

Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children



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Sustainability for Accountants (New CA Program Subject)

"Develop your understanding of environmental, social and governance impacts on organisations.

"In *Sustainability for Accountants*, you will develop your awareness of environmental, social and governance impacts on organisations, and the role Chartered Accountants play in linking these issues to broader business agendas.

"This subject will support you to contribute to and influence an organisation's values, culture, strategy and practices to ensure they align to sustainability principles, practices, frameworks and standards. You will develop the knowledge and skills needed to identify and evaluate changes in sustainability practices and reporting, and to communicate about sustainability to inform and influence various stakeholder groups. By exploring a series of case studies and other digital content, you'll develop an understanding of how the principles of sustainability are applied in practice and the skills needed to apply them in real world settings.

"This 7-week course forms part of the new CA Program. Members and Non Members can now undertake CA Program elective subjects to enhance their accounting knowledge.


"Topics covered;

- Introduction to sustainability for accountants
- Environmental, social and governance frameworks and reporting
- Sustainability in practice.

When/Where Registration closes 16th January. Course commences 30th Jan and concludes 17th March 2023.

More:

https://store.charteredaccountantsanz.co.nz/Sustainability-for-Accountants-New-CA-Program-Subject_2 plus www.charteredaccountantsanz.com/-/media/2ffb309abbd549a4bcdef53e1002a387.ashx

Source: Editor, 28th October 2022. 

Microhome Village Ends Homelessness for Hundreds


"It's billed as the country's only master-planned development for people coming out of homelessness. Residents call it the best neighbourhood they've ever lived in. ...

Nearly 350 individuals formerly experiencing homelessness reside in the village, which provides permanent housing and sits just outside Austin's city limits As of March, the village's retention rate for residents is about 88%. Through a series of new investments, Community First plans to soon triple its footprint.

"The community itself generated \$1.2 million last year through various micro-businesses MLF has established in the village, employing a number of its residents in the process. ...

"Each microhome has a bed, fridge and microwave but not a kitchen or a bathroom; those residents use communal outdoor kitchens, as well as bathrooms and showers which individually lock, located in hubs near the microhomes.

More: <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/community-first-village-austin-homeless/>

Source: reasons to be cheerful, 2nd Nov. 2022. 

Social Power: The Twelve Habits of Successful Change-makers

"The Social Change Project sought to answer one critical question:

What can we learn about how social change is happening today that can strengthen civil society's future efforts?

"Over 18 months, around 400 change-makers took part in a conversation which identified the ways of thinking and behaving which characterise successful examples of change. These behaviours or 'habits' were exhibited by charity campaigners, local activists, service providers, and parents fighting for their children's rights. We found them in organisations of all sizes and types. People from all walks of life, with all kinds of goals, who are all working to make something better.

"We shared what we learned in the Social Power report, which urges civil society to unleash its 'social power' by being bolder and braver.

1. Mission first, not model or money
2. Looking at the bigger picture (whole-systems approach)
3. Being adaptive and responsive
4. Persistence, perseverance and resilience
5. In whose name?
6. Primacy of relationships
7. Understanding other people's interests and motivations – even when it makes us uncomfortable
8. Radical listening and an asset-based approach
9. Collaborating rather than competing
10. Knowing our tools
11. Evaluating what matters and learning from it....
12. Taking Responsible Risks....

More: https://smk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/12_Habits_Summary-1.pdf 8 pages 1.7Mb

Source: ONE Roundup, 30th October 2022. 


Get Equipped for Climate Leadership with These E-Learning Courses

"In light of the latest climate science, more and more companies are setting science-based targets with 1.5°C pathways and aim to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

"To equip your company with the knowledge and skills to lead the path on climate leadership, the UN Global Compact, in collaboration with the Science Based Targets initiative, has launched two complementary e-learning courses:

- Course 1: Science-based targets (30 minutes) guides you in the process of setting a science-based target in support of a net-zero future.
- Course 2: The Net-Zero Standard (20 minutes) provides you with a practical framework for corporate net-zero target setting in line with climate science.

More: <https://info.unglobalcompact.org/3bl-sbt-netzero>

Source: United Nations Global Compact via *Report Alert*, 27th October 2022. 

Businesses Call for Nature Impact Disclosures to be Mandatory by 2030

"More than 300 businesses, including H&M, Sainsbury's and Nestlé, have urged world leaders to make it mandatory for companies to assess and reveal their impact on nature by 2030.

"Businesses and financial institutions in 56 countries – including the UK, Canada and China – are pushing for governments to agree to the disclosures at Cop15, the UN biodiversity conference being held in Montreal this December.

