

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children



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Photos from: www.eds.org.nz/keep-in-touch/blog/2020/jeanette-fitzsimons-cnzm/ and https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rob_Fenwick

Very Different yet Very Much the Same

First it was Jeanette Fitzsimons. She died unexpectedly on 5th March aged 75 as the result of a sudden stroke. A few days later, on 11th March, it was Sir Rob Fenwick's turn. Aged 68 he died expectedly as the result of cancer.

Two hugely important people, or rather people hugely important to New Zealand.

For much if not all of their lives they both had an 'affair' with the natural environment and many closely aligned arenas.

Both took different paths – one in academic teaching, then national politics with a focus on environmental issues. The other in business, whilst having a focus on environmental issues. Both were excellent communicators and excellent people people. Both were able to motivate, lead, encourage and change what people thought and did and they did so differently.

One was involved early on with the then Values Party which morphed into the Green Party. The other became a leader of the Progressive Party and later a founding member of the Blue-Greens; an offshoot of the National Party. One entered Parliament; the other did not.

Both promoted and advocated seemingly without let up for matters environment related. Each did it differently.

One became rather wealthy and the other not, yet both were close to the land, what is in it and what it creates – nature's capital – capital which is near impossible to replace.

Both were feted and honoured although differently.

Both were of strong character and possessed lashings of determination. Both had charisma. Both have provided legacies for all of us.

Numerous tributes have been written. A smattering of them, have been selected and are presented below, plus a thought piece by each of them. Various sources;

- Former Green Party co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons has died
www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12314353
- New Zealand environmentalist and entrepreneur Sir Rob Fenwick dies
www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12315811

- Fran Sullivan: Praise for Sir Rob Fenwick, an environmental champion
www.nzherald.co.nz/opinion/news/article.cfm?c_id=466&objectid=12314568
- Rod Oram: A Lot of Work Yet to be Done
www.newsroom.co.nz/2020/03/15/1079895/a-lot-of-work-yet-to-be-done
- Rachel Brown: Tribute to Jeanette Fitzsimons
<https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/tribute-to-jeanette-fitzsimons/>
- Rachel Brown: Tribute to Sir Rob Fenwick
<https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/tribute-to-sir-rob-fenwick/>
- Catherine Delahunty Former MP: Jeanette Fitzsimons - goodbye to a loved leader
<https://www.theinformer.co.nz/feature/former-mp-jeanette-fitzsimons-goodbye-to-a-loved-leader>
- A Good Knight
<https://www.vervemagazine.co.nz/a-good-knight/>

Jeanette Fitzsimons' Poignant Piece on the Kauaeranga River

In 2014, we [*The New Zealand Listener*] asked prominent New Zealanders to share their stories about the awa [river stream] they love. Here's what environmentalist and former Greens co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons wrote.

www.listener.co.nz/planet/planet-planet/jeanette-fitzsimons-poignant-piece-on-the-kauaeranga-river

First published 11th Jan 2014 and re-published 6th Mar 2020.

Sir Rob Fenwick: The Fête Environmentalist's Urgent Last Message

"Sir Rob outlines his dance with cancer and the other dancing is winning and within that the importance of trees – the urgency. 'And although the environment might speak its own language, its cries cannot be misunderstood. We know what is happening, we know what we must do – now, we must simply do it.'

www.noted.co.nz/planet/planet-planet/sir-rob-fenwick-feted-environmentalist-last-urgent-message

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ASB Bank, Queen Street branch, Auckland.

Creating Climate Resilience for Farmers

"Accelerating New Zealand's transition to regenerative agriculture.

"Farmers under pressure to transition to climate and freshwater-friendly farming practices can access farm advisors and financial support from the Calm The Farm marketplace, launched today [4th March] by Toha Foundry.

"Calm The Farm is developing new financial products and connecting farmers with advisors and impact investors keen to accelerate New Zealand farming's shift to regenerative agriculture (regen ag).

"For the past two years the Calm The Farm team has been working with farmers, regen ag advisors and scientists, to understand regen ag practices and how data can unlock impact investment and speed up the transition to more sustainable farming.

