

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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Climate Commission Report: What You Need to Know

"The [NZ] Climate Change Commission has released a landmark report on decarbonising the economy. Here's everything you need to know.

"On Sunday [31st January], the Climate Change Commission released an historic report calling for 'transformational and lasting change across society and the economy' in response to the climate crisis.

"The report found New Zealand will miss its emissions reduction targets if it doesn't engage in 'strong and decisive action now' and recommended ambitious limits on the amount of greenhouse gases the country should be allowed to release over the next 15 years.

"The Commission's draft advice to the Government includes three emissions budgets covering five-year periods to 2035, recommendations on how to meet these budgets and a finding that New Zealand's target under the Paris Agreement 'is aligned with an approach – that if adopted by all nations – carries major risks in the ability to limit global warming to 1.5°C'.

"New Zealand is currently on a pathway to emit 112.5 million more tonnes of greenhouse gases between 2022 and 2035 than the Commission's budgets call for.

"The Commission says its budgets, which call for New Zealand to emit far less over the period to 2035 than it is currently projected to, can be met without the need for any new technology.

"Transformational and lasting change across society and the economy will be needed, but the Commission's analysis shows the tools to start the work to reach our targets and address climate change in Aotearoa already exist.'

"However, those tools are not currently being used to the fullest extent.

"Current government policies do not put Aotearoa on track to meet our recommended emissions budgets and the 2050 targets.'

"Even the gentlest of the Commission's recommended cuts still involve emitting far less than the country is projected to in the near future. Over the first budget period, between 2022 and 2025, New Zealand would emit an average of 67.7 million tonnes a year – down from currently expected 68.7 million. Then the gap widens. For the second period, between 2026 and 2030, average annual emissions would drop to 57.3 Mt, instead of the projected 63.9 Mt. In the final period, from 2031 to 2035, the country would emit an average of just 44.6 Mt rather than the forecast 57.8 Mt.

"These represent cuts from 2018 emissions of 2.1%, 17.2% and 35.5%, respectively.

"The Commission found the cost of action was lower than previously expected - less than 1% of projected annual GDP...

More: www.newsroom.co.nz/climate-commission-report-what-you-need-to-know plus www.climatecommission.govt.nz

Submissions close: 14th March 2021

Source: Editor, 2nd February 2021.

Campbell Ballantyne

Campbell William (Cam), CNZM, FCA, died on 22nd December, in Christchurch, aged 89 years. A memorial service was held in Christchurch on Thursday, 14th January.

Source: Lesley Ballantyne, 21st January 2021.



Editor: In 2003 Campbell joined the then Sustainability Working Group, a special interest group (SIG) attached to the then ICANZ. He became a regular attendee of the video-linked events at the Christchurch venue and persisted even though at times he was the sole attendee. Although of a quiet presence, when he did speak it was with wisdom and always worth listening to. Campbell had been Managing Director of Ballantynes, a world famous in New Zealand family department store established in 1864. In 1999 the Nurse Maude Campbell Ballantyne Fellowships was established recognising his contribution to the Nurse Maude Association. He also had other interests including Sustainable Ōtautahi Christchurch.

A 20 year Anniversary on 8th February 2021

Those 20 years have gone quickly – perhaps not. Arising from some ideas which had been gestating since the middle of 2000, the first exploratory meeting of what would become the Sustainability Working Group was held. The date was 8th February 2001 and the place the Auckland Branch of ICANZ (subsequently NZCA and now CA ANZ).

A key part of the context were articles about sustainability which Bruce Gilkison of Nelson had been writing for the then *Accountants Journal* for some years. After a gap he has recently started again, writing for *Acuity*, plus recording podcasts – more are looked forward to with anticipation!

At that first meeting, hosted by Branch Manager, Geoff Andrews, twelve of us gathered, including Past President and Life Member Peter Hays. The meeting had been called by Paul Watkinson and Ray Skinner. The very able facilitator was Gail Reichert. Twenty others had expressed interest but could not be there. Among them was Bruce.

While work proceeded at pace a formal SIG was established with the first committee meeting held in March 2002. By then multi-venue presentations were being delivered monthly by video-link Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch as well as by telephone – the first SIG to operate nationally. Other venues included Dunedin, Hamilton and Tauranga. The precursor to *Sustainability Matters* was being produced from May 2001.

