

# Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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## National Portrait: Rod Carr, Climate Tsar

"Dr Rod Carr thought he had retired. He quit full time work at the end of 2018, let his beard grow until he resembled a 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian novelist, ran a marathon in North Korea and planned to sit on a board or two into his twilight years. So what happened?"

"The future of the planet came calling. Climate Change Minister James Shaw asked in 2019 if he would consider chairing the Climate Change Commission, charged with nothing less than keeping current and future governments on track towards Zero Carbon Act targets.

"They said it will be four days a week in Wellington', Carr recalls. 'I said, I'm retired and live in Christchurch.'

"He is only 62. His 'two paid retirement gigs' were directorships at ASB and Christchurch rebuild agency Ōtākaro, and he had a couple of pro bono spots on boards in Christchurch, so he had room on his dance card, as he puts it. ....

"Covid-19 has revealed we are capable of doing things in reality which in theory we thought we couldn't. For example, working from home. The idea ASB could get 5000 of its 5400 workers to be working from home within two weeks. If somebody had done you a business case and said we're planning to do this, you'd have said you've got to be joking.

"You can't do it? It turns out you can do it. If you can do it, it's going to cost you a lot of money? Turns out it's not. And if you do it, the staff will hate you for it? Turns out not to be true either."

"But the comparison only goes so far.

"The challenge for climate change is there isn't really a vaccine. Some things are going to become relatively more expensive, and we need to think about what the social impacts of that are.'

**More:** [www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/124292382/national-portrait-rod-carr-climate-tsar](http://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/124292382/national-portrait-rod-carr-climate-tsar)

**Source:** Forever Project, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## Whacky or Just in Time? – Draft Declaration on the Rights of the Moon

"Human technical capability, national pride and curiosity that is rapidly overtaken by greed have underpinned much of human exploration. We have seen this sequence play out over and over again as exploration is closely followed by colonial expansion and resource exploitation. Ethics and human forbearance are frequently left behind, and they struggle to keep up.

"When the first seabed exploration expeditions were undertaken, minerals exploration was part of the motivation and funding for the work. Now it is the turn of celestial bodies: the Moon and Mars.

"Ethicists from the Rights of Nature community have come up with a draft Declaration on the Rights of the Moon. They invite support and editorial suggestions, and are keen to get public discussion going. ....

**More:** <https://mailchi.mp/eco.org.nz/tieke-eco-news-alerts-events-12-march-817980?e=e02a97980b>

**Source:** *Tieke: ECO News, Alerts & Events*, 12<sup>th</sup> March. 

## IFRS Announces Strategic Direction

"The Trustees of the IFRS Foundation met 2-4 March 2021 to continue their analysis and discussions of the feedback received to their Consultation Paper on Sustainability Reporting (2020 Consultation).

"Feedback to the 2020 Consultation confirmed an urgent need for global sustainability reporting standards and support for the Foundation to play a role in their development. The Trustees are therefore continuing their work on the establishment of an international sustainability reporting standards board within the existing governance structure of the IFRS Foundation, as set out in the Trustees' February announcement.

"The Trustees welcomed the February 2021 public statement by the IOSCO Board, announcing IOSCO's intention to work with the IFRS Foundation in developing a plan to establish a new board for setting sustainability reporting standards that meet the needs of the capital markets. This will include consideration of future endorsement of the new board and its standards. The Trustees recognise the importance for the public interest of reporting standards that address enterprise value, which captures expected value creation for investors in the short, medium and long term and is interdependent with value creation for society and the environment.

**More:** [www.ifrs.org/news-and-events/2021/03/trustees-announce-strategic-direction-based-on-feedback-to-sustainability-reporting-consultation/](http://www.ifrs.org/news-and-events/2021/03/trustees-announce-strategic-direction-based-on-feedback-to-sustainability-reporting-consultation/)

**Source:** IFRS, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**Editor:** Its 'unfortunate' IFRS has decided to go ahead with a separate operation under its leadership rather than as a single unit encompassing all reporting. i.e. separate from IASB. Although not surprising it is also unfortunate the focus will be on a narrow group of entities i.e. by not including public sector entities, co-ops, NGO's, incorporated societies and similar. 

## Better Futures Report 2021

"New research reveals New Zealanders are anxious about the cost of living and housing availability in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Colmar Brunton's *Better Futures* report released today [5<sup>th</sup> March] in conjunction with the Sustainable Business Council (SBC) surveyed 1009 New Zealanders, finding the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on livelihoods and wellbeing. ...

"There is also still plenty of scope in New Zealand for improvement, with 54% saying the brands they like don't do ethical or sustainable versions. ...

