

Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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Regulate Business to Tackle Climate Crisis, Urges Mark Carney

"Governments must step up their regulation of businesses to tackle the climate crisis, the former Bank of England governor Mark Carney has urged, because the financial free markets will not reduce greenhouse gas emissions alone.

"Carney, who left the Bank of England last year before the first Covid-19 lockdown, is now one of the most influential figures working on Cop26, the vital UN climate talks to be held in Glasgow in November. He is a UN envoy on climate change and Boris Johnson's finance adviser on the climate.

"He said for the world to meet its climate goals, governments would have to force industries to follow clear rules, on everything from energy generation to construction and transport, and set carbon prices that would drive investment towards green ends and close down fossil fuels.

"We need clear, credible and predictable regulation from government", he said. "Air quality rules, building codes, that type of strong regulation is needed. You can have strong regulation for the future, then the financial market will start investing today, for that future. Because that's what markets do, they always look forward."

"Without such robust intervention from governments, markets would fail to address the crisis. "It wouldn't happen spontaneously by the financial sector", he said. "But we can't get there without the financial sector."

"Carney has drawn criticism from green groups over his support for offsetting, but remains a staunch advocate. "I'm of the view that offsets can play a role because they extend the carbon budget", he said. "It's a bit like when we think about people living on a very tight budget. If you can find ways to save a bit of money here and there or earn a bit more money, you do it. That's what this is."

More: www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jul/17/regulate-business-to-tackle-climate-crisis-urges-mark-carney

Source: *Carbon News*, 19th July 2021.

MHUD Seeks Feedback on Policy for Housing and Urban Development

"The Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development (GPS-HUD) will set a long-term vision for housing and urban development in New Zealand and guide the actions of the Government and others in working towards that vision.

"The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) has released a discussion document proposing the vision, outcomes, focus areas and actions that will shape housing and urban development over the next 30 years.

"MHUD have asked for feedback on the proposals through an online survey and will use the feedback to help shape the GPS-HUD which is expected to be published in October 2021. The discussion document and a summary of proposals can be found on MHUD's website.

Closes: 30th July 2021

More: www.minterellison.co.nz/our-view/mhud-seeks-feedback-on-government-policy-for-housing-and-urban-development

Source: MinterEllisonRuddWatts, 5th July 2021.

Solar

"Michael Beard is a Nobel prize-winning physicist whose best work is behind him. Trading on his reputation, he speaks for enormous fees, lends his name to the letterheads of renowned scientific institutions, and half-heartedly heads a government-backed initiative tackling global warming.

"When Michael's personal and professional lives begin to intersect in unexpected ways, an opportunity presents itself in the guise of an invitation to travel to New Mexico. Here is a chance for him to extricate himself from his marital problems, reinvigorate his career, and very possibly save the world from environmental disaster. Can a man who has made a mess of his life clean up the messes of humanity?

"A complex novel that brilliantly traces the arc of one man's ambitions and self-deceptions, *Solar* is a startling, witty, and stylish new work from one of the world's great writers.

More: www.goodreads.com/book/show/7140754-solar plus www.theguardian.com/books/2010/mar/14/solar-ian-mcewan

Source: Assoc. Prof Ralph Bathurst

Editor: Although published in 2010 *Solar* was highly recommended by Ralph at 'Climate Change: Recreating the Economy' round table at Massey University, Auckland on 14th July.

Value Reporting Foundation & IFRS Foundation Developments – What This Means for New Zealand

"CPA Australia and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) are delighted to invite you to an exclusive session covering what the work by the newly established Value Reporting Foundation and the IFRS Foundation means for New Zealand.

"We are delighted to welcome speakers Lisa French, Chief Technical Officer, and Neil Stewart, Director of Corporate Outreach, at the Value Reporting Foundation, along with Joanna Perry, Trustee at the IFRS Foundation.

"The merger of the Integrated Reporting <IR> Framework and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), to create the Value Reporting Foundation, represents an important step towards a harmonised corporate reporting framework. Further, the establishment of the International Sustainability Standards Board by the IFRS Foundation, with the support of IOSCO and G7 Finance ministers and develop associated standards accordingly.

"It is crucial New Zealand stakeholders are informed and engage with these developments, particularly given the expectation of future consultations in this area.

"This session is intended to provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about the work by both the Value Reporting Foundation and the IFRS Foundation

When/Where: 13th July 2021.