A remit presented to the ICANZ November 2001 AGM resulted in the Taskforce on Sustainable Development Reporting being announced February 2002. This morphed in to the Sustainable Development Reporting Committee. Although the work was not completed the Institute disbanded it in December 2007.

The SIG was also hard at work issuing a number of submissions to international and national bodies.

In December 2012 as a result of restructuring and other issues NZICA suggested a different operating model for the SIG; it did not proceed. It is interesting to read the correspondence – the issues raised by the Group have not gone away – globally they are on 'everyone's lips'. **Source:** Editor.

Inaugural Poem for a New USA Presidency

I'm not much into poetry. This though is powerful. The skill and abilities of poet Amanda Gorman augers well for us all.

More: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/20/politics/amanda-gorman-inaugural-poem-transcript/index.html> 5:32

Source: Editor, 22nd January 2021. 

A Brief History of Consumer Culture

"Over the course of the 20th century, capitalism preserved its momentum by moulding the ordinary person into a consumer with an unquenchable thirst for more stuff.

"The notion of human beings as consumers first took shape before World War I, but became commonplace in America in the 1920s. Consumption is now frequently seen as our principal role in the world.

"People, of course, have always 'consumed' the necessities of life – food, shelter, clothing – and have always had to work to get them or have others work for them, but there was little economic motive for increased consumption among the mass of people before the 20th century.

"Quite the reverse: Frugality and thrift were more appropriate to situations where survival rations were not guaranteed. Attempts to promote new fashions, harness the 'propulsive power of envy', and boost sales multiplied in Britain in the late 18th century. Here began the 'slow unleashing of the acquisitive instincts', write historians Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb in their influential book on the commercialisation of 18th century England, when the pursuit of opulence and display first extended beyond the very rich.

"But, while poorer people might have acquired a very few useful household items – a skillet, perhaps, or an iron pot – the sumptuous clothing, furniture, and pottery of the era were still confined to a very small population. In late 19th century Britain a variety of foods became accessible to the average person, who would previously have lived on bread and potatoes – consumption beyond mere subsistence. This improvement in food variety did not extend durable items to the mass of people, however. The proliferating shops and department stores of that period served only a restricted population of urban middle-class people in Europe, but the display of tempting products in shops in daily public view was greatly extended – and display was a key element in the fostering of fashion and envy.

"Although the period after World War II is often identified as the beginning of the immense eruption of consumption across the industrialised world, the historian William Leach locates its roots in the United States around the turn of the century.

"The prospect of ever-extendable consumer desire, characterised as 'progress', promised a new way forward for modern manufacture, a means to perpetuate economic growth. Progress was about the endless replacement of old needs with new, old products with new. Notions of meeting everyone's needs with an adequate level of production did not feature. ...

"The capitalist system, dependent on a logic of never-ending growth from its earliest inception, confronted the plenty it created in its home states, especially the United States, as a threat to its very existence. It would not do if people were content because they felt they had enough. However over the course of the 20th century, capitalism preserved its momentum by moulding the ordinary person into a consumer with an unquenchable thirst for its 'wonderful stuff.'

[Very long article]

More: www.resilience.org/stories/2021-01-25/a-brief-history-of-consumer-culture/

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 29th January 2021. 

Collision Course: Endless Growth on a Finite Planet

"The story behind the reckless promotion of economic growth despite its disastrous consequences for life on the planet.

"The notion of ever-expanding economic growth has been promoted so relentlessly that 'growth' is now entrenched as the natural objective of collective human effort. The public has been convinced that growth is the natural solution to virtually all social problems – poverty, debt, unemployment, and even the environmental degradation caused by the determined pursuit of growth. Meanwhile, warnings by scientists that we live on a finite planet that cannot sustain infinite economic expansion are ignored or even scorned. In *Collision Course*, Kerry Higgs examines how society's commitment to growth has marginalised scientific findings on the limits of growth, casting them as bogus predictions of imminent doom.

"Higgs tells how in 1972, *The Limits to Growth* – written by MIT researchers Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William Behrens III – found unimpeded economic growth was likely to collide with the realities of a finite planet within a century.

