



Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

Our Future on Earth 2020: Uncovering the Linkages Among Global Risks

"A bit of genetic material that skipped from animal to human, and from local market to international stage in a matter of weeks, is now a concern in every single health, social, and economic sphere around the world. If nothing else, the coronavirus pandemic perfectly illustrates the complex, interlinked challenges we face in 2020.

"To work towards solutions to these large-scale problems, we must get a handle on the links, tensions, and trade-offs within our entire planetary system. That's why our international research organisation, Future Earth, recently published *Our Future on Earth 2020*, which synthesises the latest science on the state of our planet, and connects the dots among the developments we are currently experiencing, from pandemics to fires and rising populism. Drawing on insights from researchers in the physical and social sciences, and from over 20 different countries, the report helps to explain what is driving current events and how we might move in a more sustainable direction.

"For example, published within the report is a survey of over 200 scientists who identified five issues (climate change, extreme weather, biodiversity loss, food, and water) as a critical nexus of risk that could lead to a global systemic crisis. (See Figure 1 with full survey results available online.) The survey chapter calls for the world's academics, business leaders, and policymakers to ensure these five global risks are treated as interacting systems, rather than addressed one at a time, in isolation. Now, building on this work and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey team has also launched a new rapid foresight survey to better understand how people's perception of global risks are changing in response to this crisis, and where opportunities lie to rebuild towards a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable future. [See diagram of complex inter-connections] ...

"As outlined in the report's introduction; 'science now provides an important view of our planet from the macro to micro scales and across deep time, giving us new insight into the Anthropocene. But how will this knowledge be harnessed and used?' This is a fundamental question, and one where we have a chance to truly make our future more sustainable or equitable. Our continuing future on Earth is a story we are all creating together.

More: www.ncseglobal.org/ncse-essays/our-future-earth-2020-uncovering-linkages-among-global-risks plus <https://futureearth.org/publications/our-future-on-earth/> 53 pages, 23Mb

Source: NCSE, 24th April 2020.

Page 13: In 2020, we can no longer claim we are unaware of environmental change – it is depicted everywhere across our media. Every day, our small and large choices ripple across society and are multiplied and added into the greater wave. Even if some environmental changes feel too locked-in or overwhelming to reverse, we have the power to change the social justice systems that underlie and manage their impacts on us. We live in our own small local environments that we can ourselves defile, restore, or enhance. Each is a part of the bigger whole, just as we are part of a bigger humanity.

Climate Change Commission Recruiting for Three Senior Positions

"The (NZ) Climate Change Commission is advertising for a [Chief Science Advisor](#), a [General Manager Corporate Governance and Services](#) and a [General Manager Strategic Engagement and Planning](#).

"Their website is at www.climatecommission.govt.nz

"To make contact with the Commission, use their email enquiries@climatecommission.govt.nz

Source: *Tieke: ECO Alerts & Events*, 22nd April 2020.

Editor: Great opportunities for those who have what it takes!

Citizens' Assemblies on Climate Change Seek to Shape the Post-covid Recovery

"As governments mull over multi-billion packages to weather the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, citizens' assemblies could have a role to play in shaping a green recovery.

"In France and the UK, citizens' assemblies set up to make climate policy recommendations have moved online to continue their work amid restrictions to contain the spread of the virus. ...

"France's citizens' assembly was launched following 'yellow vest' protests that were sparked by a 2018 hike in fuel tax. It was tasked to come up with measures to reduce the country's emissions at least 40% by 2030 from 1990 levels 'in a spirit of social justice'.

"Its 150 members, drawn from a cross-section of society, met in person over five weekends starting in October 2019. Then Covid-19 hit and the authorities ordered people to stay home and avoid non-essential journeys.

"Undeterred, the citizens assembly took its penultimate session online over two days at the start of April. The agenda was adapted to discuss the economic and social consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and how recovery measures could support climate action.

"Following its online session, the assembly decided to send 50 of the 150 propositions to the French government, in the hope of influencing the Covid-19 recovery plan. ...

"It called for recovery measures to prepare for 'a different social and economic model, that is more human and more resilient in the face of future crisis' by reducing France's dependence on imports, boosting jobs and reducing emissions.