More: <https://bit.ly/3rjABL> [URL is very long] Webinar is at <https://cpaaustralia.webex.com/cpaaustralia/lsr.php?RCID=bffeb11d5c5a47f6b81e49defc38d093> 1hr 24min. To access use password: Reporting1

Source: CPA 30th June 2021 and Lydia Tsen 16th July

Editor: About 70 people joined the webinar.

Sixty years of Climate Change Warnings: The Signs Missed (and ignored)

"The effects of 'weird weather' were already being felt in the 1960s, but scientists linking fossil fuels with climate change were dismissed as prophets of doom. [A very long read.]

More: www.theguardian.com/science/2021/jul/05/sixty-years-of-climate-change-warnings-the-signs-that-were-missed-and-ignored

Source: *Carbon News*, 6th July 2021

Editor: *Our Biggest Experiment: A History of the Climate Crisis* is at <https://thegreenish.co.uk/home-and-family/five-brilliant-books-about-climate-change> with four other 'standout as well-written, interesting, useful and engaging books'.

Glass Half Full: The Climate Activist Who Is an Optimist

"Marlborough resident Tom Powell is optimistic the fight for our climate goals remains winnable. 'I'm hoping we can turn this thing around so our children, and our children's children, can have a future which was as good, maybe better, than ours was. One reason to be hopeful: denialism of climate change is dying', Powell says. 'I think with time people have seen more evidence of it around the world, and it's sinking in more.'

More: www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/300352372/glass-half-full-the-climate-activist-who-is-an-optimist

Source: Forever Project, 16th July 2021.

Channeling Your Shareholder Power

"If you own shares in listed companies, are interested in corporate democracy or want to find out more about ACCR's work, join us for a webinar with our Climate Lead Harriet Kater and Shareholder Engagement team, Emma Batchelor and Vanessa Mai.

"Harriet has thirteen years of experience in the climate and energy industry and three years in the NGO sector. ...

"In the first half of this webinar, Harriet will discuss the Australian climate team's work to date in 2021, our priorities for the rest of the year and emerging themes and opportunities. This will include discussion on:

"Following this, Emma and Vanessa will provide practical information on:

"This session is part of a planned program of webinars that will explore ACCR's research and shareholder advocacy work focusing on how shareholders in Australian-listed companies can exercise their ownership powers. ...

When/Where: 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm AEST, Wed 28th July 2021

More: <https://events.humanitix.com/accr-shareholder-webinar-july-2021> plus www.accr.org.au/

Source: ACCR, 15th July 2021.

Electric Delivery Truck Hits the Road

"Genesis has added its first commercial electric truck to their fleet! The eCanter is able to carry up to 7 tonnes and has a 100-150km range. Genesis aims to get their fleet 50% electric by 2025. And would increase to 55 on the next four years.

"TR Group, which leases heavy vehicles to transport and logistics companies, has also ordered 110 trucks to be delivered over the next two years.

"So far more than 20 companies have signed up to lease an eCanter.

More: www.stuff.co.nz/business/125725646/genesis-first-electric-gas-delivery-truck-hits-the-road-with-more-than-50-to-come

Source: ChargeSmart, 15th July 2021.

'We Need to Become the Solution': Older New Zealanders Join Climate Change Fight

"Older New Zealanders are stepping up and joining the fight against climate change. New research from the University of Waikato shows younger and older Kiwis are increasingly becoming concerned about the climate emergency. 74-year-old Kapiti Coast resident David Yockney provides some thoughts on how he personally sees climate change and how he is trying to make a difference. Of course, it takes combined action to be truly successful, so he joined Low Carbon Kapiti, a community group of mainly older residents.

More: www.carbonees.com/single-post/snippets-for-15-july-2021 plus www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/06/we-need-to-become-the-solution-older-new-zealanders-join-climate-change-fight

Source: *SnippETS*, 15th July 2021.

Even More Mosquitoes? That Could Happen With Climate Change

"It's summertime in the Northern Hemisphere, and that means outdoor barbeques, playtime at the beach and swimming pools and more. It also means mosquitoes are back and often making a beeline to feast on humans and animals.

"Mosquitoes are definitely a nuisance in this part of the world – I have a bite on my ankle to prove it – but without a doubt they are a much bigger menace in Africa where malaria in particular causes hundreds of thousands of deaths per year.