"Mike Taitoko, co-founder of Toha and acting Chief Executive of Calm The Farm, says: 'Farmers have told us they want their social licence back. Calm The Farm wants to support farmers to build resilience into their businesses by improving the health of the soil, water, animals, the economics and, ultimately, the wellbeing of our farmers.'

"Calm The Farm's impact measurement and verification framework creates confidence and trust between farmers and investors, by proving actions and tracking outcomes.' ...

"The new venture's platform helps farmers co-ordinate their on-farm data to measure changes in soil health, ecosystem and animal health and productivity as a result of new practices. Calm The Farm uses the latest tools and technologies to measure the long-term impacts of regen ag for waterways and climate.

More: www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU2003/S00067/creating-climate-resilience-for-farmers.htm plus www.calmthefarm.nz/how-it-works and www.toha.nz/about 'We want to channel the world's impact finance to the best solutions at the frontline of climate action. Help us build a one-of-a-kind platform so that environmental impact can be funded, measured, valued, and traded'.

Source: Richard Gordon, 5th March 2020. 

How Hip Hop Can Bring Green Issues to Communities of Colour

"The environmental movement has largely failed to connect with people of colour and marginalised urban communities. This week at *Yale Environment 360*, environmental leader and rapper Thomas Easley makes the case that by confronting issues from contaminated drinking water to climate change, hip hop music can help bridge that divide and bring home the realities of environmental injustice. 'Hip hop has been speaking to peoples' struggles since it came out of South Bronx in the 1970s, whether it's been about poverty, racism, or gun violence. Why shouldn't it be about environmental justice, too?' writes Easley, an assistant dean at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies.

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-hip-hop-can-bring-green-issues-to-communities-of-color>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 6th March 2020.

Extract: A 2014 survey of environmental non-profits, foundations, and government agencies, conducted by Dorceta Taylor of the University of Michigan, found while people of colour make up 36% of the U.S. population, they constitute no more than 16% of the workforce of any environmental organisation. The result, Taylor argued, was the emergence of a disproportionately white 'green insiders club.' ... Those in the environmental fields are accustomed to speaking to small audiences that understand a specialised language that does not resonate with people of colour.' 

Whenua Ora Tangata Ora Partnership Leads the Way Forward in Regenerative Agriculture

"An initiative targeted at establishing and supporting a critical mass of New Zealand landowners to use regenerative farming practices was launched today [5th March].

"Whenua Ora Tangata Ora is a joint partnership between FOMA Innovation, the science and technology arm of the Federation of Māori Authorities (FOMA); Soil Connection, biological farming and soil health experts; and Toha, an environmental impact platform that recently launched Calm The Farm to support farmers to reduce their environmental and climate impacts while improving financial resilience.

"Transforming 'industrial farming' practices in Aotearoa through regenerative agriculture to reflect true kaitiakitanga (guardianship) is the way of the future', says FOMA Innovation lead representative, Te Horipo Karaitiana. ...

"Through well-executed regenerative farming practices, we can introduce long term enviro-economic stability to Aotearoa, and we believe Māori, together with others who can see the potential of regenerative farming, can lead this transformational change.'

"A growing number of farmers are already transitioning to regenerative farming practices to improve productivity, create resilient farms and reduce environmental impacts, especially with freshwater, and Whenua Ora Tangata Ora provides the resources and knowledge to promote and enable the transition. Regular field days are organised to farms who have successfully transitioned to regenerative agriculture, and advisers are on hand to walk farmers through the conversion process, which typically takes 12 to 36 months. ...

More: www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU2003/S00090/whenua-ora-tangata-ora-partnership-leads-the-way-forward-in-regenerative-agriculture.htm

Source: Richard Gordon, 5th March 2020. 

Is the Current Focus on Climate Change Misguided?

"I was listening to the BBC Friday night comedy when the subject turned to the recent IPCC Climate Change report. 'I don't see the politicians doing anything about it, so I'm not' said one comedienne. She went on to say she had explored the UK government website to find out what she could do – and there was nothing, she claimed.

