

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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NZ Becomes First in World for Climate Reporting

“Commerce and Consumer Affairs Minister David Clark says Aotearoa New Zealand has become the first country in the world to introduce a law that requires the financial sector to disclose the impacts of climate change on their business and explain how they will manage climate-related risks and opportunities.

“The Financial Sector (Climate-related Disclosure and Other Matters) Amendment Bill has been introduced to Parliament and will receive its first reading this week. [2nd week of April]

“It is important every part of New Zealand’s economy is helping us cut emissions and transition to a low carbon future. This legislation ensures financial organisations disclose and ultimately take action against climate-related risks and opportunities,

“Becoming the first country in the world to introduce a law like this means we have an opportunity to show real leadership and pave the way for other countries to make climate-related disclosures mandatory”, said David Clark.

“Climate Change Minister James Shaw said the law was another step towards a climate-friendly, prosperous future for New Zealand.

“Climate change will have a profound impact on businesses all over Aotearoa New Zealand. There are activities and assets these businesses are involved in which will not hold their value in a low carbon world, simply because they emit too much climate pollution and contribute to the climate crisis. ...

More: www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz-becomes-first-world-climate-reporting plus www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/business/regulating-entities/mandatory-climate-related-financial-disclosures/

Source: *Carbon News*, 13th April 2021.

Editor: At the Select Committee stage there will be opportunities for the public to provide input. There will also be opportunities for stakeholder engagement as the External Reporting Board develops new standards and guidance material for producing climate-related financial disclosures.

NOTE: The current proposal does not extend to central, regional, or local government entities, nor co-ops, Maori incorporations, etc. A summary of the 77 submissions which closed in December 2019 is at

<https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/climate-related-financial-disclosures-summary-of-submissions.pdf>

Lithium Battery Recycling Facility Opened in Singapore

“A new battery recycling facility capable of recycling 14 tonnes of lithium-ion batteries – or the equivalent of 280,000 smartphone batteries – per day officially opened in Tuas on Wednesday (24th March).

“The TES B facility, set up by home-grown electronic waste (e-waste) recycler TES, is able to recover more than 90% of precious metals from lithium-ion batteries for reuse in battery production, said TES.

More: www.straitstimes.com/singapore/environment/new-battery-recycling-facility-a-first-in-singapore-and-south-east-asia

Source: *eco-Business.com*, 31st March 2021.

O Tātou Ngāhere (Our Forest) Project Launched

“O Tātou Ngāhere – Our Forest, is a comprehensive programme of research which details how native forests can be integrated into our whenua for the benefit of all.

“The project is a collaboration between Pure Advantage and the foresters and scientists of Tāne’s Tree Trust, which champions the valuable role our native species can play in the future of forestry in Aotearoa New Zealand.

“Our aim is to firmly embed the myriad benefits of native forests into New Zealanders’ thoughts and actions and in the process improve our natural ecosystems and landscapes, contribute to rural economies, and help Aotearoa New Zealand play its part in mitigating climate change.

“Together we have convened this suite of essays from some of Aotearoa New Zealand’s foremost thinkers and practitioners in areas related to native forests as the first stage of this campaign. The cumulative knowledge and expertise that underpins these 37 contributions is formidable. We thank all our authors for their input.

“The native forests of Aotearoa are unique biological and environmental treasures. They are also cultural taonga, part of our identities as New Zealanders. Their destruction, first by the glacial events of the last two million years, followed by successive waves of human settlers of the past 800 years, has also been extraordinary in terms of the speed and comprehensiveness of habitat and species loss. We are only now becoming fully aware of what this loss means in terms of our own future as a species.

More: <https://pureadvantage.org/o-tatou-ngahere/> plus <https://vimeo.com/534651143> 2:5 minutes; also sign up for seven webisodes one week apart started 6:30pm 13th April. Also, www.newsroom.co.nz/rod-oram-walking-in-tanes-forests

Source: Pure Advantage, 9th April 2021.

The Earthrise Photo – A Reflection 50 years After

“It’s hard to believe this wonderful image [see URL below] was taken more than 50 years ago.

“The crew of Apollo 8 – the first humans to leave the earth’s orbit – stumbled on it on Christmas Eve, 1968. They were coming around the dark side of the moon photographing craters in black and white, when Astronaut Bill Anders happened to look out one of the lunar module’s side windows. Anders quickly loaded some colour film, and in the following seconds he captured the first full glimpse of our planet set against the vastness of the universe. ...

