product stewardship scheme for large batteries of all types.

"B.I.G. is chaired by Vector. Research for this project is being undertaken by Eunomia Research & Consulting and WasteMINZ has been contracted to provide project coordination.

More: <https://big.org.nz/>

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 5th December 2019. 

World Economic Forum Founder Suggests Natural Capital Could Replace GDP as Measure of a Countries Wealth

".....For 75 years, the world marched to the beat of the drum called Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Now, we need a new instrument... One quick fix is to adopt a measure like median income per capita, which better reflects the economic conditions real people face. A more ambitious measure is 'natural capital', based on a country's ecosystems, fish stocks, minerals, and other natural assets. Because this balance sheet would also need to include human capital, we could incorporate all of the relevant elements in one composite scorecard..."

"As a recent Business Roundtable declaration makes clear, we have entered the age of stakeholder capitalism (a model that the World Economic Forum has embraced since the early 1970s). Business metrics will have to change, and all business leaders should have already developed an ESG mindset. These standards now need to be included in financial statements and annual reports.

"The good news is that many businesses are moving in this direction. Better yet, they will soon be able to rely on a common scorecard which is being developed by the International Business Council, a group chaired by Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan. That effort has the support of the Big Four accounting firms, whose experience working on similar initiatives in the past could prove useful. If enough stakeholders embrace the new scorecard, it could become a leading indicator for business performance globally.

"Adopting these three scorecards – new global growth metrics, a climate tracker, and a measure of ESG – would go a long way toward addressing the world's greatest long-term challenges. It would also help alleviate today's economic crises and avoid future ones, by demonstrating to a disgruntled public that political and business leaders really are working for everyone's interests, and not just their own. I invite every stakeholder in the global economy to join in these efforts to end the era of short-termism.....

More: <https://fortune.com/2019/10/17/klaus-schwab-wef-world-economic-forum-economic-short-termism/>

Source: The Natural Capital Coalition, 29th November. 

Should I Ditch My Fossil-fuelled Car?

"Yes. Reducing the number of cars in your household, or switching from petrol/diesel to electric, will dramatically reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. It's one of the easiest and highest-impact climate steps you can take.

"New Zealand is being flooded with cars: The New Zealand vehicle fleet is increasing rapidly. In the five years 2012-2017, 1,420,000 vehicles were imported and 660,000 were scrapped. The fleet increased by 760,000 vehicles: they would fill all lanes of State Highway 1, from Cape Reinga to Bluff, bumper to bumper. The fleet increase of 22% exceeds population growth of 9% and has given New Zealand the highest rate of car ownership in the OECD. Because of a shift to higher-emission utes and SUVs, and the lack of a fuel efficiency standard, the average fuel efficiency of the fleet has not improved. Road transport contributes 45% of all emissions from the burning of fossil fuels in New Zealand and is up 78% since 1990. The fleet is almost entirely fossil-fuelled.

Other discussion points include:

- Vehicle use is bad for human health
- Transport is a large, important, and expensive part of our lives
- This growth didn't just happen
- Electric vehicles have dramatically lower lifecycle emissions
- Burning fossil fuels has to end
- The fossil fuel industry is fighting back
- Early adopters are vital and can have a huge impact
- Isn't it better to run my existing old car as long as possible?
- What else can I do?

More: <http://wiserresponse.org.nz/2019/12/05/should-i-ditch-my-fossil-fueled-car/>

Source: Robert Howell, 5th December 2019. 

Australia 'Risks Being Dumping Ground' for Cars with Greenhouse Gas 1,400 Times More Potent than CO2

"Australia is at risk of becoming a dumping ground for cars pre-charged with a greenhouse gas 1,400 times more potent than carbon dioxide, industry groups warn.

"The culprit is refrigerant used in car air-conditioning systems known as HFC-134a, a gas first introduced to replace ozone-depleting gases that were phased out in the 90s.

"Since then, HFC-134a has been found to be a potent greenhouse gas, a discovery which has seen it banned in the EU and the US thanks the widespread availability of an alternative gas, HFO-1234yf.

"HFO-1234yf has no impact on the environment as a greenhouse gas, but is slightly more flammable under very specific circumstances. ...

"Last year Australia imported roughly 1.2m new cars, which added an additional 677 tonnes of HFC-134a to the country's stocks, while another 707 tonnes was used to refill empty air-conditioning systems. ...

"Last year, air-conditioning systems used in Australian cars released 1.34 megatonnes of CO2-equivalent into the atmosphere as they experienced general wear, road accidents or came to the end of their life. ...

More:

www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/09/australia-risks-being-dumping-ground-for-cars-with-greenhouse-gas-1400-times-more-potent-than-co2

Source: *Carbon News*, 10th December 2019. 