

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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An 'Ecological Constitution' for Chile?

"A draft now being debated, which must be completed by 5th July and ratified in a national vote before September, would recognise the climate crisis and guarantee the rights of nature and animals.

"Chile's constitutional convention, underway in Santiago since 4th July, 2021, is the first time a country has re-written its foundational document in the wake of the Paris Agreement and comes as the world reckons with three interconnected environmental crises: climate change, biodiversity loss and toxic pollution.

"With most of the 155 delegates being either left-leaning or independent, environmentalists are hoping the convention will seize the moment and enshrine an array of environmental rights and obligations to create a so-called 'ecological constitution', similar to the constitutions of neighbouring Ecuador and Bolivia.

"Among the concepts already approved for inclusion in the convention's draft constitution are the rights of nature (the idea that ecosystems have legal rights to exist and regenerate), the rights of animals to live free from abuse and human rights to environmental information and participation in environmental decision making. The draft also includes recognition that the climate crisis is a consequence of human activity, and the recognition of the government's duty to promote efforts to mitigate and face the climate crisis. [Very long article]

More: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/03042022/chile-ecological-constitution/>

Source: *Carbon News*, 5th April 2022.

The IPCC Report – 3,675 pages

Yes, the report released on 5th April comprises 3,675 pages. The watered-down summary over which there was much wheeling and dealing is a further 37 pages.

In brief it seems the findings tell us what reports over 20 or so years have repeatedly told us. That includes each series of reports stating the issues have become more urgent, because the issues continue to compound and get worse, and those who have the ability to act do not, or are not acting with sufficient grit, tenacity or urgency. It's quite simple really.

There are dozens of news reports interpreting the latest findings (and those of yore).

There are minuscule steps being taken, or talked about by some Governments – many scared of being turfed out because the processes by which they came to hold their roles. There are those who profit enormously by BAU (Business as usual) – with many Jacks and Jills in it for themselves.

Voices rise up and get exhausted and generally have very little money. Voices in the past eventually got rid of, well not entirely, slave labour, and other inequities, not unusually taking a 100 years to achieve changes in mind-set. This time 60 years have expired since the seminal *The Silent Spring* was published. Perhaps there's another 40 years to go?

More: Just about everywhere. Here's the report www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-3/

Source: Editor's rant, 13th April 2022.

Meet the 'Future Generations' Commissioner of Wales

"Sophie Howe has one job: make sure her country's policies benefit citizens who haven't been born yet.

"Sophie Howe has a uniquely forward-looking job. Since 2016, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has been tasked with ensuring her country's public institutions are taking into consideration how their actions affect Welsh citizens who haven't been born yet. In that time, Howe has intervened on transport planning, education reform, gender and racial equality, and climate change. She has called for a trial of the four-day working week and has been a vocal advocate for a Universal Basic Income, which will soon be piloted by the Welsh Government.

"Howe's role is thought to be the first of its kind worldwide, but after early promising signs other nations are following Wales' lead. In September 2021, Scotland announced it, too, was appointing a Future Generations Commissioner, and in November, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres endorsed a proposal for a Special Envoy for Future Generations, which could impact the 193 member states. We spoke to Howe about the impacts so far, and those still to come.

More: <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/meet-the-future-generations-commissioner-of-wales>

Source: *Reasons to Be Cheerful*, 6th April 2022.

Editor: A contact has advised me this concept is taken up in the recent *Reimagining Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: Harnessing the Region's Potential, and Better Futures 2022* Report reference in *Sustainability Matters* of 31st March 2022.

Supreme Court Agrees to Hear Climate Case

"Northland iwi leader Mike Smith's climate case is heading to the Supreme Court.

"Smith (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu) launched legal action against seven of the country's largest polluters and fossil fuel producers, claiming injury from their ongoing emissions.

"A chain of judgments relate to a strike-out application by those companies – Fonterra, Genesis Energy, Dairy Holdings, NZ Steel, Z Energy, NZ Refining Company, and BT Mining.

"In March 2020, the High Court struck out Smith's claims of public nuisance and negligence, but allowed a new 'tort' – the section of law dealing with obligations of one party to another – claiming a breach of duty, to remain live.

"Then, last October, the Court of Appeal threw the whole case out, including the novel tort, saying climate change wasn't the realm for courts but rather national regulations and international coordination.