"Reducing CO2 emissions is something quite difficult for individuals to tackle – seemingly it needs disruptive changes to lifestyle: stop flying, stop driving a car, turn off the heating and wear warm clothes in winter and so on. All the luxuries of modern life for which generations have strived – to be denied.

"In some parts of the world the response is 'bring it on'. How many Scottish comedians have used that line since 'Global Warming' (what we used to call Climate Change) became the catch cry?

"To my way of thinking, the fundamental causes of Climate Change is the result of waste; wasteful use of resources, such as oil, gas and coal. But it is also the non-use of abundant solar energy, which to me is another kind of waste.

"Should we be focusing on eliminating waste?

More: <http://gojacaranda.com/is-the-current-focus-on-climate-change-misguided/>

Source: Ronald Ainsbury, 5th March 2020. 

EcoFest North – 90+ Events

From 21st March to 19th April. From Rainbow Valley Farm at Matakana to Goat Island, Awhitu (near Waiuku)

More: <https://kaipatiki.org.nz/ecofest/>

Source: Kaipātiki Project, 13th March 2020. 

You Are What You Wear – Moving away from Fast Fashion

“Join the slow fashion movement and reality check your wardrobe!

“Sustainable Business Network and The Now Crowd are excited to present an evening of sustainability, fashion, music, food and drink.

“*You Are What You Wear* pulls together experts in sustainable fashion – heralded makers, trend setters, consultants – to tell their stories and journeys of creating a world where fashion won’t harm people or the planet.

“Bring items of clothes for a clothing swap, to follow the speakers. Clothes must be clean and quality – NO FAST FASHION! One garment brought = one garment swapped. The more you bring, the more you swap!

“Browse to DJs spinning vinyl with a wine or beer, and nibbles – all sustainable, all included in your ticket price. ..

When/Where: 5:30-8:30pm Friday 24th Apr 2020, Ellen Melville Centre, Auckland

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-events/you-are-what-you-wear-moving-away-from-fast-fashion/> NB: Check for possible cancellation

Source: SBN, 27th February 2020. 

David vs Goliath: The Man Taking Huge Corporates to Court over Climate Change

“A climate change court challenge against some of Aotearoa’s largest corporates will go ahead after the High Court on Friday [6th March 2020] refused to strike it out, ..

“Over the past few years, court proceedings have been mounted in a number of countries to challenge lack of action on climate change by both government and corporates. Now New Zealand has a new case of its own.

“Overseas, such legal challenges have gone both ways. In January, an appeals court threw out a landmark climate change lawsuit brought on behalf of young people against the US federal government. However, one month later, the UK Court of Appeal ruled that plans for a third runway at Heathrow Airport were illegal, as ministers had failed adequately to take into account the government’s climate change commitments.

“Although most of the climate change court challenges to date have been unsuccessful, they have the potential to bring about large-scale change if – or when – courts decide the time is ripe for creating new principles and duties relating to the environment.

“On Friday [6th March], Justice Ed Wylie agreed to scupper two of the causes of action, but said the third could proceed. He noted Smith’s claim raised novel issues which had not previously been dealt with by the New Zealand courts. ...

“In relation to Smith’s third claim, Wylie said he was reluctant to conclude recognition of a new duty making corporates responsible to the public for their emissions was untenable. The law was capable of creating new principles and causes of action. Smith had made no attempt to refer to recognised legal obligations or incrementally identify a new obligation, and it would accordingly be a significant step for the court to decide a new legal duty should be recognised.

“Smith has a more than an uphill battle to achieve that with his claim, but both the case and the precedent it sets will be significant if he succeeds.

More: <https://thespinoff.co.nz/business/09-03-2020/david-vs-goliath-the-kiwi-taking-huge-corporates-to-court-over-climate-change/>

Source: *Carbon News*, 9th March 2020. 