**More:** [www.colmarbrunton.co.nz/better-futures-reports-2021/](http://www.colmarbrunton.co.nz/better-futures-reports-2021/) 41 pages, 8.79Mb

**Source:** *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## Sustaining *Sustainability Matters*

If you would like to support production of the newsletter you would be most welcome to send a donation to;

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Sustainability Matters

ASB Bank, Queen Street branch, Auckland.

How much? As a suggestion NZ\$46 (\$40 net of GST)

## UN Adopts Landmark Framework to Integrate Natural Capital in Economic Reporting

"In a move that may reshape decision and policy-making towards sustainable development, the United Nations adopted a new framework today [10<sup>th</sup> March 2021] that includes the contributions of nature when measuring economic prosperity and human well-being.

"The new framework – the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA) – was adopted by the UN Statistical Commission and marks a major step forward that goes beyond the commonly used statistic of gross domestic product (GDP) which has dominated economic reporting since the end of World War II. This measure would ensure that natural capital – forests, wetlands and other ecosystems—are recognized in economic reporting.

"Experts emphasise while a statistic such as GDP does a good job of showing the value of goods and services exchanged in markets, it does not reflect the dependency of the economy on nature, nor its impacts on nature, such as the deterioration of water quality or the loss of a forest.

"UN Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed the adoption of the new economic and environmental framework. 'This is a historic step forward towards transforming how we view and value nature. We will no longer be heedlessly allowing environmental destruction and degradation to be considered economic progress.'

"The new framework can also underpin decision-making at two crucial conferences later this year – COP15 on Biodiversity in Kunming and the Glasgow Climate Conference, COP 26. ...

"More than 34 countries are compiling ecosystem accounts on an experimental basis. With the adoption of the new accounting recommendations, many more countries are expected to begin implementing the system, though a significant number of countries will require assistance and additional resources for statistical data collection.

**More:** <https://seea.un.org/ecosystem-accounting-plus-seea-un-adopts-landmark-framework-integrate-natural-capital-economic-reporting> and [www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00616-9](http://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00616-9)

**Source:** *Carbon News*, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## Overcoming Political Polarisation

"In this webinar, we'll examine political polarisation and how to overcome it. We recognise the 'us vs. them' posture in American political life is making it hard to achieve the cooperation needed to address our most pressing social and environmental problems. We are hoping to explore two drivers of polarisation: (1) The neurological and psychological characteristics of individuals who promote tribalism, and (2) The cultural constructs and social institutions which reinforce personal tendencies toward 'us vs. them' thinking. Given our brains and the world we inhabit, how do we go about dismantling (or at least chipping away at) polarisation so people can act more collaboratively?

**When/Where:** 1:00 – 2:15pm Eastern time (USA), 24<sup>th</sup> March. Online and will be recorded

**More:** [www.postcarbon.org/events/overcoming-political-polarization/](http://www.postcarbon.org/events/overcoming-political-polarization/)

**Source:** Post Carbon Institute, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**Editor:** There may be similarities with other jurisdictions. 

## 'Climate Conflict': Directors of UK Banks

"An analysis of the activities of directors at the UK's biggest banks reveals almost 80% have close ties to corporates in industries linked to climate change and pollution – which could undermine their net-zero commitments. ....

**More:** [www.edie.net/news/9/-Climate-conflict--4-in-5-UK-bank-directors-have-connections-to-high-emitting-corporates/](http://www.edie.net/news/9/-Climate-conflict--4-in-5-UK-bank-directors-have-connections-to-high-emitting-corporates/) Sign-in required.

**Source:** edie, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## He Coined the Term Anthropocene – Paul J. Crutzen

"[Nobel Laureate] Paul J. Crutzen passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at the age of 87 following several years of illness. Born in the Netherlands, he was Director of the Atmospheric Chemistry Department at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Mainz from 1980 to 2000. 'Paul J. Crutzen was a pioneer in many ways', says Martin Stratmann, President of the Max Planck Society. 'He was the first to show how human activities damage the ozone layer. For his scientific work on the Earth's atmosphere, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995, together with Mario J. Molina and F. Sherwood Rowland. This knowledge about the causes of ozone depletion was the basis for the worldwide ban on ozone-depleting substances – a hitherto unique example of how Nobel Prize-winning basic research can directly lead to a global political decision. ....

"MPG-President Stratmann adds: 'Paul Crutzen was also a pioneer of the sciences focusing on the impact of human civilization on the environment, whether through his findings on the destruction of the ozone layer or through his later scientific work on human-made climate change. .

