

Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

11th Nov. 2021



Designed by
www.vecteezy.com

A Reflection on Armistice Day

This edition of *Sustainability Matters* is published on Armistice Day – the day which marks the signing of the WW1 truce at 11:00am on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, bringing to an end 'the war to end all wars'.

While thinking about that I found this;

"Guys like me get sent to war. It's not those politicians who are fighting the wars."¹

And of course that remains as true today as it ever has.

In addition to 'conventional' and 'un-conventional' wars since, we have another which has been emerging especially during the last 15 to 20 years – actually longer than that.²

The war being fought is for a fair, just equitable and sustainable world; a world which is fair to the Earth, (there is no Planet B), fair to nature and fair to all its peoples.

This year's Armistice Day occurs during COP26 currently under way in Glasgow. With some licence it could be said the protestors there, and world-wide, are similar to those who went to war during WW1. They went to war not only because of politicians, but perhaps also of big business. In WW1, as in any war, it is the young who do the fighting. Just as it is now the young who are doing the fighting, this time for their futures rather than the shorter futures of decision-makers.

During WW1 big business such as the arms industry and big finance benefitted hugely and as they continue to do.³

At Glasgow some limited although worthwhile progress is being achieved⁴; albeit too slowly. As in the previous 25 meetings of the COP there continues to be push-back from politicians and big business.⁵ One senses the protestors are becoming louder, increasingly frustrated and angry. Why aren't the youth put in charge? Why are the tables not being turned and those who have the most to lose – and gain – put in charge? For when all is said and done 'we' are borrowing and drawing down from their futures – our futures too perhaps, although by comparatively little.

Source: Editor, 10th November 2021.

¹ <https://news.usc.edu/151635/the-true-meaning-of-armistice-day-a-commitment-to-peace/>

² Greenpeace's 50th year this year; www.greenpeace.org/international/press-release/49498/greenpeace-50th-anniversary-statement-media-resources/ plus www.stuff.co.nz/environment/126379080/a-look-back-at-50-years-of-greenpeace

³ WW1: How firms cashed in on the war at www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30115533

³ World War One: Industrial innovation and suspicion at www.bbc.com/news/business-28739064

³ U.S. Economy in World War I at <https://eh.net/encyclopedia/u-s-economy-in-world-war-i/>

⁴ <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/cop26-climate-change-conference-optimistic/>

⁵ COP26: Fossil fuel industry has largest delegation at climate summit; "There are more delegates at COP26 associated with the fossil fuel industry [503] than from any single country, analysis shared with the BBC shows." See chart and story at www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-59199484

Reasons to be Cheerful

"Reasons to be Cheerful" is a non-profit editorial project that is tonic for tumultuous times.

"We tell stories that reveal that there are, in fact, a surprising number of reasons to feel cheerful. Many of these reasons come in the form of smart, proven, replicable solutions to the world's most pressing problems. We're here to tell you about some of them. Through sharp reporting, our stories balance a sense of healthy optimism with journalistic rigor, and find cause for hope. We are part magazine, part therapy session, part blueprint for a better world.

"Reasons to be Cheerful" was founded by artist and musician David Byrne, who believes in the power of approaching the world with curiosity – in art, in music, in collaboration and in life. Under the banner of Byrne's non-profit organisation, Arbutus, *Reasons to be Cheerful* embodies this sensibility, applying it now to the future of our world. Through stories of hope, rooted in evidence, *Reasons to be Cheerful* aims to inspire us all to be curious about how the world can be better, and to ask ourselves how we can be part of that change.

More: <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/about/>

Source: Editor, 28th October 2021.

APEC CEO Summit 2021

"A virtual gathering of the world's most powerful CEOs, business leaders, entrepreneurs, thought leaders, prime ministers and presidents of APEC economies. Delegates will attend the Summit online as it is hosted using an immersive stage and the latest digital technologies and broadcast from the Aotea Centre in central Auckland.

"This is the most important meeting of business and government in the Asia-Pacific, where thought leaders and world business executives engage with each other and with APEC leaders to seek solutions to the biggest challenges and opportunities of our times.