"In a decision from last Thursday, Supreme Court Justices Susan Glazebrook, Mark O'Regan and Joe Williams granted leave for the Court of Appeal judgment to be challenged.

"A date for the New Zealand Supreme Court hearing is yet to be set.

More: www.newsroom.co.nz/supreme-court-agrees-to-hear-climate-case

Source: *Carbon News*, 11th April 2021.

Valuing Nature and People to Inform Business Decision-making

"Today we [24th March, Capitals Coalition] launch a free online business training course on the Coursera platform, supported by We Value Nature.

"The course, 'Valuing nature and people to inform business decision-making', comes in response to increased demand from businesses and the finance sector for the knowledge and skills needed to apply natural capital assessments and a capitals approach more generally.

"The course will introduce individuals working in the private sector to the fundamental aspects of the capitals approach and provide guidance on where to start when adopting the approach within an organisation. This course is introductory and no prior knowledge of natural, social or human capital is required.

"The course provides a comprehensive introduction to the capitals approach and to undertaking a capitals assessment, and, while it is open to all, will be of specific relevance to those working across strategy, risk management, finance, procurement, accountancy, auditing, human resources and sustainability.

"The material is covered in depth and will require time [approx. 25hours] and commitment to complete.

"The course consists of four modules and its structure follows the steps and stages of the internationally standardised Natural Capital Protocol and Social & Human Capital Protocol.

When/Where: Own time. Online,

More: <https://capitalscoalition.org/new-online-business-training-course-launched-today/>

Source: Capitals Coalition, 30th March 2022

Editor: 17,078 views as at 12th April 2022. 

NZ's Environmental Hero of the Year: Charmaine Bailie

"We are thrilled to announce Charmaine Bailie, Chairperson of Kaipātiki Project, has been awarded Te Toa Taiao o Te Tau, New Zealand Environmental Hero of the Year. We believe that Environmental Hero is an apt title for this incredible woman, congratulations and thank you for inspiring us all with your work Charmaine!

"This is not the first time Charmaine has been recognised for her contribution to the environment and to community, having been awarded a commendation as a finalist in the Sustainability Superstar category of the Sustainable Business Awards just a few months ago.

"What exactly has Charmaine been up to, which has put her at the top of everyone's superhero list? Not much really, just this: [Warning: It's a long and impressive list.]

More:

https://engage.ubiquity.co.nz/mail/view/vs_h58gd03b490sr13f18dwj1003sy0355j9_klgqpy0knm856lt14bb1b1v0v1y9bsy426v2981tjpy83b5x

Source: Kaipātiki Project, 1st April 2022. 

Green Gremlins: The Hidden Fraud Risks in ESG Branding

"Discusses the growth of environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategies for companies and the criticism levied at them for misleading and fraudulent claims. Provides information on how regulators are clamping down...

More: www.fraud-magazine.com/article.aspx?id=4295017135 [Login required or from CA ANZ library.]

Source: Chartered Accountants Library, 12th April 2021. Note: Copyright

Editor: The newly hired head of sustainability was fired for insisting gaps and weaknesses in ESG reporting be remedied. 

TCFD Mandate: Everything to Know About the UK's Climate Disclosure Requirements

"From Wednesday (6th April), certain large businesses in the UK will be required by law to include climate risks in their annual reporting. Here, *edie* rounds up all the key information about aligning with the Taskforce on Climate-related Disclosures' (TCFD) recommendations. . [Long article]

More: www.edie.net/tcf-mandate-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-uks-new-climate-disclosure-requirements/

Source: edie, 7th April 2022

More: Useful for NZ and other contexts. NZ is mentioned. 

Sweden Could be First Country to Target Consumption-based Emission Cuts

"Sweden's political parties agreed on Thursday to include consumption-based emissions within its climate targets, making it the first country in the world to make the leap into the complex realm of overseas emissions reporting.

"National climate targets rely on reporting the emissions which are created on a country's territory. In Sweden's case, it has used that data to write a 2045 net-zero target into law, making it one of Europe's most ambitious green-leaning nations.

"Those credentials were burnished further on Thursday when a cross-parliamentary environmental committee agreed to include consumption-based emissions – pollution generated overseas to make products for import – in Sweden's climate targets.