SBN Collaboration Will Help Businesses Take Urgent Climate Action

“With the impacts of climate change being felt around the world we need to act and fast. To help New Zealand businesses take urgent climate action SBN is looking for partners to collaborate on an innovative new programme. ...

“The programme is designed to meet the needs of businesses at all stages of their climate action journey – from the bulk of NZ business just starting out, to those who want to be climate leaders. ...

“SBN’s Project and Advisory Lead Phil Jones is already conducting interviews and researching existing tools and resources to prepare a simple, low cost and comprehensive climate change toolkit. He stresses in many cases the toolkit will link to existing resources.

“We don’t need to reinvent the wheel. The toolkit will help businesses by directing them to existing information, tools and resources that are relevant to their stage of the climate action journey.”

“The toolkit will include:

- Educational elements to demystify the issues
- Guidance to understanding carbon footprinting and reducing a business’s greenhouse gas emissions
- Resources on adapting business activities to a changing climate
- Systems for measuring the collective impact of the programme

“The impact of our Climate 20-25 programme will be demonstrated by more businesses taking more action on climate. In particular, they will make commitments to lower their greenhouse gas emissions and take steps to fulfil those commitments.’

Action: For more information on joining the coalition, contact Rachel Brown rachel@sustainable.org.nz or Phil Jones phil@sustainable.org.nz

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/sbn-collaboration-will-help-businesses-take-urgent-climate-action/>

Source: SBN, 3rd March 2020. 

Documentary "Fantastic Fungi"

“*Fantastic Fungi*, directed by Louie Schwartzberg, is a consciousness-shifting film that takes us on an immersive journey through time and scale into the magical earth beneath our feet, an underground network that can heal and save our planet. Through the eyes of renowned scientists and mycologists like Paul Stamets, best-selling authors Michael Pollan, Eugenia Bone, Andrew Weil and others, we become aware of the beauty, intelligence and solutions the fungi kingdom offer us in response to some of our most pressing medical, therapeutic, and environmental challenges.

More: www.rottentomatoes.com/m/fantastic_fungi 74 minutes 7.91/10 rating <https://fantasticfungi.com/>

Source: Hunter Lovins, 6th March 2020

Editor: Excellent reviews *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Observer*. Six screenings scheduled in Australia, and three in NZ. 

Tesla Produces its 1 millionth Electric Car

“Tesla announced that it produced its 1 millionth electric car – becoming the first automaker to achieve the milestone. ...

“As we reported last year, based on data gathered by Kevin Rooke, Tesla became the world’s largest EV automaker after surpassing China’s BYD. ...

416 comments as at 18th March.

More: <https://electrek.co/2020/03/09/tesla-produces-1000000th-electric-car/>

Source: Topio Networks, 18th March 2020. 

A Follow-through – Bjorn Lomborg

Following through from 5th March edition of *Sustainability Matters* a reader brought to my attention that providing an article by Bjorn Lomborg might not be appropriate as he has a long history of disparaging scientific findings on climate change, and the article was a classic case of it. At the time I had no prior knowledge of him.

Make up your own mind! Some insights;

- Meet Bjorn Lomborg, the always-sunny political scientist that climate deniers love; www.nrdc.org/onearth/something-rotten-state-denmark
- Bjørn Lomborg; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bj%C3%B8rn_Lomborg
- Bjorn Lomborg: Electric cars are fun, but not the solution; https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12314543
- Dutch EV expert debunks Murdoch-pedalled myth about electric car emissions; <https://thedriven.io/2020/03/09/dutch-ev-expert-debunks-murdoch-pedalled-myth-about-electric-car-emissions/>

Source: Editor, 16th March 2020. 

Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future

by Mary Robinson

“An urgent call to arms by one of the most important voices in the international fight against climate change, sharing inspiring stories and offering vital lessons for the path forward.

“Holding her first grandchild in her arms in 2003, Mary Robinson was struck by the uncertainty of the world he had been born into. Before his fiftieth birthday, he would share the planet with more than nine billion people--people battling for food, water, and shelter in an increasingly volatile climate. The faceless, shadowy menace of climate change had become, in an instant, deeply personal.