When/Where: 11th and 12th Nov. Online

More: <https://apec2021nz.org/ceo-summit> plus www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/126823781/apec-ceo-summit-2021--an-international-business-conference-like-no-other

Regarding youth: www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/126904020/we-need-young-voices-permanently-at-the-top-table plus www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/126651012/aotearoa-young-delegates-at-apec-event-to-champion-a-future-for-all [Links to COP26]

Source: NZ Herald, full page adverts, 28th October and subsequent.

Editor: Sustainability is one of the central themes.

If you would like to support the production of *Sustainability Matters*

contributions would be much appreciated.

A/c No. 123 011 0249104 00

ASB Bank, Queen Street branch, Auckland.

Make sure you provide your name!

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Feeding Ourselves Thirsty: Tracking Food Company Progress Toward a Water-Smart Future

"Most food companies are not taking the necessary action to reduce their demands and impacts on freshwater resources in the midst of the growing global water crisis, according to Ceres newest benchmarking report, *Feeding Ourselves Thirsty*.

"The fact is, the \$6 trillion food industry is uniquely vulnerable to the water crisis. Growing, processing and packaging food consumes more than 70% of the world's increasingly strained water resources. And climate change is only adding to the speed and scale of the growing water crisis. Without proper management and disclosure of water-related risks, food companies in particular face enormous financial and reputational risks. ...

"The report underscores much more work needs to be done to ensure sustainable water supplies now and in the future.

"On the positive side, there has been improvement from some companies in key areas including board oversight of water risks and strategies, establishment of water use or efficiency targets for operations, as well as assessment of water risks beyond just their facilities to the agricultural supply chains. And some of the most improved companies are recognising that smart water management is a business imperative. ...

"If food companies want to succeed in an increasingly water-stressed world, it's time for them to build a new paradigm around the real value of water. And it is up to investors to hold companies accountable to high standards when it comes to protecting our precious water resources.

More: www.ceres.org/news-center/press-releases/food-companies-arent-moving-quickly-enough-fend-global-water-crisis-new plus <https://feedingourselfsthrsty.ceres.org/> and www.ceres.org/sites/default/files/FOT%20Executive%20Summary%202021%20FINAL%20hires.pdf 8 pages, 5.33Mb

Source: Ceres, 29th October 2021

Editor: Although report focus is on US companies the same themes and risks could apply to other countries. 

2021 Sustainable Business Awards

"The Sustainable Business Awards are New Zealand's pre-eminent and longest-standing sustainability awards, now in their 19th year. They recognise and celebrate success in sustainability.

"The Awards event is the highlight of the sustainable business calendar. This year we've transformed it into an engaging, inspiring format accessible to everyone, regardless of Covid restrictions. It will be online, free for everyone to watch and low carbon.

"The event will comprise a short documentary about sustainability in Aotearora in 2021, produced by digital storytelling agency Borderless. This will celebrate and share stories from key sustainability themes of the year, ranging from climate and Covid to the circular economy and sustainable finance.

"The event will be livestreamed by Stuff, our broadcast partner, to help ensure the stories of sustainability success reach as many people as possible.

"Follow the links about the Awards, the sponsors and the stories behind the 2021 finalists.

When/Where: 5:00-6:15pm Thurs 25th Nov 2021. Online

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-business-events/sustainable-business-awards-2021/> plus <https://sustainable.org.nz/finalists-for-2021-sustainable-business-awards/>

Source: SBN, 2nd November 2021. 

Navigating Climate Risks and Opportunities

"Climate risks and opportunities have become a core focus for boards and businesses, having evolved from simply being considered ethical and environmental issues.

"Investors, regulators and the community now expect greater action on climate change. Understanding the way climate can affect business is vital for proactive strategy and risk management.

"Accountants have a responsibility to act in the public interest, which includes supporting businesses to navigate the risks and opportunities associated with climate change. And the profession is particularly well-placed to do this, as accountants are skilled in translating climate-related matters into potential operating and financial impacts.

"This event will explore the outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow in November and the profession's role in supporting the journey to net zero and a just transition.

"Our expert facilitator and panelists will provide their insights on the economic consequences and business opportunities presented by the global response to climate change, encouraging and empowering you to take action through:

- An open format to address your questions and comments in real-time;
- Providing insights demonstrating the role of the profession in the just transition; and
- Sharing practical tools and resources, including our new playbook designed to equip members to take action. ...