"Ghana and Sudan, for instance, which are two of the largest gold mining countries in Africa, saw 18,757 and 2,552 malaria deaths, respectively, in 2017. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is known for cobalt mining – needed for lithium ion batteries – saw a staggering 81,226 deaths in 2017.

"While mosquitoes might not be the first creature you think of when you think of dangerous animals, they are actually the world's deadliest animal! To be precise, it's the female mosquitoes that thrive on human blood; males seem to be content eating nectar.

"Some 700 million people get sick each year from common mosquito-borne illnesses such as dengue, West Nile virus, yellow fever and malaria, which leads to more than 1 million deaths annually. For comparison, there were 13 shark-related fatalities worldwide in 2020 (10 of which were deemed unprovoked), which was well-above the global average of four unprovoked deadly attacks per year

"As we reported in our recent list of the 'Top 10 Operational Risks for 2021', climate change is not only a risk to sustainability but an operational risk as well. We saw that play out earlier this year when a glacier incident turned deadly in India and, just last week, when Portland, Oregon, suffered an unprecedented and deadly heatwave with temperatures reaching 116°F (almost 47°C).

"Less dangerous but no less of an operational risk: Portland Streetcar had to cancel service when the extreme heat melted power cables. After all, hotter temperatures have consequences on technology, too.

"Climate change is clearly not something we can just swat away; it will take a lot of hard work and effort. Companies, for instance, will have to play a crucial role in limiting their greenhouse gas emissions on the road to net zero and the circular economy.

"As a bonus, tackling climate change will also help prevent the preying proboscises of mosquitoes from getting under even more people's skin.

More: <https://sphera.com/spark/even-more-mosquitoes-that-could-happen-with-climate-change> plus <https://sphera.com/spark/top-10-operational-risks-for-2021/>

Source: Sphera, 15th July 2021.

The Innovations We Need To Avoid a Climate Disaster

"The single most important thing for avoiding a climate disaster is cutting carbon pollution from the current 51 billion tons per year to zero, says philanthropist and technologist Bill Gates. Introducing the concept of the 'green premium' – the higher price of zero-emission products like electric cars, artificial meat or sustainable aviation fuel – Gates identifies the breakthroughs and investments we need to reduce the cost of clean tech, decarbonise the economy and create a pathway to a clean and prosperous future for all. (This virtual conversation, hosted by TED Global curator Bruno Giussani, was recorded in March 2021.)

More:

www.ted.com/talks/bill_gates_the_innovations_we_need_to_avoid_a_climate_disaster 46:29

Source: *Acuity Newsletter* (CA ANZ Library), 16th July 2021

Editor: 1,454,878 views as at 15th July 2021. Has transcript. Also a book of same name. One video in a series of seven by various people with the others being between 4 and 6 minutes each. 

The Weight of a Thousand Oceans

"Last week saw the New Zealand re-release of *The Weight of a Thousand Oceans*, a climate fiction novel by Wellington author Jillian Webster. With strong themes of the importance of caring for the Earth.

"It's the first in a climate fiction trilogy called *The Forgotten Ones*. Climate change has dramatically altered the entire earth and humans are on the verge of extinction. Heeding the call of a mysterious force, Maia must make her way from Aotearoa to the Arctic Circle in search of a better future.

"The second book in the trilogy *The Burn of a Thousand Suns* comes out on 3rd August and the third next year.

More: www.goodreads.com/book/show/54127416-the-weight-of-a-thousand-oceans

Source: Elizabeth Heritage for Jillian Webster (www.jillianwebster.com) 13th July 2021. 

Trees Save Lives in Heat Waves. Why Aren't We Saving Trees?

"Can nature help us cope with, and even help reverse, the environmental messes we've created?

"The answer from scientists and environmental planners is a resounding yes. Can nature provide a free pass to avoid rapidly getting off fossil fuels? On that too, there's a resounding answer from scientists: No. Definitely not.

"But given the temperature curve our climate's on, and the damage already done, life on Earth needs all the help we can get. In this article, I looked at one nature-based solution: Urban trees.

"Large cities are warming at twice the rate of the rest of the planet. Air-conditioning helps, sure, but it does so by burning more fossil fuels. And imagine the catastrophe of a serious power outage during an extreme heat wave.