"Paul J. Crutzen published over 360 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, another 135 scientific publications in research journals, and 15 books. He was one of the most highly cited scientists in the world, was bestowed numerous awards and honours, and was a member of many scientific academies, such as council member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and an honorary member of the German National Academy of Natural Sciences Leopoldina. ....

**More:** [www.mpg.de/16360356/obituary-paul-j-crutzen](http://www.mpg.de/16360356/obituary-paul-j-crutzen)

**Source:** *The NY Times*, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021. 

## Integrated Reporting Training: <IR> Approved Practitioner Course

"Proxima are New Zealand's accredited training partners for the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Integrated Reporting <IR> frameworks. Both frameworks are internationally recognised and have been recommended and endorsed by NZX as part of its 2017 Reporting Guidelines for listed companies to report on their sustainability related information. The frameworks help organisations credibly communicate their true sustainability performance to a range of stakeholders, and are equally valuable as internal strategic exercises as they are external communications initiatives.

"Positions are available for their upcoming <IR> course to be held in April.

**When/Where:** 21<sup>st</sup> /22<sup>nd</sup> April, Auckland

**More:** <https://proxima.global/courses-and-training>

**Source:** Sally Wilkins, Proxima, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## Creatively Reimagining Waste into Value

"The ReCreators believe collective business power will help both artisan and consumer alike. By coming together under one brand, their multi-culturally diverse artisans can share their skills, showcase their products, all of which have been lovingly restored, revived or crafted from sustainable materials. Consumers can choose to either learn new skills through workshops, purchase custom made products or purchase from our pre-made selection. All of our workshops and products are priced using the Living Wage as a minimum.

"During November 2020 they celebrated their second birthday and the founder Geraldine Tew wrote some thoughts providing insights into creating and operating a social enterprise in New Zealand [See blog]

**More:** <https://therecreators.co.nz/blogs/an-upcyclers-thoughts/the-re-creators-turns-two-what-i-ve-discovered-in-my-two-years-of-social-enterprise> plus <https://therecreators.co.nz/>

**Source:** Ger Tew, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. 

## Environmental Responsibility and Disclosures by SMEs: Issues, Challenges, and Future Directions

"A call for papers.

"Environmental responsibility and associated disclosures/reporting are a growing concern for businesses of all sizes including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, the diversity of SME characteristics, their opportunities, constraints, and the individual, national, and cultural differences among SMEs have resulted in a rather fragmented literature. This Special Issue will focus specifically on questions of environmental accounting and reporting instruments and behaviours of SMEs. By doing so, we aim is to put together conceptual and empirical papers that address environmental accountability of SMEs and associated challenges. ...

"In the case of SMEs (which generally account for about 90% of businesses worldwide) no regulations of this nature currently exist and this is perceived as a problem. The main pressure for SMEs to account for environmental responsibility seems to relate to supply chains and reputational risk. However, as evidence from larger businesses and the limited available from SMEs suggests, responsible environmental behaviour and related disclosures can have an overall positive effect on business operations. Yet the debate on how SMEs should respond to the demand for being accountable and responsible for their environment-related issues lacks an informed underpinning of evidence. As a result, SMEs tend to use guidelines developed for larger corporations, which can be challenging as SMEs have less resources ....

- The Paper Development workshop (PDW) welcomes submissions of preliminary paper drafts or extended abstracts (of 2,000 words minimum).
- The submission deadline for the PDW is 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 ([ccho@schulich.yorku.ca](mailto:ccho@schulich.yorku.ca)).
- A PDW will be organised and hosted by the Guest Editors online on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to provide feedback and guidance. Participation is encouraged ....

**More:**

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/bse.2704> [Paywall. Editor: I have a copy]

**Source:** CSEAR, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**Editor:** Possible topics include: Role of accountants, lenders, suppliers, and investors in promoting CSR-related best practices in SMEs. 

### Building Back Better?

"The world's governments are failing to 'build back better' from the Covid-19 economic slump, the UN Environment Programme warned in a report published on Thurs [11<sup>th</sup> Mar].

"Its analysts classified just 18% (\$341 billion) of national recovery spending pledges as green. Including European Commission spending brings the figure up to \$697bn.

"Oxford University environmental economics professor Cameron Hepburn said the report 'made sure countries can be compared and frankly shamed if necessary... we need to call out countries which aren't doing what they need to be doing in their own best interests.'

"The report authors accepted 'some dirty rescue-type expenditure may have been necessary to ensure lives and livelihoods were saved' – but said these bailouts should have had green strings attached.

"The report is critical of a lack of spending on re-training, at a time many people were laid off from sectors like oil and gas....

