

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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Carbon Literacy: UK Government Unveils New Climate-focused Education Strategy

"The [UK] Government has today (21st April) unveiled a plethora of new skills and education commitments under its Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

"The Government has committed to introducing a new GCSE in natural history for UK schools, which will come into effect by September 2025. The aim of the strategy is to equip children with new ways of learning about the environment, the climate crisis and sustainability, but also by developing new skillsets that help them carve out a career in relevant environmental sectors, ranging from observation and analysis through to field studies.

"As part of the commitment, the Government has pledged to revamp teaching requirements to focus on sustainability by 2023. To support this, the Government is rolling out a carbon literacy training programme to support at least one sustainability lead in every locally maintained nursery, school, college and university.

"There was a near-universal acknowledgement of the importance of lessons directly relating to the climate crisis and other aspects of environmental sustainability, for all age groups. Almost eight in ten (77%) of respondents from academia and industry said it is 'very important' to directly link to sustainability in chemical sciences courses. The proportion was even higher for primary and secondary school educators.

More: www.edie.net/natural-history-gcses-and-carbon-literacy-government-unveils-new-climate-focused-education-strategy

Source: edie, 21st April 2022

Editor: How do NZ and Australia shape up?

No, Burning Wood Fuels Is Not Climate-Friendly

"When the European Union (E.U.) created a Renewable Energy Directive in 2009 to encourage its member countries to transition away from fossil fuels, it made the mistake of defining wood biomass as a renewable energy source. In the years since, subsidies under the directive have caused the wood biomass industry to take off, with huge consequences for the climate, forests, and local communities.

"When these E.U. policies were first coming up, there appeared to be a genuine misunderstanding about the carbon impacts from biomass', says Heather Hillaker, a staff attorney with the environmental nonprofit Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC). 'This is not the magical solution we've been looking for to fight climate change.'

"At the smokestack, wood emits more carbon dioxide than coal for every unit of electricity produced.' power plants which burn biomass emit 150% more carbon dioxide than those burning coal

More: www.nrdc.org/stories/no-burning-wood-fuels-not-climate-friendly plus www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/2021-10-14-woody-biomass-us-eu-uk-research-paper_0.pdf 77pages

Source: NRDC, 25th April 2022.

Once You Know

"Today, like a ship entering the storm, industrial civilisation faces the first symptoms of energy depletion and climate change induced collapse as scientists assert the opportunity to prevent catastrophic climate change has passed. Are some ways of collapsing better than others? *Once You Know* takes viewers on an intimate trek across the abyss of a world at the edge of catastrophe, into the intersection of climate science and civil disobedience.

"Connected to the natural world at an early age, Director Emmanuel Cappellin's worldview is shaken while traveling aboard a giant container ship to Asia, leaving him obsessed with how to best respond personally and collectively to the planet's existential crisis. Trapped at sea with 18,000 containers, his mind spins as he calculates the millions of goods and billions of economic transactions that will take place across the planet just from this one vessel, a cornerstone of the global growth machine responsible for altering the world's climate. Panic attacks take hold of him, and visions of apocalypse flash before his eyes.

"This visceral experience becomes a turning point in Cappellin's life as he ponders how climate and energy scientists manage to face similar visions on a daily basis. His quest takes him around the world to meet five of the world's leading climate scientists and energy experts who have coined a new field of study: 'collapsology'. They share with him the truth, chaos, and hope in their work and allow him to challenge everything he took for granted – from growth-based democracies to personal freedoms.

"This odyssey brings him back to himself and to Saillans, a small Alpine mountain village he calls home. In this life-size, open sky laboratory, where everything becomes once again possible: having a child, redefining questions of social justice, implementing participatory democracy, starting an energy transition...The first steps, perhaps, towards some kind of collective resilience.

"*Once You Know* offers a unique perspective, both personal and universal, which re-contextualises the climate problem as not something approaching, but something already here, and charts out how we can best live in this new paradigm while attempting to mitigate its worst effects....

"Inspired by an apocalyptic sea crossing on a container ship, he sought out climate experts to learn how to stay hopeful in a world on the brink and best bring about change to try to save this rock we call home.' – *NZ Herald*

More: www.videoproject.org/once-you-know.html 105 minutes

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 21st April 2022.