“As Anders himself said a few years ago on the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 8 mission:

“We set out to discover the moon ... and discovered the earth instead.” ...

More: www.theaotearoacircle.nz/news/2021/3/2/partner-perspective-whatungarongaro-te-tangata-toit-te-whenua-while-people-come-and-go-the-land-remains-8f2wd

Source: Aotea Circle, 13th April 2021.

The Future of the GRI –A Call for Papers

“Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) provides one of the most widely used and cited sustainability standards globally. Since the launch of the GRI two decades ago, it has worked on the development of a conceptual framework to provide guidelines for firms to elaborate sustainability reports. This ongoing effort has enabled GRI in championing the institutional field of sustainability reporting. As a result, some of the largest corporations across the world are engaged on accountability practices and this has inspired much more organisations to start taking steps in the same direction. The GRI conceptual framework is designed based on multi-stakeholder insights, one reason it is seen as appropriate for a broad audience. However, with the increasing discourse on the need for convergence of non-financial reporting frameworks and the related recent IFRS Foundation Consultation Paper on Sustainability Reporting suggesting the need for a single sustainability standard-setting body, the role and scope organisations like GRI will continue to play is an important question.

“Almost simultaneously, the European Commission has asked the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group to elaborate on possible EU sustainability reporting standards and for possible changes to EFRAG’s governance and funding if it were to become the EU sustainability reporting standard setter. EFRAG’s reports to the EC highlight overarching principles to support an inclusive range of stakeholders and to build on initiatives, like GRI, that have similar goals.

“We welcome the submission of empirical, conceptual and critical work which explores, but is not restricted to, the following topics: [9 are suggested.]

Submissions: Open: 30th June 2021. Close: 31st Jan. 2022

More: www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/journal/sampj/future-global-reporting-initiative

Source: CSEAR, 13th April 2021. 

Greenhouse Gas Emissions to be Considered in RMA Processes

“On 31st December 2021 past prohibitions on considering the direct and indirect effects of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change in decision-making will be removed from the RMA. The ramifications of that change are significant for those seeking resource consents or a plan change where climate change could be raised as an issue. The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) has published *Phasing out fossil fuels in process heat: National direction on industrial greenhouse gas emissions* (Consultation Paper) about how this new approach could work. Those with emissions, particularly those who use process heat, will need to ensure the proposals provide adequate certainty about the level of information needed for resource consent applications and private plan changes and reduce parameters for possible climate action litigation.

“The Consultation Paper proposes national direction on industrial greenhouse gas emissions (targeting coal) and non-statutory guidance on how other direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions should be considered in consenting and planning decisions. The proposals will affect all businesses which emit or plan to emit greenhouse gases as a by-product of their operations, particularly those operating on coal-fired heating systems.

“We comment on MfE’s proposals in further detail below and what they may mean for your business.

Closes: 20th May 2021 [Opened 8th Apr].

More: www.minterellison.co.nz/our-view/greenhouse-gas-emissions-to-be-considered-in-rma-processes plus <https://consult.environment.govt.nz/climate/phasing-out-fossil-fuels-in-process-heat/>

Source: MinterEllisonRuddWatts, 13th April 2021. 

New Zealand Climate Related Disclosures Regime

“In September 2020, the New Zealand Government its intention to implement mandatory reporting on climate risks. At this time, it was also announced that the External Reporting Board would be responsible for developing the reporting standards for the regime.

“This regime will take a comply-or-explain approach to climate-related disclosures will be mandatory for listed companies, Crown financial institutions, large insurers, registered banks and managers of investment schemes with more than \$1 billion in assets. Subject to parliamentary approval, these entities could be required to make disclosures alongside wider year end reporting in 2023.

“For those interested in developments in this space, included below is a link to information recently published on the External Reporting Board website setting out the project’s time frame and background.

More: www.xrb.govt.nz/extended-external-reporting/climate-related-disclosures/

Source: Jamie Cattell, (XRB) via CA ANZ Climate & Sustainability Group, 8th April 2021.

Editor: Among other things the web page has a graphic showing the timeline. Work is underway to have focussed engagement and prepare a draft reporting standard. 

Exciting New Role: CEO, Centre for Sustainable Finance

“The Aotea Circle via its Sustainable Finance Forum has created a role and is seeking expressions of interest for the newly created role of CEO.