**More:** [www.climatechangenews.com/2021/03/10/hall-shame-9-countries-missing-chance-green-recovery/](http://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/03/10/hall-shame-9-countries-missing-chance-green-recovery/) plus <https://recovery.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/tracking/>

**Source:** *Climate Home News*, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**Editor:** NZ does not appear; Australia does; see graphics. 

## Go Green Expo 2021

"NZ's largest Sustainable Lifestyle Show is BACK! Showcasing a large range of companies and brands, this expo is a great opportunity to see new products and learn from experts in eco-home & building, food & beverages, organic products, health & wellness, beauty & personal care, home & living and many more.

"Get up close and personal with seminars, workshops, and product demonstrations that will give you the confidence to take on a new way of living more eco-consciously. There are also activities for all ages, samples, a food and beverage alley, and prizes to win to really round out your expo experience!

**When/Where:** 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> March Auckland

**More:** [www.gogreenexpo.co.nz/location/auckland/](http://www.gogreenexpo.co.nz/location/auckland/) FREE tickets online with promo code GREEN

**Source:** Tessa Vlaar, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021. 

## Best Practice Guidelines on Getting Rid of Problematic Plastic Packaging

"Alarming photos of sea creatures strangled by plastic created justified outrage about how we are dealing with packaging and pollution. While Kiwi shoppers have embraced the ban on single-use plastic bags, major businesses here are now working hard on long term solutions.

"A recent survey by Toluna found sustainability is a key factor in choices made by a fifth of all shoppers. That rises to a quarter among young people. But New Zealand businesses have a lot of work still to do to make the right choices and make it easier for us to do the right thing.

"Right now the way we make, use and dispose of products is an uncoordinated mess. There's an urgent need to rethink and redesign the products we make together with their packaging, so that it's easy to buy goods that can be reused or recovered for remanufacture. And businesses must be responsible for their products throughout their life cycle....

"Plastic will have a role to play in our society for years to come, but we have to manage it much, much better.

"It's confusing for businesses to know what the right move is, and things change fast. SBN has led the work with 50 organisations to find solutions to the problems with plastic packaging. The result is new best practice guidelines, released today [4<sup>th</sup> March 2021].

**More:** <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-news/plastic-piles-up-in-our-world-of-confusion/> plus <https://sustainable.org.nz/sbn-plastic-packaging-masterclass-2020-key-findings/> [Registration required]

**Source:** SBN, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## Living Wood Fair

"The Living Wood Fair is a 2-day community event exploring the wonderful world of wood, including:

- All aspects of forestry
- Environmental stewardship
- Creative arts, wood and bush crafts
- Natural building.

We have a wide range of activities on offer including:

- Live demonstrations, displays, kids' zone, information hub, market and food stalls.
- The Workshop Zone hosts indoor and outdoor hands-on workshops.
- Inspiring and informative presentations and panel discussions in the Te Uru Rākau Kōrero Zone
- Local live music and display of artworks. ....

**When/Where:** Sat and Sun 17-18<sup>th</sup> April, Golden Bay, Nelson

**More:** [www.eventfinda.co.nz/2021/living-wood-fair2/nelson-tasman](http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2021/living-wood-fair2/nelson-tasman)

**Source:** Living Future NZ Rakeiora (Jerome Partington), 6<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## Is the 'Legacy' Carbon Credit Market a Climate Plus or Just Hype?

"Fred Pearce examines how as major corporations look to buy carbon credits to offset emissions, critics are questioning the value of 'legacy' credits from green projects that are a decade or more old. Energy giants Total and Shell, for example, recently labeled deliveries of liquefied natural gas as 'carbon neutral' because of carbon credits the companies had purchased from green projects such as wind farms and forest conservation that have been in operation for 10 years or more. The market 'contains hundreds of millions of tons of poor-quality credits', says one analyst. What's needed, experts say, is to reform the credit system so it delivers actual carbon reductions.

**More:** <https://e360.yale.edu/features/is-the-legacy-carbon-credit-market-a-climate-plus-or-just-hype>

**Source:** *Yale Environment 360*, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Editor:** 'In the end', says Oxford climate scientist Myles Allen, 'offsetting schemes need to recognise that the only way to compensate for the impact of pulling carbon out of rocks is to put it back. No amount of creative accounting can alter that. ...' 

## Raising Cost of Flights to New Zealand a 'Good' Thing, says Air NZ Adviser

"Hiking the price of international flights to pay for greenhouse gas emissions, putting some people off flying here, would be a good thing, Air New Zealand's chief environmental adviser Sir Jonathon Porritt says.