NZ Scrubbed 'Plant-based' Diets from Report

"Climate Change Minister James Shaw says officials may have created the impression New Zealand is protecting big polluters 'at the expense of the climate'. The comments come after he asked for a please explain when *Newsroom* revealed diplomats opposed the use of the term 'plant-based foods' in an international climate report.

More: www.newsroom.co.nz/nz-scrubbed-plant-based-diets-from-climate-report

Source: Bruce Gilkison, 18th April 2022.

Up to 28 Million in East Africa Face Severe Hunger

“Oxfam has warned that as many as 28 million people across East Africa are likely to face severe hunger if the March rains fail.

“With the unfolding crisis in Ukraine taking their attention, there is a real danger that the international community will not respond adequately to the escalating hunger crisis in East Africa.

“Speaking Tuesday [22nd March] during a press briefing, Oxfam Executive Director, Gabriela Bucher said this is the worst drought experienced in the last 40 years in East Africa.

“She said, a massive ‘no regrets’ mobilisation of international humanitarian aid is needed now to avert destitution and to help the 21 million people already facing severe levels of hunger in the midst of conflict, flooding, and a massive two-year drought in countries across East Africa.

“East Africa faces a profoundly alarming hunger crisis. Areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and beyond are experiencing an unfolding full-scale catastrophe. Even if the rains do arrive this month, full recovery will be near impossible unless urgent action is taken today’, said Bucher.

“The repercussions of the Ukrainian conflict on the global food system, Bucher said, will reverberate around the globe, but it is the poorest and most vulnerable people who will be among those hit hardest and fastest. ...

More: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202203230634.html>

Source: Oxfam, 20th April 2022. 

Skill Up Your Activism: Educate Yourself!

“Regarding the headlines and reports about the future of our planet in the last month was hard to take, and sometimes it’s hard to know where to get started making a difference, but here are some ideas to get you started:

- Step 1: Skill up on climate science;
- Step 2: Talk to your family and friends about it;
- Step 3: Campaign for change!

“These online courses come in the form of interactive and multimedia activities, all to take you one step closer to becoming an expert.

When/Where: You chose when. Online

More: <https://trainings.350.org/online-skill-ups/>

Source: *Fossil Free News*, 350.org, 27th April 2022. 

Insights on New Zealand Sustainability Professionals –Launch of Findings

“Oxygen Consulting, together with the Sustainable Business Network, Sustainable Business Council and AUT, are launching the results of the third year of research into the role of the sustainability professional in New Zealand.

“Join us to find out if organisations are meeting the growing demand for sustainability, what challenges lie ahead, and what we can do to address these challenges and continue to grow the sustainability profession.

“Insights on New Zealand Sustainability Professionals is the only research of its kind in New Zealand. It reveals findings into the role of the sustainability professional, including the capabilities and competencies required, remuneration, job opportunities, and overall wellbeing.

“This online event will include a panel Q&A.

When/Where: Noon to 1:00pm, Thurs 12th May. Online.

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/learn/events/insights-on-new-zealand-sustainability-professionals-launch-of-findings/>

Source: SBN, 20th April 2022. 

Lord of the Swans: The Tragedy of the Enclosure of the Commons

“Crazy Town Episode 52: Lord of the Swans: The Tragedy of the Enclosure of the Commons: The ‘tragedy of the commons’ is an idea which has so thoroughly seeped into culture and law it seems normal for people and corporations to own land, water, and even whole ecosystems. But there’s a BIG problem: the ‘tragedy’ part of it has been debunked – it really should be the triumph of the commons. Learn the origin story of privatisation and explore the true meaning of commons and how to manage them for sustainability and equity. Also check out our suggestions for championing the commons (beyond Robin Hood’s strategy of beating up the aristocracy).

More: www.postcarbon.org/crazytown/episode-52/

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 21st April 2022.

Editor: New Zealand is mentioned!

Quotes the 17th century poem which starts;

The law locks up the man or woman

Who steals the goose off the common

But leaves the greater villain loose

Who steals the common from the goose. at

www.onthecommons.org/magazine/%E2%80%9Cstealing-common-geese%E2%80%9D which links to

CELEBRATING THE COMMONS: People, Ideas, and Stories for a New Year at

<http://onthecommons.org/sites/default/files/celebrating-the-commons.pdf> Dec 2012. 71 pages, 4.84Mb 

Sustainability and Impact Strategy Practitioner Course

“In an increasingly volatile and unpredictable world, business leaders are being pushed to take more responsibility for their non-financial impacts. Current and future employees, customers, suppliers and investors are looking more closely than ever at the sustainability performance of brands and businesses they support. Developing an effective strategic framework ensures organisations have a clear long-term direction towards a future of sustainable value creation. It navigates the challenges of today; captures the opportunities of tomorrow; and provides a prioritised pathway towards authentic sustainable success.