"The inclusion of consumption emissions in Sweden's emission targets is historical and something that many organisations have worked towards for a long time", said Karin Lexén, secretary general at the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation.

More: www.climatechangenews.com/2022/04/08/sweden-set-to-be-worlds-first-country-to-target-consumption-based-emission-cuts/

Source: *Climate Home News*, 9th April 2022. 

Exposure Drafts on Climate and General Sustainability-related Financial Disclosures Published by ISSB

"The International Sustainability Standards Board expects on 31st March 2022 to publish:

- Exposure Draft Proposed IFRS S1 *General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information*; and
- Exposure Draft Proposed IFRS S2 *Climate-related Disclosures*.

"The documents will be available to download from the Open for comment section and from their project pages, General Sustainability-related Disclosures and Climate-related Disclosures. ...

Comments close: 29th July 2022

More: www.ifrs.org/news-and-events/news/2022/03/ISSB-to-publish-exposure-drafts plus www.ifrs.org/projects/work-plan/climate-related-disclosures/exposure-draft-and-comment-letters/ and www.ifrs.org/projects/work-plan/general-sustainability-related-disclosures/exposure-draft-and-comment-letters/ Also www.accountingforsustainability.org/en/knowledge-hub/blogs/issb-proposal-exposure-drafts-global-sustainability-disclosures.html

Source: IFRS and Karen McWilliams 31st March 2022.

Late breaking news: Overview webinars on 28th April; two sessions www.ifrs.org/news-and-events/news/2022/04/webinar-on-the-issbs-exposure-drafts/. To be recorded. 

Wild Sounds: The Loss of Sonic Diversity and Why it Matters

"Biologist David George Haskell examines how the world is losing the variety of sounds which enrich the planet and human experience. From birdsongs to whale calls, once-common sounds are now being silenced. Habitat loss, species extinctions, and industrial and urban noise all contribute to this sonic loss, which cuts off a vital human connection to the Earth, writes Haskell, a Pulitzer Prize finalist. Adding to this loss, humans are tuning out the sounds of other species. 'When we cease to listen, the richness of human sensory experience, a necessary foundation for right action, is eroded', he notes.

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/wild-sounds-the-loss-of-sonic-diversity-and-why-it-matters>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 1st April 2022.

The Promise of Farming with Solar Panels

"Could we integrate solar power and crop cultivation to the benefit of both? It's called agrivoltaics – and if done right, it may catch on.

"Recently, the field of agrivoltaics has emerged to explore ways of incorporating solar arrays into farmland without sacrificing that farmland's arability, effectively allowing landowners to cultivate crops and generate clean energy harmoniously at the same time.

"Research indicates growing crops beneath photovoltaic displays can actually yield a distinct set of agricultural and environmental benefits. Thanks to the shade provided by the panels, for example, the soil can retain more water, meaning it needs less irrigation. Panels can also help protect crops from hailstorms, high winds, and severe cold and heat, making them less vulnerable to extreme weather events.

"There's even evidence to suggest certain crops actually grow better, stronger, and longer under the protective covering of solar panels than they might otherwise, especially in hotter, more arid growing environments. As the already-hot-and-sunny parts of the world become even hotter and sunnier, the implications are enormous – for the climate, for crops, and for the farmers themselves.

"A farmer's annual income can be unpredictable. But by leasing their land to solar developers, farmers can put extra money in their pockets during good years and give themselves a much-needed degree of economic security during bad ones.

"Kominick and Winter are quick to point out agrivoltaics isn't a silver bullet. Its benefits, while real, are region and plant-specific. It won't work everywhere, with every kind of vegetation. 'You have to be thinking about what you're growing, and what the light requirements are', says Winter. [Long article.]

More: www.nrdc.org/stories/made-shade-promise-farming-solar-panels

Source: NRDC, 3rd April 2022.

The 2022 Chocolate Scorecard

"We eat chocolate for comfort, celebration, and indulgence. But what's really going into the chocolate we buy? We have surveyed the world's biggest chocolate companies to find out!

"Some are rising to the challenge, but others continue to ignore consumer demand for chocolate that's free of child labour, poverty, deforestation and is good for people and the planet.

More: www.chocolatescorecard.com

Source: Green America, 9th April 2022

Editor: Whittakers – yes that's the one, the one from NZ ranks in the top four.