“The Sustainable Finance Forum (SFF) is the first project launched by The Aotearoa Circle, recognising the critical role of finance to achieve, and accelerate, the transition to a sustainable economy, and the need for a financial system which is fit for that purpose.

“The SFF was established with the desired outcome to help Aotearoa New Zealand shift to a financial system that supports sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes. The SFF’s focus has been to advance the financial sector’s role in this global and domestic shift and reshape its regulatory and financial policy for long-term economic prosperity and sustainable development.

“Driving the sustainable finance agenda in Aotearoa New Zealand will require ongoing leadership, commitment and funding from capital providers, capital users and the public sector.

“An independent Centre for Sustainable Finance to coordinate implementation of the recommendations of the Sustainable Finance Forum (SFF) Roadmap for Action is being established and financed.

“A number of implementation projects are already underway.

More: www.theaotearoacircle.nz/s/SFF-20-Centre-for-Sustainable-Finance-CEO-Position-Description.pdf plus www.theaotearoacircle.nz/sustainablefinance

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 8th April 2021. 

Covering Climate Now

“CCNow collaborates with journalists and newsrooms to produce more informed and urgent climate stories, to make climate a part of every beat in the newsroom – from politics and weather to business and culture – and to drive a public conversation which creates an engaged public.

“460+ news and media partners with reach of 2,000,000,000, with 57 countries represented, \$0 cost of membership

More: <https://coveringclimatenow.org/about/>

Source: *Carbon News*, 13th April 2021.

Editor: Wow! Includes several NZ and Australian partners. 

Turning the CFO into a Champion for Green Growth

"Ten years ago, asking the chief financial officer (CFO) to accept responsibility for climate change would have been like suggesting the chief executive take personal charge of diversity and inclusion. They may have liked the idea and seen value in it, but it wasn't a priority.

"Today though, investors are likely to question why the CFO doesn't have a mandate for sustainability. The evolution in attitudes over the decade has intensified in the past two years, converting lofty corporate ambitions on social and environmental issues into actionable targets.

"Accounting for Sustainability, which has been encouraging the integration of natural capital into business operations since 2004, surveyed CFOs about incorporating natural capital into business in 2012. Their views? That environmental and social factors were 'nebulous', 'notional costs to society' and the case for their relevance to a board had 'not yet been answered'.

"Nowadays, CFOs are championing the sustainability agenda. They are the obvious candidates at executive level to lead the charge and highlight the opportunities of sustainable business. Finance chiefs have the requisite skills of forecasting, risk management, governance, measurement and reporting to integrate the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into a company strategy and map out a plan to measure and monitor progress.

More: www.raconteur.net/c-suite/cfo/cfo-green-champion/

Source: CSEAR, 9th April 2021. 

Tools to Communicate Long-Term Value Creation

"This April, join us [The Value Reporting Foundation] at one of two webinars hosted by Janine Guillot, CEO, SASB and Charles Tilley, CEO, IIRC to find out more about how the International <IR> Framework and SASB Standards, when used together, can provide a more complete picture of long-term enterprise value creation, while meeting investor needs for comparable, consistent and reliable information.

"A major driver behind the IIRC and SASB's plans to merge into a unified organisation, the Value Reporting Foundation, is to enable organisations to report on the range of resources and relationships they use to create value.

"The <IR> Framework drives a holistic view of the value creation process, while SASB Standards add comparability to sustainability-related data across peer companies.

"At this webinar, we will set out how the <IR> Framework and SASB Standards are already being used together to drive robust, effective reporting. You will hear from a leading adopter to understand how they are using both and what benefits, and challenges, they've experienced as a result. You will also hear the investor perspective on the complementary benefits to investors of integrated reports that are strengthened through SASB Standards.

When/Where: Wed. 28th April, 9am JapanST / Tues, 27th April 5pm PacificST. Online

More: <https://info.sasb.org/value-reporting-foundation-iirc-sasb-webinar.4.28>

Source: SASB, 6th April 2021. 

Half of NZ's Discarded Tyres to be used at Cement Factory

"There are a lot of cars on NZ's roads which equates to 6 million car tyres being sent to landfill each year. An upgraded cement factory will now be burning these tyres at 1,400 degrees Celsius as part of their process heat requirements.