“In this practical applied course, you will learn how to critically reflect on social, economic, and environmental sustainability challenges and opportunities, including evaluating the importance of good governance. You will learn to develop and apply a structured strategic approach to address sustainability challenges and impact measurement. We will review and apply evidence-based approaches to lead sustainable impact strategies using the science-based Future-Fit Business Benchmark and aligned with common frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals and GRI.

When/Where: 18th and 19th of May 2022, Auckland

More: <https://proxima.global/courses-and-training/future-fit-business-strategy>

Source: SBN, 20th April 2022. 

Tuvalu's Government Reverses Decision To Support Sea Mining

“Tuvalu’s government recently reversed its decision to sponsor a deep sea mining company. The decision has seen the support of environmental activists globally, including Greenpeace Aotearoa. ...

More: <https://95bfm.com/news/the-wire-tuvalu-government-reverses-decision-to-support-sea-mining> plus www.greenpeace.org/aotearoa/press-release/tide-shifts-against-seabed-mining-as-tuvalu-withdraws-support/

Source: Greenpeace 20th April 2022. 

Annual Meetings are the New Frontline in the Battle Over Corporate Purpose

“Companies have always had to answer to their investors. But these days shareholders have new questions – lots of them. On 28th April shareholders in three big drug companies, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna and Pfizer, are set to vote on resolutions filed by Oxfam, a charity, which seek to widen access to covid-19 vaccines. In May shareholders in Amazon are due to vote on a proposal from New York state’s pension fund, asking for an audit of the e-commerce giant’s policies on racial equity. Carl Icahn, a notoriously fierce corporate inquisitor, has broadened his attention from profits to pigs. He has filed proposals at McDonald’s and Kroger, a grocer, in a quest to end the confinement of pregnant sows.

“These proposals are a small selection of the onslaught of shareholder resolutions that American companies face in proxy season, the time when most publicly traded companies hold annual meetings, which runs from April to June. Emboldened by successes last year and newly favourable regulations, by 12th April investors had filed a record 576 proposals on environmental and social measures, up from 499 in 2021, according to the Sustainable Investments Institute, a research group (see chart). This barrage points to the next phase of America’s fight over corporate purpose. Executives who have endorsed ‘stakeholder value’, a much broader measure of corporate worth than profits and cashflow, are now seeing their declarations put to the test. ...

“As the sway of activists grows, many firms have tried to preempt shareholder action, for instance, by publishing lengthy reports on their environmental policies, or devoting more time to meeting investors. Some companies placate investors by agreeing to a proposal before it is put to a vote. This year As You Sow, a non-profit organisation, has withdrawn proposals at Dominion Energy and Duke Energy, two big utilities, after each revised its policies for reducing emissions. But some bosses complain activists seem uninterested in compromise. ‘What we’re seeing right now is advocacy groups just interested in picking fights with large companies for the sake of building public attention and momentum’, says an executive at a big tech company.

“That highlights the main concern of critics of activism: that environmental and social proposals are more about values than actual value. Larry Fink, boss of BlackRock, defended stakeholder capitalism in his annual letter to chief executives this year. ‘It is not ‘woke’, he wrote. ‘It is capitalism, driven by mutually beneficial relationships between you and the employees, customers, suppliers, and communities your company relies on to prosper.’ ... [Long article]

More: www.economist.com/business/annual-meetings-are-the-new-frontline-in-the-battle-over-corporate-purpose/21808834

Source: *The Economist*, 20th April 2022.

The Big Switch: Australia's Electric Future

“Climate change is a planetary emergency. We have to do something now – but what? Australian visionary Saul Griffith has a plan. In *The Big Switch*, Griffith lays out a detailed blueprint – optimistic but feasible – for fighting climate change while creating millions of new jobs and a healthier environment. Griffith explains exactly what it would take to transform our infrastructure, update our grid, and adapt our households. The same natural advantages – incredible resources on an enormous continent – which helped Australia prosper in the 20th century are the ingredients for becoming the most prosperous, entirely renewable, economy in the world.