More: <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/collision-course> 416 pages, Aug 2014, plus <https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/review-of-collision-course-endless-growth-on-a-finite-planet> (Herman Daly)

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 29th January 2021. 

Consultation: The CDSB Framework – Water-related disclosures

"CDSB invites comments from multi-stakeholders on the *CDSB Framework application guidance for water-related disclosures* and how it can support the integration of material water-related information in corporate mainstream reports.

"*The CDSB Framework application guidance for water-related disclosure* (Water Guidance) has been produced by the Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB) to assist companies in the disclosure of material water-related information in the mainstream report. It is designed to complement the CDSB Framework for reporting environmental and climate change information (CDSB Framework) and other frameworks, codes and recommendations which are aligned with some or all of the requirements of the CDSB Framework. The Water Guidance offers companies a means of developing their reporting practices and ensuring that investors are receiving the material water-related information needed for effective capital allocation to drive the transition to a sustainable, resilient, and water secure economy.

Submissions Close: 1st March 2021.

More: www.cdsb.net/sites/default/files/cdsb_framework_water_guidance_draft.pdf 48 pages, 1.1Mb

Source: Miranda Siu, 31st January 2021.

Editor: Matters related to water are of increasing importance to many entities globally across a diverse range of sectors. The work ties in with that of the TCFD, <IR>, GRI and SASB. The matters are complex and merit consideration by ESG reporters. 

Electric Cars May Offer Better Value for Money

"Electric vehicles are better for the climate than gas-powered cars, but many Americans are still reluctant to buy them. One reason: The larger upfront cost.

"New data, however, shows electric cars may actually save drivers money in the long-run.

More: www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/15/climate/electric-car-cost.html [Paywall if beyond free limit]

Source: *NY Times*, 21st January 2021. 

NZ's Wealth Gap and Why it's So Dangerous

"You could say it all began around the dinner table. Politics, socialism, inequality, the environment ... no topic of conversation was out of bounds in the Rashbrooke household, where the old black and white TV was always switched off at meal times.

"Max Rashbrooke, who's just turned 40, was the baby of the family. Now a noted author and advocate for social change, one of his Ted talks on the flaws in democracy has had more than half a million views. But as a young kid with two opinionated big sisters, he rarely got a word in, unless he and dad Geoff were talking about football.

"Instead, he learned to listen and observe – skills which have proved useful in his work as a writer and researcher who's exposed some uncomfortable truths about inequity in New Zealand, a country where people still like to think everyone gets a fair go. ...

"An analysis of the most recent data available, from the 2017-18 Household Economic Survey, shows a massive disparity between the top 10% (aged 15 years and over), who have a collective \$800 billion in wealth, and the bottom 10%, who owe a combined debt of \$13 billion. The richest 1% (about 38,000 people) are worth 68 times more than a typical NZ'er and have a total of \$141 billion tucked away in trusts.

"Max, whose original research drew from the 2014-15 survey, says the poorest now have essentially the same disposable income after housing costs than they did in the 1980s, while incomes for the richest have doubled. Public perception, however, has yet to catch up. ...

"What that shows you is that for all the advances of the past 100 years in human development and the sophistication of modern life, control and ownership of the productive economy has remained vested in a small group of people – which raises real questions about wealth and equality, people's ability to control their lives, and where the proceeds of the economy flow.' ...

"We need to sell greater equality as something that's dynamic and positive that will unleash greater levels of wellbeing and talent and ability, because people see it as a levelling down', he says.

More: www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/max-rashbrooke-nzs-wealth-gap-and-why-its-so-dangerous/EBZOJMNBZPDHON3M4DNVJSPPSM/

Source: [Paywall] *Canvas* supplement *NZ Herald*, 30th Jan. ©

Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020

"This legislation is to help transition the Australian economy to net zero and manage Australia's climate change risks, it is modelled on successful mechanisms of other countries, and similar to what is being set up by the Democrats in the US. It is akin to applying the TCFD at the country level. It is currently being reviewed by a House standing committee to see whether it merits adoption by the House of Reps. IMO** this is really critical to moving Australia in the right direction so I encourage you to have a look and lend your support by signing the petition and emailing your federal member. The report will be presented in a couple of weeks so now is the time to act!