Opposition to 'Human Rights' in Nature Talks

"The inclusion of rights-based language in a global agreement to protect nature by 2030 is being threatened by loopholes and a proposal to streamline the text, sources close to the negotiations have told *Climate Home News*.

"Two weeks of slow and tedious negotiations on agreeing on a global framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss came to a close in Geneva, Switzerland, on Tuesday. Little progress has been made in advancing a deal due to be adopted at a biodiversity summit in Kunming, China, later this year.

"Many countries supported the inclusion of language on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and of the role they have traditionally played as stewards of nature.

"But not everyone agreed on how this should be reflected in the text. Russia and China have pushed back against wording on 'human rights' and references to a resolution of the UN Human Rights Council on the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

"A proposal by the negotiations' co-chairs to 'avoid overburdening the text' and to ensure it remains 'clear, concise and communicable' could relegate detailed references to rights to a section on cross-cutting issues designed to guide the agreement's implementation.

"Australia and New Zealand have argued references to indigenous people's 'free, prior and informed consent' should be stripped out of the main text and included in this new section, one source told *Climate Home***.

"In a letter to the meetings co-chairs, campaigners argued the proposal risked 'downgrading' important principles which should be strengthened rather than removed and countries will be less likely to implement these principles if they aren't mentioned in the operative section of the deal.

More: www.climatechangenews.com/2022/03/30/russia-china-oppose-human-rights-in-nature-talks-amid-slow-progress-to-a-deal/

Source: *Climate Home News*, 2nd April 2022

Editor: **Is this a good idea or not?

The Green Divide: How Wealth Buys Shade in a Warming World

"Don't miss data journalist Kate Newton's project showcasing the links between inner-city trees and prosperity. Vegetation will be a lifeline as our planet heats, offering not just shade, but breezes and the release of water vapour. Yet we're leaving our lower-income suburbs behind, according to data from Auckland. In a feature that's even more eye-catching online than in print, Newton confirms 'leafy suburb' is an appropriate adage: there are clusters of wealthier suburbs (think Remuera and St Heliers) with plenty of trees – while in many South Auckland suburbs, lower incomes overlap with less greenery

More: <https://interactives.stuff.co.nz/2022/03/urban-heat-island-tree-cover/>

Source: *Forever Project*, 1st April 2022.

Editor: NZ's current urban sub-division design with narrow roads and tiny sections seems to exacerbate this very issue – it's been obvious for years. And of course black and near black roofs exacerbate the issues.

Beverage Container Return Scheme for NZ

MfE is advancing its work on a CRS and is seeking input.

Consultation closes: Midnight 8th May.

More:

<https://community.greenpeace.org.nz/petitions/support-a-container-return-scheme-for-aotearoa> plus <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/container-return-scheme-reducing-waste-landfill/>

Source: Greenpeace, 12th April 2021.

NZ's New Water Regulator Not a Guarantee Drinking Water Standards will Improve

"Taumata Arowai is proposing changes to the limits for several chemicals including increasing the levels for some described by Greenpeace as 'toxic'. The proposal has been met by swift backlash from the environmental group

"Greenpeace senior campaigner Steve Abel said the regulator is increasing the amounts of 'dangerous toxins' allowed in drinking water under the guise of improving quality.

"The water regulator's proposals are a wolf in sheep's clothing because they actually increase the amounts of dangerous toxins permissible in people's drinking water."

"Speaking with RNZ on Tuesday Taumata Arowai principal advisor for drinking water Jim Graham said the new standards have been closely reviewed by the Crown research agency ESR, the Cawthron Institute, the Ministry of Health, and are aligned with World Health Organization guidelines

"Graham said a review found some of the levels need to be reduced while some need to be increased.

"However, that didn't fly well with Greenpeace which says there is no need to increase levels of any chemicals in drinking water.

"For the good of human health there is absolutely no 'need' - nor can any good come from increasing toxins in people's drinking water", Abel said.

"Everybody has the right to safe drinking water, but Taumata Arowai, the agency entrusted with making our water safe, is raising the amount of poison allowed in drinking water. It's perverse and wrong."

More: www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2022/03/greenpeace-slams-nz-s-water-regulator-over-proposal-to-increase-limits-for-some-chemicals.html

Source: Greenpeace, 3rd April 2022. 