"Trees not only cool, but store carbon at the same time. They also scrub away air pollution, nurture wildlife, suck up storm water and improve people's physical and mental health. Yet every year, American cities and towns are losing the canopy of 36 million trees, despite tree planting efforts

More: www.nytimes.com/2021/07/02/climate/trees-cities-heat-waves.html [Pay-walled unless within limit of free articles]

Source: *NY Times*, 8th July 2021

Editor: Thought: Are urban designers in NZ, with the push for more housing, designing new housing areas with treescapes in mind? Sections are tiny, roadways very narrow, houses have almost no shading, eaves or verandahs. 

The Gospel of Consumption

"Private cars were relatively scarce in 1919 and horse-drawn conveyances were still common. In residential districts, electric streetlights had not yet replaced many of the old gaslights. And within the home, electricity remained largely a luxury item for the wealthy.

"Just ten years later things looked very different. Cars dominated the streets and most urban homes had electric lights, electric flat irons, and vacuum cleaners. In upper-middle-class houses, washing machines, refrigerators, toasters, curling irons, percolators, heating pads, and popcorn poppers were becoming commonplace. And although the first commercial radio station didn't begin broadcasting until 1920, the American public, with an adult population of about 122 million people, bought 4,438,000 radios in the year 1929 alone.

"But despite the apparent tidal wave of new consumer goods and what appeared to be a healthy appetite for their consumption among the well-to-do, industrialists were worried. They feared the frugal habits maintained by most American families would be difficult to break. Perhaps even more threatening was the fact that the industrial capacity for turning out goods seemed to be increasing at a pace greater than people's sense that they needed them.

"It was this latter concern that led Charles Kettering, director of General Motors Research, to write a 1929 magazine article called 'Keep the Consumer Dissatisfied'. He wasn't suggesting manufacturers produce shoddy products. Along with many of his corporate cohorts, he was defining a strategic shift for American industry – from fulfilling basic human needs to creating new ones. [Long article.]

More: <https://orionmagazine.org/article/the-gospel-of-consumption/>

Source: *Orion Magazine*, 9th July 2021. 

30 Years of Trees for Survival

"We are delighted to announce that 2021 marks our 30-year anniversary. Since 1991, we have planted almost two million Natives – and what a journey it has been over the 30 years!

"We are very fortunate 'Trees for Survival' founder Noel Holyoake, the many Tfs Trustees, Field Officers and schools have been with us on this exciting journey since the beginning in 1991 – sharing a wealth of knowledge and expertise with all of us!

"We sincerely thank everyone who has been involved in our 30-year journey and helped make Trees for Survival the fantastic programme it is today. There are now 154 schools in the Trees for Survival programme continuing to work diligently towards our shared vision of enhancing our waterways, stabilising erosion-prone land and increasing biodiversity. Our target this year is to plant 100,000 New Zealand native plants.

More: https://tfsnz.infoodle.com/user_email?60e3b6c1893f30.09324728.97247

Source: Trees for Survival, 5th July 2021. 

The Americas with Simon Reeve: Episode 3

This is a fascinating episode highlighting climate change carbon sequestration, wild fires, water use and land subsidence of up to 60ft, homeless people, agricultural work and workers, degradation of physical infrastructure and more in California. A real eye-opener for NZ'ers and others.

It may not be available online from NZ, access may expire 27th July 2021. Screened on Prime TV 20th July 2021.

More: www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0009tvs/the-americas-with-simon-reeve-series-1-episode-3 59 minutes plus www.amazon.com/North-America-With-Simon-Reeve/dp/B08CZXC7C3 and others.

Source: Editor, 20th July 2021. 

Government Laying Tracks To Support Economic Recovery

"The Government is fulfilling its commitment to bring New Zealand's rail network back up to scratch and support the economic recovery, Transport Minister Michael Wood announced today [8th July].

"KiwiRail's inaugural Rail Network Investment Programme (RNIP) was released today which details renewals and upgrades on the rail network over the next three years.

"The Programme includes:

- Fully replacing 20 bridges around the country and improving around 25 more
- Replacing more than 200km of rail sleepers
- Replacing more than 130km of tracks
- Adding active controls (barrier arms, lights/bells) to 3 level crossings and making improvements to 25 more through renewals
- Upgrading signals on the Auckland metro network, a new Auckland train control centre and an additional power supply into the network, to support increased train frequency to come with the City Rail Link
- Investing in a business case for further network improvements across Wellington, including looking at potentially extending electrification north of Waikanae to Levin and beyond.

"Michael Wood said rail is key to keeping New Zealand moving and is supporting our economic recovery.