When/Where: 12:30-2:00pm NZDT Thurs 25th Nov. Online

More: https://store.charteredaccountantsanz.co.nz/Climate-Tentpole-Event_2

Source: CA ANZ, 2nd Nov. 2021. 

As Warming and Drought Increase, a New Case for Ending Big Dams

"Journalist and author Jacques Leslie explores how climate change is posing a growing threat to major hydropower projects. The downsides of large dams, which ravage ecosystems and displace large numbers of people, are well known. But Leslie writes that as the world warms and drought worsens in many places, shrinking hydropower reservoirs, dams are becoming an increasingly unreliable source of electricity. The hydropower industry portrays itself as a dependable source of green energy, but Leslie argues that is increasingly not the case.

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/as-warming-and-drought-increase-a-new-case-for-ending-big-dams>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 5th November 2021. 

Editor: Confession. In the mid-1960's I worked for a while in the Power Division of the Ministry of Works helping the construction of big and not so big hydro dams.

2021 CFO Sustainability Snapshot Survey Results

"Deloitte, the Sustainable Business Council and Toitū Tahua: Centre for Sustainable Finance have released the findings of the 2021 CFO Sustainability Snapshot Survey, finding two-thirds of [83] CFOs are on their organisation's sustainability transition but there is an opportunity for greater and faster action. ...

"The survey also indicated resourcing and capability were key barriers for organisations to progress sustainability action, reflecting the sustainability transition requires new ways of thinking, new skillsets, and new investments.

More: www.sbc.org.nz/news/2021/2021-CFO-Sustainability-Snapshot-Survey-results 19 pages 1.36Mb

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 4th November 2021. 

Our Kids Always Lose Stuff. Why Do We Tolerate Them Destroying the Planet?

"An environmentalist-mother's patience is running out.

"It's not just about the money or even, really, the time. I'm an environmentalist. I've educated myself about the pollution embedded in supply chains, the destroyed forests, the plastic in the oceans. Such knowledge is disturbing in itself, but it also feeds a sense of social alienation. Among the wealthy parents in gentrified Brooklyn, I'm unusual in my willingness to inconvenience myself, at least to some degree, to cause less harm to the Earth.

"Most adults around me vote for politicians who support measures to mitigate climate change. Some even consider themselves climate activists. But they order online for next-day delivery with abandon and buy their children endless bubble teas with giant plastic straws that seem almost willfully designed to fit neatly into a dolphin blowhole. Then they usher them into emission-belching, six-cylinder vehicles to country homes in those rural areas where the soil or water table hasn't been adulterated by chemicals from industry past and present. ...

"I probably won't hit my sons with this all at once – my husband would call that 'piling on'. But over time, gauging what they can handle I'll educate them. As importantly, I'll make sure they recognise they're at the receiving end of a marketing juggernaut pushing them to desire products and lifestyles that pollute and heat the planet. In not openly discussing the implications of overstuffed lost-and-found bins, we may be failing to give our children a chance to change course.

"Maybe we need to trust this generation with the full, stressful truth: when Greta Thunberg says the house is on fire, they're providing the kindling. They might find more comfort in owning fewer things and knowing just where they put them. A longer-lasting comfort.

More: www.economist.com/1843/2021/11/02/our-kids-always-lose-stuff-why-do-we-tolerate-them-destroying-the-planet

Source: 1843 Magazine, The Economist, 5th November. 

This Is How It Ends, A Seven-part Stuff Documentary Series

"Human activities are destroying the natural world, leading to the extinction of animal and plant species at a terrifying rate.

"Our actions threaten over one million species. And in New Zealand we have the highest proportion of threatened native species in the world, with more than 4000 at risk.

"Some experts believe we are in the throes of the sixth mass extinction. In *This Is How It Ends*, a seven-part *Stuff* documentary series, Andrea Vance and Iain McGregor investigate the biodiversity crisis.

"On the edge of survival are seabirds, including black petrels and our unique penguins. ...