More: <https://climateactnow.com.au/> Info on the bill and updates: <https://climateactnow.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CAN-WEB-News-Jan28.pdf> plus www.zalisteggall.com.au/climate_change_bill_2020_busin_ess_overview and www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=r6617

Source: **Julianne Krassay, member CA ANZ Climate & Sustainability group, 30th January 2021.

Editor: Has some similarities to recent NZ legislation. . ©

Leading the Charge: The CFO Climate & Sustainability 2021 Programme

"The CFO plays a critical role in driving organisational strategy and performance and as a catalyst for transformation. Our [SBC/Deloitte] CFO Climate & Sustainability Programme is designed to help CFOs understand how they can take the lead in managing climate change risk, and empower and enable them to take action in their influential roles.

"We will establish a shared understanding of what we mean by 'climate risk' and 'sustainability', what the critical challenges and opportunities are, and why they are important to you and your key stakeholders. This foundation will allow you to compellingly communicate the case for change. You will leave the Programme with a pathway forward to embed climate resilience and maximise opportunities for your business.

"Deloitte, SBC and others will share best practice, insights and guidance; however more than two-thirds of each session will be interactive to allow you to share stories of the unique challenges and opportunities you face and support each other to overcome barriers.

"Participants become members of a network of passionate, driven and high-performing CFOs who are empowered to navigate their organisations through the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change.

When/Where: Three stages: 1st March, 2nd stage 15th and 29th March, 12th April, 3rd stage 3rd May; Auckland and online

Cost: \$600 for SBC members or Deloitte clients; \$750 for other participants.

Source:

www.sbc.org.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/210158/CFOxSustainability_Brochure.pdf

More: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 28th January 2021. ©

Crimes Against Nature: Environmental Criminology and Ecological Justice

"*Crimes Against Nature* provides a systematic account and analysis of the key concerns of green criminology, written by one of the leading authorities in the field. The book draws upon the disciplines of environmental studies, environmental sociology and environmental management as well as criminology and socio-legal studies, and draws upon a wide range of examples of crimes against the environment – ranging from toxic waste, logging, wildlife smuggling, bio-piracy, the use and transport of ozone depleting substances through to illegal logging and fishing, water pollution and animal abuse. ...

More: www.amazon.com/Crimes-Against-Nature-Rob-White/dp/1843923610 June, 2008, 328 pages

Source: *NY Times*, 28th January 2021. ©

Australia Urged to Overhaul Environment Laws and Reverse 'Decline of Iconic Places'

"The Morrison government must overhaul Australia's environmental laws, including establishing new independent bodies to take on responsibility for monitoring the environment and enforcing compliance with the law, a once-in-a-decade independent review has found.

"The final report from the review of the laws finds the environment is suffering from two decades of failure by governments to improve protection systems meant to ensure the survival of the country's unique wildlife. ...

More: www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/28/australia-urged-to-overhaul-environment-laws-and-reverse-decline-of-our-iconic-places plus <https://epbcactreview.environment.gov.au/resources/final-report> 268 pages, 5.987Mb

Source: ACF, 30th January 2021

Editor: Report held by Australian government for 3 months ©

Modest Start on Reducing Road Emissions

'The [NZ] government has highlighted its plans to move on its election promises to clean up transport emissions.

'It has announced the first tranche of measures that it said would help New Zealand's 2050 carbon neutral target.

'It's also hinted something like the 'feebate' scheme proposed last year, saying it is considering an incentive to switch to clean cars.

'Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said with transport making up the country's second-highest amount of emissions after agriculture it was 'important we reduce emissions from our vehicle fleet'.

'Transport Minister Michael Wood said the government had agreed in principle to mandate a lower-emitting biofuel blend across the transport sector.

'Over time this will prevent hundreds of thousands of tonnes of emissions from cars, trucks, trains, ships and planes.

'There are economic opportunities for New Zealand in strengthening our clean green brand, encouraging innovation and creating jobs. It will also help our economic recovery. A biofuel mandate has the potential to create jobs and boost the economy through encouraging a local industry', he said.

'Officials will consult with the public and stakeholders, with the government expected to make a decision on the way forward before the end of the year.