Ecuador Grants Wild Animals Legal Rights in a World First

"In a landmark ruling, Ecuador has become the first country in the world to grant legal rights to individual wild animals. Back in 2008, the country became the first in the world to recognise nature, or Pachamama, as a deserving right-bearing entity. However, while that law was enshrined in the constitution, it was unclear whether wild animals can benefit from it. That uncertainty has now been cleared up thanks to a woolly monkey by the name of Estrellita.

"Before becoming aware the monkey had died, the owner filed a case for Estrellita's rights to be recognised, pleading her detention was illegal and the pet be returned to her home. The court eventually ruled in favour of Ana Beatriz Burbano Proaño but also ruled the monkey's removal from her natural habitat in the first place was also a violation of her rights.

"The verdict raises animal rights to the level of the constitution, the highest law of Ecuador", says environmental lawyer Hugo Echeverría. "The Court has stated animals are subject of rights, protected by rights of nature."

"Also, in part of the verdict, the court stated 'wild species and their individuals have the right not to be hunted, fished, captured, collected, extracted, kept, retained, trafficked, traded or exchanged.'

"Following Ecuador, other countries have also granted legal protection to nature either through their court system or the constitution, including Colombia, Mexico, Chile, New Zealand, and Panama.

More: www.optimistdaily.com/2022/04/ecuador-grants-wild-animals-legal-rights-in-a-world-first/

Source: OD Action News, 12th April 2022. 

How Biochar can Mitigate Carbon in Farmlands and Urban Centres

"Biochar has long been hailed in the environmental community as a potent solution for mitigating certain aspects of climate change, from fixing soil erosion to upping water absorption and pulling carbon out of the atmosphere. Now, there is a growing list of industries which might improve their environmental impact from adding it to their processes.

"While the biochar industry is still very young, and too costly for large scale agriculture, there are some industries where biochar might make all the difference in terms of mitigation and adaptation to climate change:

- Organic Waste Management
- Dairy Farming
- Stormwater filtration
- Building materials
- Remediating abandoned oil fields

More: www.optimistdaily.com/2022/03/how-biochar-can-mitigate-carbon-from-farmlands-to-urban-centers/

Source: SnippetTS, 31st March 2022. 

78 year old's Four-wheeled Electric Bike

"At 78, William 'Bill' Blakie rarely uses his car, instead all his travel is completed in his own custom-made e-bike, which he believes is the future of commuting.

"The final product, an electric bike with four wheels, an aluminium tubing exterior and polycarbonate windows, is designed to deal with the south's weather as well as appeal to those that can no longer physically ride two-wheelers.

"It's called the 'veryeco bike' – and Bill has sold more than 35 of them since he began marketing online.

More: www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/127291820/fourwheeled-electric-bike-with-windows-is-this-78yearolds-answer-to-southlands-wind-and-rain

Source: Editor, 8th April 2022. 

Travel Choices: A Personal Dilemma

"Olivia Wannan, Climate reporter for the Forever Project has long heard criticisms that individual action can be a distraction – that the fossil fuel giants want to make us feel guilty about travelling to see our loved ones, rather than fighting for systemic change.

"But people making choices every day build momentum, influence companies and change norms. The new IPCC report concludes billions of tonnes of emissions can be saved, globally, by conscious citizens making lower-carbon choices. We must also face up to the climate crisis is driven by the rich. Flying is one of the most carbon-intensive actions you can undertake. Yet four-fifths of the world will never set foot on a plane. One per cent of the population is responsible for half of all aviation emissions. Can we keep our feet on the Earth more often until lower-carbon solutions come aboard?

More: <https://t.comms.stuff.co.nz/nl/jsp/m.jsp?c=%40PyJaG8DKJgl1prMy9IMcvlRakAS7i1%2F6863OwmsLA0M%3D&id=PDM721091&bid=1448396146>

Source: Forever Project, 8th April 2022

Editor's Dilemma: I've been invited by family to join them on their travels in Europe for several weeks. I've never been and this could be my only opportunity. Plus, in October there's a weekend conference in Canberra and colleagues in NSW whom I've never met, or not seen for several years. Also, family members in NSW and QLD whom I've not seen for 20+ years, if ever. Dilemma: Should I go or not and why? 