"The UK's assembly is also moving online to continue its work to draw up measures for the UK to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. ... Sarah Allan, of Involve, ..., said members were keen to finalise their work despite Covid-19 restrictions.... nobody has dropped out or doesn't want to take part anymore' ... Assembly members will also be given the opportunity to discuss the impact of the pandemic. ...

"According to a survey by pollsters Opinium, 48% of the British public agrees the government should respond 'with the same urgency to climate change as it has with Covid-19' – 28% of respondents said it shouldn't.

"The model for holding citizens' assemblies, even at times of crisis, has gathered international interest. ...

More: www.climatechangenews.com/2020/04/17/citizens-assemblies-climate-change-seek-shape-post-covid-recovery/

Source: *Climate Home News*, 18th April 2020.

A Roadmap for Addressing the Climate and Post COVID-19 Economic Crises

"The COVID-19 pandemic presents the world with an unprecedented policy challenge: not only will it have a severe impact on the global economy likely to exceed that of both the 2008-09 Global Financial Crisis and the Great Depression, it will take place against the backdrop of the ongoing climate crisis.

"In acknowledging the magnitude of this unprecedented challenge, the priority for governments must first be the immediate emergency response focussing on saving lives, supporting health infrastructure, food availability, and the many other urgent social and economic support measures such as short-term job allowances, direct cash handouts to citizens, or targeted liquidity support to SMEs. But solving the COVID-19 crisis cannot come at the expense of solving the longer-term issue facing humanity: the climate crisis.

"The question of how the economic recovery is designed remains crucial in shaping the long-term pathways for emissions and determining whether the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature limit can be achieved. Our analysis points to strong economic and climate change advantages if governments were to adopt green stimulus packages in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Conversely, if governments don't roll out low carbon development strategies and policies – or roll back existing climate policies - in response to the coming economic crisis, emissions could rebound and even overshoot previously projected levels by 2030, despite lower economic growth in the period to 2030. This report shows that the future is for governments to choose. COVID-19 recovery presents both opportunities and threats to enhancing our resilience to climate change. ...

"As governments grapple with the critical task of dealing with the very real impacts of COVID-19 on the health and welfare of their populations, they are now also developing their economic stimulus packages to assist in economic recovery.

"We have outlined a green stimulus framework that contains key criteria for policymakers to consider for any green stimulus interventions in order to successfully address short-term needs with long term benefits. ...

Graphs.

Suggested do's and don'ts.

More:

<https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/addressing-the-climate-and-post-covid-19-economic-crises/>
33pages, 1.58Mb

Source: Tieke: *ECO Alerts & Events*, 29th April 2020.

Before the Next Pandemic, an Ambitious Push to Catalogue Viruses in Wildlife

"Our contributing writer Jim Robbins reports on a new initiative that seeks to prevent future pandemics by sampling wildlife populations around the globe and finding viruses that might spill over into humans.

"Researchers have identified only 4,000 of the estimated 1.67 million viruses thought to exist. The fledgling Global Virome Project, which would cost an estimated \$1.2 billion, aims to enlist an international network of scientists to track down hundreds of thousands of viruses in wildlife and map their genomes. But some experts say a better use of limited resources is to focus on detecting viruses that are posing the most imminent threats to humans.

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/before-the-next-pandemic-an-ambitious-push-to-catalog-viruses-in-wildlife>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 24th April 2020.

The Story of Plastic

"*THE STORY OF PLASTIC* takes a sweeping look at the man-made crisis of plastic pollution and the worldwide effect it has on the health of our planet and its peoples. Spanning three continents, the film illustrates the ongoing catastrophe: fields full of garbage, veritable mountains of trash, rivers and seas clogged with waste, and skies choked with the poisonous emissions from plastic production and processing.

"*THE STORY OF PLASTIC* features interviews with experts and activists on the front lines of the fight, revealing the disastrous consequences of the flood of plastic smothering ecosystems and poisoning communities around the world, and the global movement that is rising up in response. With engaging original animation, archival industry footage beginning in the 1930s, and first-person accounts of the unfolding emergency, the film distils a complex problem that is increasingly affecting the planet's and its residents' well-being.