"A large proportion of our fauna is at risk: 76% of indigenous freshwater species, 90% of seabirds, 80% of shorebirds; 22% of indigenous marine mammals, 9% of sharks, rays and chimera; and 84% of reptile species.

"The series looks at:

1. Seabirds
2. Native birds
3. Oceans
4. All Creatures Great and Small
5. Freshwater ...
6. The Endangered Forest
7. The Island

More: <https://mailchi.mp/eco.org.nz/tieke-eco-news-alerts-events-4-november-2021> plus <https://interactives.stuff.co.nz/2021/this-is-how-it-ends-extinction-documentary/>

Source: Tieke: ECO News, Alerts & Events, 4th Nov. 2021. 

Reviving the Art of Apprenticeship to Unlock Continuous Skill Development

"Recognise this situation? A manager asks a team member to prepare a presentation. The draft falls short of what's needed, so the manager expresses her disappointment and offers feedback via email, then waits for her colleague's second try. The next iteration still misses the mark; the manager, pressed for time and concerned her team member will never get the presentation quite right, takes over and rewrites it herself. In the end, the presentation is completed, but both parties leave the experience frustrated and demoralised – and no one has better skills than they had before the effort began.

"As simplistic as this example may seem, the manager faced an all-too-familiar decision.

"The pressure for businesses to develop and reskill their employees, however, continues to increase. As businesses emerge from the pandemic, more than 80% of them face critical gaps in the skills needed to build resilience amid ongoing uncertainty. Learning and development will continue to play a crucial role in keeping pace with change, but only 42% of employees are taking up employer-supported reskilling and upskilling opportunities in their organisations. As remote work increases, teams become more diverse and geographically distributed, further straining a manager's ability to meet individual employee needs. In short, there is simply too much to learn and not enough time for formal learning to meet all of an organisation's reskilling needs.

"In these new circumstances, we believe one age-old art can become central to an organisation's strategy for improving capabilities, learning, and culture: apprenticeship. Apprenticeship may feel counterintuitive in the face of intense workplace time pressures, but – with some modernising – it can efficiently unlock the rapid capability building which today's knowledge-based workforce requires. An emphasis on learning via apprenticeship can also contribute to providing a sense of meaning and purpose which increasing numbers of employees seek while simultaneously building a cohesive culture of continuous development which is the hallmark of leading companies in the knowledge economy..... [Long article.]

More: www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/reviving-the-art-of-apprenticeship-to-unlock-continuous-skill-development

Source: McKinsey Highlights, 7th Nov. 2021. 

Sustainable Procurement Activator Course and Leaders Group

"New Zealand businesses can reduce their environmental impact through changes in procurement – what they buy, who from and how.

"Businesses know they have huge influence. They can set high standards for things like climate, waste and water in their procurement policies. But it can be tough to find the right suppliers and know what to ask them. It's also challenging to know how to monitor changes, measure success and get leadership buy-in. Making this the norm means changing the system for everybody.

"Want to help drive change? Find out how to implement best practice procurement by joining our Activator Course. The course will help you to:

"Find out how to implement best practice procurement by joining our Activator Course. The course will help you to:

When/Where: 5 weekly 2.5 hour online sessions, starting 1st March 2022

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/procurement-group>

Source: SBN, 4th November 2021. 

Collaboration – You Can Make It Work With Great Results

"The place-based housing initiative in Hastings involved a deep collaboration between Central and Local Government and Iwi. We have invited two Chief Executives, Nigel Bickle, Chief Executive, Hastings District Council, and Andrew Crisp, Chief Executive, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to tell us what it took to make it happen.

"They will talk of mindset changes, thinking and acting differently, overcoming risk averseness, the essential drivers of success, ways of overcoming the hurdles and making a difference. You will go away from this session with inspiration, and practical steps on how to create an effective collaborative venture.

When/Where: Thurs 25th Nov, 12.30-1.30pm. Wgtn

More: https://ipanz.org.nz/Event?Action=View&Event_id=961

Source: IPANZ, 28th October 2021. 

National Level Collaboration - Setting Up for Success

"The establishment of Predator Free 2050 was a massive national collaborative process. It involved multiple public sector agencies, local government, NGOs, scientists, iwi and more – over 30 organisations in one collaborative process.