More: www.acuitymag.com/business/Can-rewiring-the-nation-combat-climate-change plus www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/60410649-the-big-switch where rated 4.5/5.0 February 2022, 208 pages.

Source: *Acuity*, 26th April 2022.

The Good Ancestor: How to Think Long-Term in a Short-Term World

“From the first seeds sown thousands of years ago, to the construction of the cities we still inhabit, to the scientific discoveries that have ensured our survival, we are the inheritors of countless gifts from the past. Today, in an age driven by the tyranny of the now, with 24/7 news, the latest tweet, and the buy-now button commanding our attention, we rarely stop to consider how our actions will affect future generations. With such frenetic short-termism at the root of contemporary crises, the call for long-term thinking grows every day – but what is it, has it ever worked, and can we even do it?

“In *The Good Ancestor*, leading public philosopher Roman Krznaric argues there is still hope. From the pyramids to the NHS, humankind has always had the innate ability to plan for posterity and take action that will resonate for decades, centuries, even millennia to come. If we want to become good ancestors, now is the time to recover and enrich this imaginative skill.

“*The Good Ancestor* reveals six profound ways in which we can all learn to think long-term, exploring how we can reawaken oft-neglected but uniquely human talents like ‘cathedral thinking’ that expand our time horizons and sharpen our foresight. Drawing on radical solutions from around the world, Krznaric celebrates the innovators who are reinventing democracy, culture and economics so we all have the chance to become good ancestors and create a better tomorrow.

More: www.goodreads.com/book/show/51107158-the-good-ancestor 2020. 288 pages, rated 4.3/5.00 by 652

Source: Angus Napier, 15th April 2022.

Seniors Offer Hope in Climate Crisis

“Vic Mills pulls out a photograph of himself with his mokopuna (grandchildren) and holds it in front of his computer camera.

“That’s my primary focus at the moment ... What kind of world are these people going to live in?”

“He wonders what they will eat, how they will work. ‘We need to get back to simplicity in our use of planetary gifts, like our food, sunshine and so on.’

“Vic Mills, 79, was an artist before he retired. Now he is part of a reforestation project on the Otago Peninsula, building tracks and benches and planting trees for a ‘Future Forest’.

“Mills is one of the 200 members of the Seniors’ Climate Action Network (Scan) – a group made up of mature Dunedin citizens who want to leave behind a legacy for their mokopuna. They have worked together since 2014 to campaign for urgent climate action and a low-carbon future. ...

“Despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic lockdowns towards the end of 2021, the Seniors’ Climate Action Network submitted a 49-page Emissions Reduction Plan to the Ministry for the Environment. The submission calls for actions which the Government and regional and local councils should adopt to achieve the goal of Net Zero Emissions by 2030.

“Said Mills: ‘We are actually focused on the fact we have got a limited bout of life left, yet we have got an enormous amount of experience behind us. The experience we are bringing to bear, we think helps the younger generations.’

More: www.issuesofsustainability.org/downloads/SCAN-EmissionsReductionPlanSubmissionDec2021Revision.pdf 50 pages, 2.82Mb

Source: *Forever Project*, 15th April 2022.

Editor: Contains very interesting graphs, graphics and an extensive framework of solutions for thriving within planetary boundaries.

Seven Questions to Make Your Packaging More Sustainable

"A plastic tub. A cardboard box. A paper envelope. What's involved in making them 'more sustainable'?"

"More than you might expect! Assessing your packaging options involves balancing many competing priorities. Our seven questions will help you find that balance;

- 1: What's the main purpose of my packaging?
- 2: What are my main sustainability priorities?
- 3: Where does my product go?
- 4: Is the impact of alternatives really lower?
- 5: What are the main issues for my packaging?
- 6: Should I even focus on the packaging?
- 7: Can we do better rather than simply less bad?

More: www.thinkstep-anz.com/resrc/blogs/seven-questions-to-answer-to-make-your-packaging-more-sustainable/

Source: *SBC Panui*, 14th April 2022. 

Sustainable Packaging Highlighted for New Zealand Exporters

"New Zealand Trade and Enterprise – Te Taurapa Tūhono (NZTE) has released new resources on sustainable packaging for New Zealand exporters, in response to global trends and requirements for businesses to reduce waste and non-renewable material use.