"*THE STORY OF PLASTIC* is presented by The Story of Stuff Project, a non-profit dedicated to changing the way we make, use, and throw away Stuff so that it is more sustainable, healthy, and fair.

More: www.storyofplastic.org/about plus <https://deadline.com/2020/02/the-story-of-plastic-documentary-premiere-discovery-channel-earth-day-1202857663/>

Source: The Story of Stuff, 23rd April 2020.

What's the Point of Fashion Magazines Now?

"Glossy magazines sell fantasy. Now they have to reckon with reality. It's complicated.

"Last week [1st week of April], *Vanity Fair* Italy's cover star was not a supermodel lounging on a yacht in an Etro caftan, or a movie star in Gucci, but rather a lung specialist in a starched white lab coat.

"In Britain, front line workers from the National Health Service graced four special edition covers of *Grazia* magazine. The April issue of *Russian Glamour* featured a pop star in pigtailed, a yellow puffer jacket and a white respirator mask.

"*Vogue* Portugal opted for a monochrome image of two models kissing through face masks under the words 'Freedom on Hold'.

"Fashion magazines are vehicles for luxury fantasies. They sell readers on consumerist dreams, sandwiching glossy images of supermodels and stars between advertisements for \$50,000 watches and \$250 moisturisers.

"The new coronavirus pandemic and lockdown orders have derailed those dreams. As a result, fashion magazines have been derailed both in production and purpose.

"It's not just that 2020 is set to be the worst year in the history of the modern luxury business, with supply chains in free-fall and media advertising budgets slashed. It's not just that shoppers have stopped shopping, or that fewer people in the fashion industry, from seamstresses to salespeople, are able to go to work.

"It's that magazines were already a fraught business. It's that many people have been re-evaluating their moral relationship with consumption. It's that resentment and even rage has risen toward celebrities and other elites — a pampered pool of cultural figureheads who fill the pages of contemporary fashion publications.

"And now there's a pandemic to address. ...

More:

www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/fashion/magazines-coronavirus.html

Source: *New York Times*, 16th April 2020.

Editor: Has fashion ever been of real value?

Free New Guides to Being More Sustainable

"... to make life easier for you, we've created a series of new and updated resources covering some of the key sustainability topics. And, they're all in one spot on our website.

"Thanks to the financial support our members have provided us over the years we're able to make these super useful resources free to everyone.

"Our 'How to' guides provide you with all the basic info you need. This is then followed up with practical steps you can start taking to make your business more sustainable in the future.

"The series, which we'll continue to extend, covers climate action, calculating and reducing carbon emissions, sustainable transport, reducing office waste, product stewardship, saving energy, smart purchasing and wellbeing in the workplace.

"Some people may want more specific help. That's what SBN is all about. Join our network to stay ahead of the curve and get help from our advisory team to plan and introduce changes to make your business more sustainable. ...

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-tools-resources/>

Source: SBN, 21st April 2020.

Ticking Time Bomb of Rising Demand for Cooling

PAGE 7: "With energy use for air conditioning set to nearly double by 2050, Diana Rojas reports on how a global network headed up by UN Environment is working to make access to low-carbon cooling a priority in the fight against climate change.

PAGE 8: "According to the International Energy Agency, addressing HFCs alone can deliver 0.4C of avoided warming, and coupling the HFC phase-down.

"People don't know how much energy is used to keep a fish cold before they put it on their plate. It is our job to raise awareness effort with improvements in energy efficiency could double the climate benefits, while saving some \$2.9tn globally by 2050 through lower power usage.

"The Cooling Coalition has pledged funding to help diminish the need for cooling products.

PAGE 9: "Soaring demand for cooling globally is leading to a dangerous loop: energy use from cooling and refrigeration is expected to rise 90% by 2050 (from 2017 levels), which would result in additional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions equivalent to a third of all current emissions, according to a 2018 University of Birmingham study.

"The numbers are staggering. Just the number of air conditioners in use is expected to rise from 1.2 billion today to 4.5 billion by 2050, according to the Cool Coalition. ...