"This event provides opportunity to hear from the Department of Conservation, Inspiring Communities and Taranaki Regional Council – they will share the key lessons learnt through the process, including where to start, what elements are critical to make it work, lessons learnt and the top tips for success.

When/Where: Tues 30th Nov, Noon-1.00pm. Wgtn.

More: https://ipanz.org.nz/Event?Action=View&Event_id=962

Source: IPANZ, 28th October 2021. 

Net Zero New Zealand: The Emissions Workshop

"This event is run at a time when organisations are maintaining and continuing to execute their low emissions strategies. An increase in priority for emissions stems from customers, financiers, stakeholders, boards and of course, government with the zero carbon bill, a review of the ETS and the establishment of a climate change commission.

"A top level shareholder value issue, all organisational leaders need to understand their emissions profile. They must continually improve their plans and engage on what they are doing to reduce the emissions associated with their activities.

"The event features international experts and local leaders

Topics include:

- Why reducing your emissions is critical to your organisation's success
- The commercial, social and environmental benefits of reducing emissions
- The link between New Zealand's brand and international competitiveness
- The importance to your brand and competitiveness
- The impact on your cost of capital and emissions-related investment trends
- Measuring, monitoring and management of emissions
- Technology and solutions across the supply chain, energy, travel and waste
- Engaging your customers and stakeholders on your journey
- Aligning your strategy with your peers and the rest of New Zealand

When/Where: All day, 2nd December. Wgtn and online

More: www.emissionsworkshop.co.nz

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 4th November 2021. 

Tackling Modern Slavery in Our Backyard

"Modern slavery affects people of any age, gender or race.

"Accountants in business and practitioners advising clients can help improve transparency by assessing and addressing exploitative practices.

"Recorded webinar provides an overview of modern slavery and sustainable business considerations in New Zealand.

"Where does the accounting profession fit in?"

More: www.charteredaccountantsnz.com/news-and-analysis/news/tackling-modern-slavery-in-our-backyard 1hr 25min [Recorded 30th Sept.]

Source: Climate & Sustainability Group, CA ANZ, 27th Oct 

CFO and Climate Risk Training

"With an increasing investor and regulatory expectations, 2021 is a critical year for climate action. CFOs have a central role to play in driving their business's response.

"The SBC's CFO Climate & Sustainability Programme helps you take the lead in managing climate change risk, empowering you to maximise opportunities for your business.

"Developed in partnership with the Sustainable Business Council and Deloitte, this short course builds on our 2020 pilot, developed specifically at the request of SBC] CFOs and shaped by their insights.

"Topics covered include climate risk and sustainability 101, navigating your way through the reporting landscape, and performance management. Hear directly from other CFOs who have already embarked on this journey, as well as undertake practical examples and connect with your peers in small break out learning labs. ...

When/Where: Noon to 1:30pm Wed 17th and 24th Nov. plus Wed 1st Dec. 2021. Online

More: www.sbc.org.nz/our-work/leadership/leading-the-charge-the-cfo-climate-and-sustainability-2021-programme plus www.sbc.org.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/226456/CFO-Climate-and-Sustainability-Brochure-and-Registration-Link-Nov-21.pdf

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 4th November 2021. 

A Global Review of How Environmental Issues are Integrated in Education

"2020 was the equal hottest year on record. One million species are at risk of extinction. We use more resources than the planet can generate each year – if we continue to live the way we do today, we will need three earths by 2050. The way we currently live is not sustainable. Urgent change is needed, but lasting change is impossible without education.

"This publication presents the extent to which environmental issues are integrated in primary and secondary education policies and curricula across 46 UNESCO Member States. Over half of education policies and curricula studied made no mention of climate change. Only 19% made reference to biodiversity. Countries have made progress: 83% of education policies and curricula studied addressed the environment at least once, and 69% mentioned sustainability – but it is clear more needs to be done to prepare learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to act for our planet.

"Governments, education policy-makers, academics, and education and environmental stakeholders need to further commit to Education for Sustainable Development. Let's ensure learners everywhere are change-makers who learn and act for our planet!

More: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377362> 50 pages, 5.70Mb

Source: *Carbon News*, 4th November 2021. 