"His comments follow a suggestion from Simon Upton, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, for a distance-based passenger tax – adding as much as \$155 to an economy class fare to the United Kingdom, or \$25 to the cheapest seats to Australia – to fund climate-based initiatives. Such a fund might raise up to \$400 million a year.

"Air New Zealand's sustainability advisory panel, which Porritt chairs, will meet online over three days at the end of the month, and Upton's passenger tax idea, paid at departure, is on the agenda...

"Controversial though it may be, I'm in favour of putting off some people coming to New Zealand', Porritt says. 'I just don't believe in the idea that the number of international visitors to New Zealand can grow and grow and grow without limits. I just don't believe that is credible and I don't believe it's right. So, if a higher price for the privilege of flying to New Zealand puts some people off, good.' ....

"(Aside from burning carbon dioxide, aircraft also emit oxides of nitrogen, soot particles, oxidised sulphur species and water vapour, the net effect of which is warming. There's also the problematic formation of contrail-cirrus clouds.) ...

"Porritt, the Air NZ sustainability adviser, says connecting individual flyers with climate-related programmes, and making them feel they're legitimately contributing to solving the problem, seems entirely appropriate. He is in favour of a frequent flyer levy, so those who travel the most pay more.

**More:** [www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/300248291/raising-cost-of-flights-to-new-zealand-a-good-thing-says-air-nz-adviser](http://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/300248291/raising-cost-of-flights-to-new-zealand-a-good-thing-says-air-nz-adviser) [Long article]

**Source:** *Forever Project*, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## NZ's First EV Coach

"Mahu City Express has launched New Zealand's first EV coach for daily operations between Warkworth and Auckland. The vehicle features a 281Kwh battery with a range of around 300km. As part of operations, it will do a round trip of around 150km each day and can seat up to 40 passengers.

**More:** <https://evsandbeyond.co.nz/video-mahu-city-express-launches-nzs-first-ev-coach/>

**Source:** EECA, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 

## Biden Halts New Leases for Oil Drilling on Public Lands, Establishes New Task Force

"President Biden took sweeping executive actions on Wednesday to 'tackle the climate crisis at home and abroad'. He says these Executive Orders follow through on his promise to aggressively tackle climate change and build on the executive actions he took on his first day in office, including rejoining the Paris Agreement and the immediate review of harmful rollbacks of environmental standards made during the Trump Administration.

"Biden's assault on climate change is being backed by allies that include labour unions, anti-fracking activists, leaders of Wall Street, the auto industry and the US Chamber of Commerce, writes Politico.

"These allies will be a necessary force if Congress is to be persuaded to approve \$2 tr. to create a carbon-pollution-free power sector by 2035 and a net-zero economy by 2050. ....

"Biden has directed his administration to:

- Centre the climate crisis in US foreign policy and national security considerations;
- Take a 'whole-of-government'; approach to the climate crisis;
- Leverage the federal government's footprint and buying power to lead by example;
- Rebuild infrastructure for a sustainable economy;
- Advance conservation, agriculture and reforestation;
- Revitalise energy communities; and
- Secure environmental justice and spur economic opportunity.

"Among other actions, the executive orders establish the National Climate Task Force, assembling leaders from across 21 federal agencies and departments to enable the whole-of-government approach to combatting the climate crisis,

"Biden has also temporarily blocked new leases for oil drilling on federal lands; he has ordered a review of fossil-fuel subsidies and other measures to overhaul the US energy mix, writes Bloomberg. ....

**More:** [www.environmentalleader.com/2021/01/197161/](http://www.environmentalleader.com/2021/01/197161/)

**Source:** *Environmental Leader*, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021. 

## Green Property Summit: Building Better, Together

"Body The Green Property Summit 2021 sees the property sector positioned like never before, as Aotearoa faces the most serious and pressing issue of our time.

"The science of climate change is clear. And the economics are clear too.

"The property sector has the solutions, the opportunity and the momentum to drive necessary change across Aotearoa. Together, we can make our sector the carbon-busting superhero our country needs.

"We can show New Zealanders, and the global property sector, how to be a leader when it comes to tackling our climate emissions.

"The Green Property Summit will present and discuss the latest initiatives in delivering green buildings and precincts, retrofitting existing buildings, and the policies and opportunities for building green. ...

"GPS21 will showcase local and international healthy building case studies, explore solutions, and feature key players in the world's green building sector ....

**When/Where:** 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, Auckland. Early Bird registrations close Friday 18<sup>th</sup> arch

**More:** [www.nzgbc.org.nz/Event?Action=View&Event\\_id=961](http://www.nzgbc.org.nz/Event?Action=View&Event_id=961)

**Source:** NZGBC, 21<sup>st</sup> January and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 