PAGE 12: "In Medellín, Colombia, winner of an Ashden sustainable energy award last year, verges along roads and waterways have been turned into green corridors, providing shade for cyclists and pedestrians and improving air quality along busy roads. The city's botanical gardens train people from disadvantaged backgrounds to become gardeners and planting technicians, and they've been put to work transforming abandoned land that had become dumps and isolated anti-social areas into lush gardens. As a result, temperatures have fallen by two or three degrees Celsius in many places, with more significant reductions expected in the future. ...

More: <https://events.ethicalcorp.com/reports/docs/209478/april-2020.pdf> 43 pages, 33Mb

Source: Ethical Corp, 24th April 2020.

Ideas Worth Teaching Awards

"The *Ideas Worth Teaching Awards* seek to honour exceptional teaching which prepares students about the interdependence of our economic systems and human health, about the fragility of front-line workers, and about the choices of business executives in both ordinary and extraordinary times that have profound impacts on human lives. The kind of teaching which the Awards highlight – teaching which 'prepares students with the content skills and mindset to respond to the complexity and rapidly changing issues embedded in or economic and social systems' – is ever more urgent.

Close: 8th May 2020

More: www.ideasworthteachingawards.com/2020-nominations plus www.ideasworthteachingawards.com/

Source: CSEAR, 21st April 2020.

Sustainability Starts with Community Resilience

"Think Resilience is an online course to help you start doing something about climate change and our other sustainability challenges – starting in your own community.

"Think Resilience features twenty-two short video lectures by Richard Heinberg, one of the world's foremost experts on the urgency of transitioning society away from fossil fuels.

Now **free** until 20th June 2020.

More: <https://education.resilience.org/>

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 24th April 2020.

Hyundai Country Calendar Season 2020, Episode 7

Broadcast Sunday 19th April on TV1.

"Faced with falling profits, the owner of a big Central Otago station makes a radical move into regenerative agriculture and finds the profits soon flow. 22:53

More: www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/country-calendar/episodes/s2020-e7

Source: Editor. Well worth watching and taking on board the learnings especially with regenerative farming starting to receive the recognition it merits.

The Need to GROW

"In a race against the end of farmable soil, three individuals fight for change in the industry of agricultural food production, calling for a revolution.

"*The Need to GROW* delivers alarming evidence on the importance of healthy soil – revealing not only the potential of localised food production working with nature, but our opportunity as individuals to help regenerate our planet's dying soils and participate in the restoration of the Earth. 1hr 41 min, Oct 2019.

"Watch at <https://grow.foodrevolution.org/screening/> → Free, or watch for life for \$7. Support our mission now, and bring Erik, Alicia, Michael, and their inspiring message of hope with you any time or place you want – for life! ...

More: www.earthconsciouslife.org/theneedtogrow

Source: Kaipatiki Project, 21st April 2020.

Select Committee Reports Back on Resource Management Amendment Bill 2019

The article below summarises the proposed changes to the Bill. The Environment Committee's report focusses on four key areas of proposed reforms and proposes a new process for freshwater.

More: <https://tompkinswake.co.nz/insights/knowledge/select-committee-reports-back-on-resource-management-amendment-bill-2019/>

Source: Editor, 29th April 2020.

Principles for a Just Recovery from Covid-19

"We call on our government to uphold these 6 principles at every level of its response as we recover from COVID-19;

- Put people's health and human rights first, no exceptions. ...
- Honour Te Tiriti through partnership with Māori in all decision-making. ...
- Take action to stop climate change and build a just and sustainable future for all.
- Support workers and communities and create secure jobs and liveable incomes for all.
- Build a resilient economy centred on wellbeing for all people, where everyone contributes their fair share of tax to build the society we want.
- Ensure transparency and allow for democratic scrutiny in all decision-making.

More: https://350.org.nz/just_recovery/

Source: 350.org, 25th April 2020.

We Still Don't Know the Full Impacts of the BP Oil Spill, 10 years Later

"The BP oil spill of 2010 started suddenly, explosively, and with deadly force. But the response has stretched out for years and scientists say there's still much more we need to learn.

"As a crew on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig worked to close up an exploratory oil well deep under the Gulf of Mexico, a pulse of gas shot up, buckling the drill pipe. The emergency valve designed to cap the well in case of an accident, the 'blowout protector', failed, and the gas reached the drill rig, triggering an explosion that killed 11 crew members.