'The government also outlined its plan to only purchase zero emissions public transport buses from 2025, and a \$50 million commitment to help councils fully decarbonise the public transport bus fleet by 2035.

'Legislation will also be passed this year to introduce a Clean Car Import Standard.

'The standard will begin next year, with the 105 grams of CO₂/km 2025 target being phased in through annual targets that get progressively lower to give importers time to adjust.

....

More: www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/435335/eco-friendly-car-import-standard-legislation-to-come-in-this-year plus www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA2101/S00085/government-moves-on-climate-promises.htm

Source: Greens, 28th January 2021. 

2021 Insights on New Zealand Sustainability Professionals survey

'Oxygen Consulting in collaboration with Auckland University of Technology (AUT), the Sustainable Business Council (SBC) and Sustainable Business Network (SBN) have kicked off their second annual survey on the sustainability profession and are inviting eligible participants to take part.

'Their inaugural 2020 Insights on New Zealand Professionals research, which surveyed 130 New Zealand sustainability professionals in February 2020, provided a foundation of intel on the sustainability profession including the pathways to employment, remuneration and role structure, and the skills and competencies organisations are looking for within the profession.

'It will be very interesting to see how these roles have evolved over the past extraordinary year – the capabilities that have become more necessary, individual wellbeing in the roles, and the impact on remuneration.

Closes: 12th February 2021

More: www.sbc.org.nz/news/2021/2021-insights-on-new-zealand-sustainability-professionals-survey-launches

Source: SBC, 21st January 2021. 

Safe & Sustainable Packaging & Materials Forum

'Driven by an increasing societal awareness, government involvement and industry expectations, the time for sustainable change is now. This one-day forum will analyse developing government legislation, explore current industry-wide challenges, highlight packaging material trends, and showcase strategic and innovative sustainable solutions. ...

This is your opportunity for you to join the conversation towards rethinking and redesigning a more sustainable future for New Zealand. ...

'Key topics explored:

- Reviewing the roadmap to sustainable packaging success
- Product stewardship and circular economy regulations
- Real-world case studies- Practical packaging initiatives adopted by New Zealand organisations
- End-of-life waste management and recycling sector discussion ...

When/Where: 17th Mar 2021, Auckland

More: www.conferenz.co.nz/packaging

Source: Conferenze, snail mail, 5th December 2020. 

Rob Gray's Accountability Legacy: Reinstating a Critical concern for Stakeholders, Democracy and the Environment

'Is SEA [Social and Environmental Accounting] research in danger of losing much of the early critical concern for accountability, transparency and democracy in regards to both stakeholders and the environment? Is too much focus being placed on organisation-based data and information? Are we centring the organisation in a way that prioritises it at the expense, and to the detriment, of others and the environment?

'In this session we will reflect n such questions. We return to some of the earlier literature, including that of Rob Gray, that contains important insights in need of revisiting. We attempt to provoke critical reflection on what we do as a research community. ... We highlight current research that embraces a critical concern for stakeholders, democracy ...

When/Where: 10:00-11:30pm [NZ], 18th February. Online

More: <https://apira.onlive.events/>

Source: CSEAR, 19th January 2021. 

BlackRock's Larry Fink warns CEOs 'No Issue Ranks Higher than Climate Change'

'Fink's annual letter to the chief executives of companies in which BlackRock invests in notes a 'tectonic shift' to sustainable investment is accelerating as nations and investors driver towards a net-zero economy.

'I began writing these letters in the wake of the financial crisis', Fink wrote in the letter. 'But over the past year, we experienced something even more far-reaching – a pandemic that has enveloped the entire globe and changed it permanently. It has both exacted a horrific human toll and transformed the way we live – the way we work, learn, access medicine, and much more.

'I believe the pandemic has presented such an existential crisis – such a stark reminder of our fragility – it has driven us to confront the global threat of climate change more forcefully and to consider how, like the pandemic, it will alter our lives. It has reminded us how the biggest crises, whether medical or environmental, demand a global and ambitious response.' ...

More: www.edie.net/news/9/BlackRock-s-Larry-Fink-warns-CEOs-that--no-issue-ranks-higher-than-climate-change-/ plus www.blackrock.com/corporate/investor-relations/larry-fink-ceo-letter

Source: edie, 28th January 2021. 