More: www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA2107/S00071/govt-laying-tracks-to-support-economic-recovery.htm. For context see also www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/441937/government-lays-out-10-year-plan-for-rail-investment

Source: Editor, 9th July 2021.

Editor: The article has a long list of Editor's notes outlining other work previously approved. No mention of the spur line to Northland port, or inter-Island ferries. 

Within Planetary Boundaries

"WBCSD's *Vision 2050: Time to Transform* is a comprehensive framework for business action in line with the urgency of the three biggest challenges we collectively face: the climate emergency; nature in crisis; and mounting inequality. Business can and must lead the transformations needed to address these challenges.

"Future business success depends on thriving societies to trade with, and a healthy planet for us to exist on, and so *Vision 2050* begins by providing companies with a common understanding of what a sustainable future will look and feel like in practice.

"Drawing from the latest science, a broad range of expert inputs, and close consultation of intergovernmental instruments and frameworks, we have laid out a tangible picture of the world that we can and need to create, in which 9+ billion people live well, within planetary boundaries. A future which isn't just possible, but necessary. This blog digs into what it means to live 'within planetary boundaries', and what we are doing to accelerate action to achieve that.

"At its core, *Vision 2050* is about how we can run companies well, well into the future. ... [Long article.]

More: www.wbcsd.org/Overview/News-Insights/WBCSD-insights/We-CAN-create-a-world-in-which-9-billion-people-live-within-planetary-boundaries-by-2050 plus www.wbcsd.org/Overview/About-us/Vision-2050-Time-to-Transform/News/Time-to-Transform-Video-highlights-of-Vision-2050-launch-events

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 15th July. 

Sustainability Certifications

"A plethora of sustainability certifications is available for organisations to show independent verification of their commitment to sustainability. Third party verifications can be useful for businesses and consumers, but the sheer number means it can be hard to distinguish between them. Check out our list of certifications most relevant to businesses in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Factors to consider when selecting a sustainability certification:

1. Which certifications are the most widely recognised in your industry?
2. Which are the most important certifications included in corporate or council procurement policies?
3. How much does it cost to achieve certification, in both time and finances? Is this good value for your business?

[Lengthy list follows.]

"Did we miss any? Please let us know if you think we should add others. Contact Fiona at fiona@sustainable.org.nz

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-certifications/>

Source: SBN, 9th July 2021. 

Global Trends in Climate Litigation: 2021 Snapshot

"This is our third report in our Global trends in climate litigation series. The report provides a synthesis of global trends in climate change litigation (or simply 'climate litigation'), a growing global phenomenon. It updates on known case numbers, metrics and categorisations, and considers some of the most relevant trends in the arguments and strategies employed by litigants. The focus is on cases filed or concluded between May 2020 and May 2021.

"The report explores the continued growth in the number of 'strategic' cases, considering the use of litigation as a strategy by activists seeking to raise ambition on climate issues, as well as an increasing number of cases that seek to challenge or undermine climate-aligned policymaking. Critical trends in climate litigation against governments and the private sector brought since the Paris Agreement in 2015 are also reviewed and described. A selection of significant recent cases is used to illustrate the discussion. [NZ receives a mention.]

Key messages

More: www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/publication/global-trends-in-climate-litigation-2021-snapshot/ plus www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Global-trends-in-climate-change-litigation_2021-snapshot.pdf 45 pages 4.57Mb

Source: *Environmental Leader*, 21st July 2021. 

Profitably Decarbonizing Heavy Transport and Industrial Heat

"Of the global fossil-fuel carbon emissions to be halved by 2030 and eliminated by 2050, 35% come from big trucks, ships, planes, trucks, and buses, and from producing materials like steel, cement, chemicals, and aluminium.

"Three years ago, a distinguished business leadership group found abating those emissions is practical and would cost a fraction of 1% of GDP. Now this paper by Amory Lovins documents how further advances have almost certainly tipped the economic balance from cost to profit. A companion paper shows how new business strategies to capture this profit can transform industries worth trillions of dollars.

"Thus the 'harder-to-abate' sectors aren't uniquely hard, just differently hard. Wringing out their carbon emissions should be not costly but profitable. Let the competition roll – unhindered by myths that supposedly 'intractable' sectors will need costly, risky solutions. ...

More: www.rmi.org/profitable-decarb/ 52 pages 6.02Mb

Source: RMI, 21st July 2021. 