"Over the next three months, the uncapped well leaked more than 300 Olympic-sized swimming pools of oil into the Gulf's waters, making it the biggest oil spill in US history. The leak pumped out 12 times more oil than the Exxon Valdez spill of 1989, started suddenly, explosively, and with deadly force. But the response has stretched out for years and scientists say there's still much more we need to learn. ...

More: www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/04/bp-oil-spill-still-dont-know-effects-decade-later/

Source: National Geographic, 23rd April 2020.

Green Swans: The Coming Boom in Regenerative Capitalism

"Part of Volans' *Tomorrow's Capitalism Inquiry*, the latest book from John Elkington highlights how businesses can be catalysts for systems change. Drawing on first-hand experience from boardrooms around the world, and our Inquiry findings, the book examines wicked problems and the 'ugly ducklings' of today that have the potential to become tomorrow's world-saving Green Swans.

"Green Swans: Definition.

"A Green Swan is a profound market shift, generally catalysed by some combination of Black or Grey Swan challenges and changing paradigms, values, mindsets, politics, policies, technologies, business models, and other key factors.

"A Green Swan delivers exponential progress in the form of economic, social, and environmental wealth creation. At worst, it achieves this outcome in two dimensions while holding the third steady. There may be a period of adjustment where one or more dimensions underperform, but the aim is an integrated breakthrough in all three dimensions.

More: <https://volans.com/project/green-swans/> plus <https://futurefitbusiness.org/green-swans-how-to-spot-them/> 296 pages; Fast Company

Source: Ethical Corp, 18th April 2020.

Our Freshwater 2020 Notes the Poor State of NZ's Lakes and Rivers

"The Government is being urged to heed the just-released *Our Freshwater 2020* report on New Zealand's environmental performance, with Fish & Game New Zealand saying it is yet another report underlining the poor state of our lakes and rivers.

"The report highlights the state of freshwater is poor and getting worse in most parts of the country: ...

"*Our freshwater 2020* is the latest in a series of environmental reports produced by the Ministry for the Environment and Stats NZ. It provides more in-depth information about the issues highlighted in *Environment Aotearoa 2019* and is an update on *Our Freshwater 2017*.

"Fish & Game New Zealand chief executive Martin Taylor says the latest analysis makes for sobering reading.

"This report starkly portrays what is happening to New Zealand's freshwater', he says.

"Much of it will be of no surprise to New Zealanders who are becoming increasingly concerned at the state of their environment.

"Regional Councils under the RMA have a legal obligation to protect the environment for future generations, and this report shows they have failed to do that.'

"This report also shows why the Government has a mandate to stop further decline in water quality. ...

More: www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO2004/S00141/our-freshwater-2020-notes-the-poor-state-of-our-lakes-and-rivers.htm plus www.mfe.govt.nz/overview-our-freshwater-2020 Clearly outlines the stats and issues

Source: Carbon News, 16th April 2020.

Debating Disclosure: The Pros and Cons of Corporate Transparency

"... Initiatives that rank companies' performance based on information in the public domain, such as the Corporate Human Rights Benchmark, Oxfam's Behind the Brands campaign, and the World Benchmarking Alliance, are creating new incentives for leading companies to be transparent about their ESG performance.

"Pushing against the trend for more transparency are the costs of data collection, requirements for assurance, exposure to legal jeopardy, and legitimate perceptions of reputational risk.

"The lines between mandatory and voluntary, compliance and non-compliance, financial and non-financial are all blurring.

"These changes in the corporate reporting landscape and, more generally, in the context of sustainability information disclosure, are creating new conflicts within companies as different departments try to reconcile their sometimes very different views of the costs and benefits of transparency.

"Debating Disclosure: the pros and cons of corporate transparency' explores the tension within companies regarding their reporting and disclosure on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues to build a better understanding of the risk/return profile of transparency and thereby help companies to balance competing interests. ...

More: <https://mailchi.mp/70c4c34b7e2d/new-global-compact-network-uk-report-explores-pros-and-cons-of-corporate-esg-transparency?e=71b4616d8c> plus <https://unglobalcompact.org/library/5739> Sign-in required.

Source: ReportAlert, 21st April 2020.