“Mary Robinson's mission would lead her all over the world, from Malawi to Mongolia, and to a heartening revelation: that an irrepressible driving force in the battle for climate justice could be found at the grassroots level, mainly among women, many of them mothers and grandmothers like herself. From Sharon Hanshaw, the Mississippi matriarch whose campaign began in her East Biloxi hair salon and culminated in her speaking at the United Nations, to Constance Okollet, a small farmer who transformed the fortunes of her ailing community in rural Uganda, Robinson met with ordinary people whose resilience and ingenuity had already unlocked extraordinary change.

“Powerful and deeply humane, *Climate Justice* is a stirring manifesto on one of the most pressing humanitarian issues of our time, and a lucid, affirmative, and well-argued case for hope.

“As advocate for the forgotten and the ignored, Mary Robinson has not only shone a light on human suffering, but illuminated a better future for our world.” -Barack Obama

More: www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/37941696-climate-justice September 2018, 176 pages

Source: *Canvas, NZ Herald*, 14th March 2020, page 11.

Editor: Mary was to be among the ‘greatest minds of our times’ at the now cancelled 2020 Auckland Writers’ Festival www.nzherald.co.nz/books/news/article.cfm?c_id=134&objectid=12316058 plus <http://www.writersfestival.co.nz/> 

Making Sustainability Happen – Blue Star’s NZ Sites Toitū Enviromark Gold Certified

“Pioneering the introduction of vegetable-based inks, diverting over 3,500 toner bottles from landfill and retraining staff have helped Blue Star, New Zealand’s largest multi-site print and marketing company to achieve Toitū enviromark gold certification.

“Toitū enviromark gold certified organisations are assessed by Toitū Envirocare, a subsidiary of Crown Research Institute Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, to have developed a comprehensive plan to help them achieve their environmental goals.

“Cowling said Blue Star was an industry leader and the first New Zealand print business to receive Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) multi-site certification in 2007 allowing customers to use the FSC logo on printed material.

“We continue to invest in New Zealand manufacturing with the introduction of new efficient technology to replace 40% of our fleet of traditional offset printers in 2018. We now have fewer machines, less paper wastage and lower power consumption. ...

“All our key suppliers are ISO14001 certified and we encourage all suppliers in our supply chain to demonstrate sustainable sourcing practices’, says Cowling.

“We recycle toner bottles – over 3,500 bottles have been diverted from landfills. One of our main suppliers, Ricoh, is ISO14001 and carboNZero certified. ...

“A measure of this success in upskilling and retention is the longevity of our people – half have been with us for more than seven years and one in four has worked for us for more than 15 years.

More: <https://wrightcommunications.co.nz/news/making-sustainability-happen-all-blue-star-sites-nationally-are-now-toit%C5%AB-enviromark-gold-certified/>

Source: Tim Marshall, 17th March 2020. 

Modernising Governance: Key Recommendations for Boards to Ensure Business Resilience

“Today [29th January 2020], the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) launched a report on *Modernizing governance: challenges and recommendations for corporate directors*. The report aims to strengthen board decision-making and oversight to respond to today’s challenges.

“Boards play a fundamental role in ensuring business resilience and long-term value creation. Yet many boards remain ill-equipped to oversee and assure for the company’s capacity to appreciate, and act on, the current changing and volatile landscape. This report offers insights and suggestions to advance the board agenda to respond to the increasing demands and expectations of stakeholders.

“All the top risks were environmental and social in the 2020 World Economic Forum’s Risk Report and we’ve seen that many boards struggle to modernise their governance to stay ahead. ...

More: www.wbcd.org/Programs/Redefining-Value/Business-Decision-Making/Governance-and-Internal-Oversight/News/Modernizing-governance-key-recommendations-for-boards-to-ensure-business-resilience Sign in required 35 pages, 1.36Mb

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānuī*, 5th March 2020

Excerpt: Page 5: Sending the bill for our misconduct to the weakest or to the next generation is not acceptable and boards have a duty to change their actions and behaviour accordingly. 