"NZTE analysis notes legislation and targets for sustainable packaging are being toughened in key export markets for New Zealand goods, including Australia, the United States, the EU, China, South Korea and Japan.

"New or pending rules overseas include bans on single-use or non-recyclable plastic items, taxes on plastic packaging, requirements for compostable or reusable packaging, and obligations for distributors to take responsibility for packaging after products have been sold.

"The National Plastics Actions Plan and other Government measures are also expected to shape packaging decisions for businesses within New Zealand.

"NZTE's resources were prepared based on market intelligence from its offices overseas, with further support from industry expert and packaging consultant Nikki Withington.

"As well as highlighting changes in overseas markets, the collection includes guides for assessing current packaging, making decisions about materials and waste reduction, and keeping packaging materials in circulation through reuse, repurposing and effective recycling.

"The new resources are available via myNZTE for free, with no registration required.

More: www.nzte.govt.nz/blog/sustainable-packaging-highlighted-for-new-zealand-exporters-

Source: *SBN*, 7th April 2022. 

Why Are Nature-Based Solutions on Climate Being Overlooked?

"Our contributing writer Fred Pearce looks at the lack of international support for nature-based climate solutions, which have proven effective in making communities more resilient to climate change. To guard against worsening storm waves, for instance, coastal communities are planting mangroves, restoring wetlands, and reviving coral reefs — with greater impact and at lower cost than erecting seawalls. But less than 10% of funding for climate adaptation in least-developed nations went to projects which harnessed nature, one study found. The remaining 90% 'poured concrete'.

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/why-are-nature-based-solutions-on-climate-being-overlooked>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 21st April 2022. 

How Can Governments be Held More Accountable for Environment Stewardship?

"Many factors contribute to global environmental degradation, but one which has received relatively little attention is the lack of government transparency and accountability for environmental stewardship compared to other policy domains – such as fiscal and monetary policy – and the systematically weak integration of environmental stewardship into overall government strategy and target setting.

"In a book launched this week at Victoria University - *Environmental Governance and Greening Fiscal Policy - Government Accountability for Environmental Stewardship* - I address the urgent question: how can governments be made more accountable for their environmental stewardship?"

"My interest in this field was first sparked by mounting alarm at the state of fresh water in NZ. Then during the 2013 National Integrity System Assessment, Ralph Chapman and colleagues wrote a supplementary paper on environmental governance in NZ, and I became aware of the instrument of a National State of the Environment Report and the fact NZ had neither a regular practice of publishing such a report nor a legislative requirement to do so.

"Coincidentally or not, the government subsequently enacted the Environmental Reporting Act 2014, which was at least a start towards more effective transparency of key environmental indicators and threats to sustainability in this country although the Act needs considerable strengthening and is the subject of a current public consultation by the Ministry for the Environment.

"In the book I propose three interrelated areas for action globally:

More: www.transparency.org.nz/blog/how-can-we-hold-governments-mor plus <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-83796-9> November 2021, 205 pages

Source: *IPANZ*, 5th April 2022. 

Why Electric Vehicles will Not Save the Planet

"Here's a worry. According to a study of 7000 motorists in Europe reported in June last year, people with electric vehicles (EVs) drive more than those in petrol-driven vehicles. Another British study in October suggested the same.

"The differences were quite small: European EV owners were doing about 5% more driving, and in Britain it was 12%. But the British study also found owners of hybrid cars were doing a whopping 57% more driving than their petrol-propelled counterparts.

"More than all this, EVs can't solve the transport emissions issue on their own. Paul Winton, from the 1Point5 Project and a member of the All Aboard Aotearoa coalition of climate-focused lobby groups, has calculated if half our vehicle fleet was electric by 2030, Auckland would reduce emissions by 1588 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide. That's 44% of the expected emissions level of 3580kt by 2030, if there's no other change to current transport behaviours.

"It's a big whack of what we have to achieve. But it isn't big enough. As the IPCC has reminded us, our focus should be on reducing emissions this decade. Auckland Council has a target of 50% by 2030, although it doesn't have a plan to achieve that. ... Perhaps the biggest problem of is EVs reinforce car dependency. Car makers know this; it's why they're so thrilled.

More: www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/simon-wilson-why-electric-vehicles-will-not-save-the-planet/DRLWTFUVLXL6TEUW7JI7N2FZEA/ [Paywall]

Source: *NZ Herald*, page A10, 26th April 2022. 