More: www.carbonems.com/single-post/snippets-for-8-april-2021 [3 million tyres/year]

Source: *SnippETS*, 8th April 2021. 

Are Huge Tree Planting Projects More Hype than Solution?

"South African science writer Adam Welz examines the plethora of high-profile projects aimed at planting billions of trees being launched worldwide. These programs are seen as a boost to efforts to tackle climate change and protect the environment. But as Welz reports, a growing number of scientists are challenging this tree-planting narrative. They say that these programs, especially those based on huge numerical targets, can wreck natural ecosystems, dry up water supplies, damage agriculture, push people off their land – and even make global warming worse. In addition, they say, tree planting can distract from the greater priorities of protecting existing forests and reducing fossil fuel use.

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/are-huge-tree-planting-projects-more-hype-than-solution>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 9th April 2021

Editor: Could be some useful insights here for NZ's Climate Change Commission and others. 

Energy use an Achilles Heel for Agriculture? Exploring Net Energy Analysis

"How we interact with our world therefore has multiple implications, and according to recent popular press, nothing is more important for addressing climate change than what we eat.

"Future food production trends are all about 'sustainability' and technology augmented production. But are these visions sensible? What will the future look like if we realistically analyse today? Will future vegetable production occur in sterile indoor environments? Will your future burger be yeast-based and grown in a vat? Will future food production chains be tracked and traced via modification resistant blockchain cryptography?

"If we take a step back and examine what underlies all economic activity and most modern technology we find energy is the keystone. Technological solutions to food production might save emissions on the farm but increase our energy and resource consumption – which is more problematic and what is the best use of our scarce resources?

More: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pugOm3E_5d4 1hr 30min video presentation

Source: Our Climate Declaration, 13th April 2021. 

Climate Aotearoa: What's Happening and What We Can Do About It

"Edited by Helen Clark with contributions from a range of climate scientists and commentators Rob Bell, Jason Boberg, Adelia Hallett, Sophie Handford, Rhys Jones, Haylee Koroi, Matt McGlone, Jamie Morton, Rod Oram, Jim Salinger, Kera Sherwood-O'Regan, Simon Thrush and Andrew Jeffs.

"Climate Aotearoa outlines the climate situation as it is now, and as it will be in the years to come. It describes the likely impact on the environment and on our day-to-day living situation.

"It suggests the changes you can make for maximum impact, what we should be asking of our government and what we should be asking of our business community. In doing so, this is a hopeful book – actions can make a difference.

More: www.allenandunwin.co.nz/browse/books/general-books/popular-science/Climate-Aotearoa-Edited-by-Helen-Clark-9781988547633 328 pages, published 19th April 2021 plus www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covering-climate-now-how-can-we-play-our-own-part/XDX7EAUCLIG6BU6KRWZHUHUIK5A/ extracted from *Climate Aotearoa* with more in coming days. Also www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covering-climate-now-how-do-we-decarbonise-new-zealands-energy-sector/NBFCVWHOPLMT4735VRJSBYYPE/

Source: *NZ Herald*, 12th April 2021, page A8. 

BS ISO 14053:2021 Environmental Management: Material flow Cost Accounting

"This document gives practical guidelines for the phased implementation of material flow cost accounting (MFCA) which organisations, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), can adopt to enhance their environmental performance and material efficiency. ...

"Applicable to any organisation it is applicable to any organisation, regardless of level of development, the nature of its activities, or the location at which these activities occur.

"This document provides basic calculation procedures to analyse saving potentials by avoiding material losses. Detailed calculation procedures or information on techniques for improving material or energy efficiency are out of the scope of this document.

More: www.standards.govt.nz/shop/bs-iso-140532021/ Free. The 26 pages were published 22nd February. Plus www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:14053:ed-1:v1:en

Source: Standards NZ, 7th April 2021. 

Is 'Seaspiracy' Accurate? Fact Checking Dolphin-Safe Label Claims Made by Netflix Doc

"Netflix's *Seaspiracy* has revealed some harrowing truths about the widespread environmental destruction to the world's oceans due to human behaviour.

"From the co-creator of the shocking *Cowspiracy* documentary, *Seaspiracy* examines the harm humans inflict on the seas – from the impact of plastics and fishing gear polluting the waters, to the widespread damage caused by bottom trawling and by-catch, as well as the impact of illegal fishing and ruthless hunting practices.

"One revelation is the claim 'dolphin friendly' labels on cans of tuna are not guaranteed.

"Dolphin-safe labels are used to indicate compliance with laws or policies designed to minimise dolphin fatalities from by-catch during fishing for tuna caught for canning.....

"Following the documentary release, David Phillips, director of the International Marine Mammal Project of the Earth Island Institute, said in a statement on the institute's website: 'The dolphin-safe tuna program is responsible for the largest decline in dolphin deaths by tuna fishing vessels in history. Dolphin-kill levels have been reduced by more than 95%, preventing the indiscriminate slaughter of more than 100,000 dolphins every year.'

More: www.newsweek.com/fact-check-seaspiracy-dolphin-safe-labels-guaranteed-1579804 plus www.thisislocalondon.co.uk/youngreporter/19201936-conspiracy-not-watch-seaspiracy-tabitha-b-lpgs/

Source: Rob Skinner, 4th April 2021. 

Ekostories Essays and Stories by Isaac Yuen

"Few things move us like a captivating story told by a master storyteller. Stories can be grand and epic narratives that guide the thoughts and actions of entire societies and cultures. They can also be of a more intimate nature – tales of personal trials and triumphs, quiet comedies and tragedies. They can range from light-hearted escapist adventures to deep meditations of the human condition. Regardless of their scope, the stories that endure share the common trait of being able to reach, resonate, and inspire us in ways few things can.

"I've always been fascinated by the relationship between humanity and nature. I don't think it's particularly outrageous to say that it is currently, at best, a dysfunctional one. ...

More: <https://ekostories.com> plus <https://orionmagazine.org/article/the-worlds-of-hayao-miyazaki/>

Source: Editor via Orion 19th March 2021. 

Second Consultation on the SDG Impact Standard for Enterprises

"Following on from the December 2020 consultation, The UNDP SDG Impact Team is launching the second public consultation of the SDG Impact Standards for Enterprises on 31st March 2021 (GMT). The consultation will be open until 31st May 2021.

"A summary of the feedback on the first public consultation can be found on the [UNDP website](#), [CA ANZ participated in the first round consultation](#).

"Consultation Questions

1. Are the Practice Indicators appropriate and complete?
2. (For enterprises) Are you willing to pilot the Standards with or without support through a working group?
3. We are developing guidance to accompany the standards and seeking to facilitate alignment with other relevant tools/frameworks/guidance. Do you have any comments you would like us to take into consideration?
4. Do you have any other comments?

"Please contact businessreform@charteredaccountantsanz.com by **Monday 24th May** if you would like to provide any feedback for this second public consultation.

More: <https://sdgimpact.undp.org/enterprise.html> plus <https://sdgimpact.undp.org/assets/Guiding-consultation-questions-SDG-Impact-Standards-for-Enterprises-March-2021.pdf>

Source: Debbie Kandauw, Senior Policy Advocate - Business Reform at CA ANZ. 

The Path to Post-covid Cities

"A year of the pandemic has laid bare the flaws of our great metropolises. Here's how to make them healthier, cheaper and happier.

"This has been the biggest year of urban change in decades. Many cities have remade themselves during the pandemic, laying bike paths or turning parking spaces into café terraces overnight. Offices have emptied and shops closed, some forever. Every organisation on earth seems to have held a webinar on 'The future of cities'. The city – 10,000 years old – obviously isn't going to die, but it is evolving on fast-forward.

"There are constraints to change. Most of tomorrow's urban infrastructure is already there, often in the wrong place. Many cities have no money to innovate, as the pandemic has ravaged revenue sources such as taxes and subway fares. Yet there is a clear, realistic path to a better city: one that's greener, cheaper, happier, healthier, more equal and productive, and less polluted and lonely.

"The basic exchange that's required is obvious: cities need to take space from cars, offices and shops and give it to affordable housing, community and nature. The city of the future may look a lot like the city of the past, just cleaner: bicycles, farms and 18th century-style homeworking rather than flying cars.

"I've tried to distil the best ideas for the post-Covid city, focusing on rich-country megapolises such as London, New York and Paris. Developing-world cities have different problems, but much of what follows applies to them, too. ...

More: www.nzherald.co.nz/business/covid-19-coronavirus-the-path-to-the-post-covid-city/

Source: *NZ Herald*, 20th March 2021, page A18, paywall [ex *Financial Times*]

Editor: A key aspect of the article is 'urban design'. 