"In an open letter to heads of state, business leaders said the business and financial status quo was 'economically short-sighted and will destroy value over the long term'.

"If agreed, the pledge would apply to all large companies across the 196 countries signed up to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the global agreement on protecting nature. It follows increases in the number of companies making pledges to reduce emissions, with climate disclosures now mandatory in the UK, France and New Zealand, and pressure mounting for other countries to take action.

"The firms, which have combined revenues of more than \$1.5tn (£1.3tn) have agreed to assess their impacts on nature, disclose that information and publicly commit to reducing their negative effects. If parties don't agree to make these disclosures mandatory, they will be voluntary.

"The open letter was released alongside a report published by Business for Nature, the Capitals Coalition, and CDP, a non-profit specialising in environmental disclosure systems. 'They know there can be no business on a dead planet', the report says. 'They stand ready to transform their businesses and are calling on governments to set the rules of the game through legislation that will create fair competition for business.'

"Scientists say the biodiversity crisis is as serious as the climate crisis, with an estimated 1 million species at risk of extinction, yet there is less information about how businesses affect biodiversity because this data is not being disclosed. More than 18,600 companies worldwide disclosed data about their impact on climate via CDP in 2022, yet just over 1,000 firms disclosed data on forests – and 4,000 on water security – according to the report.

More:

www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/26/mandatory-disclosure-impact-nature-2030-cop15-aoe plus www.businessfornature.org/make-it-mandatory-campaign 5.61Mb, 24 pages

Source: Reuters Events, 29th October 2022. 


University of Auckland Earns Double Top Ranking for Sustainability

"A strong performance in the newly established QS Sustainability rankings of universities globally announced today has earned University of Auckland, a top ten ranking from the two main organisations assessing universities for their progress towards sustainability.

"In the inaugural Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Sustainability rankings released today, the University has earned tenth place in the world. QS.....

"Earlier this year, the University was ranked sixth in the 2022 THE (Times Higher Education) University Impact Rankings, which assess universities against the Sustainable Development Goals. Having held the top place for the first two years of this ranking,

More: www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2022/10/27/qs-sustainability.html

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 27th October. 

Still Flying Blind: The Absence of Climate Risk in Financial Reporting

"In 2021, Carbon Tracker published its first report about the degree to which companies had disclosed taking climate risks into account within financial statements, and auditors in their audits thereof.

"The report included whether the assumptions and estimates companies used were transparent and consistent with other aspects of reports. See '*Flying Blind: The glaring absence of climate risks in financial reporting*'.

"Since then, there has been a growth in net zero pledges and other climate-related commitments and increased reporting on climate risks 'outside' the financial statements. Yet, most companies still do not appear to be including the financial impacts of such commitments, or indeed climate change risks, in their financial statements.

"The companies surveyed included those from the fossil fuel, mining, manufacturing, and automotive sectors that are focus companies for the investor led Climate Action 100+ engagement.

Key Findings: Our reviews of 134 highly carbon-exposed companies provided little evidence that they had considered the impacts of material climate-related matters in preparing their financial statements.

"In general, companies failed to disclose the relevant quantitative climate-related assumptions and estimates used to prepare the financial statements, even when they indicated that climate risks may impact these assumptions.

"Companies did not present consistent climate narratives. Their financial statements failed to fully reflect climate considerations included in the companies' other reporting.

"There was little evidence auditors considered the impact of material climate-related matters.

"No company used assumptions and estimates which were aligned with achieving net zero by 2050 or sooner. This was despite a significant majority of companies having targets or ambitions to achieve this drive.

More: <https://carbontracker.org/reports/still-flying-blind-the-absence-of-climate-risk-in-financial-reporting/> 4.72Mb 84 pages

Source: Carbon Tracker, 29th October 2022. 

Less Cooling Needed with this White Paint

"A stunningly white paint could be used to reduce reliance on air conditioning, after it was demonstrated to reflect 98.7% of incoming sunlight.


"In demonstrations it was shown to keep surfaces 9.5°C cooler than the surroundings by completely reflecting incoming solar radiation.

"In 2021 Xiulin Ruan, a Purdue University professor of mechanical engineering, first developed the paint, and with a new tweak it's achieved the same results with a thinner coat, which the potential of becoming an industry standard.

"The hexagonal structure reflects the sunlight more totally, and the paint also incorporates voids of air which make it highly porous on a nanoscale. This lower density, together with the thinness, provides another huge benefit: reduced weight.

"The newer paint weighs 80% less than barium sulphate paint yet achieves nearly identical solar reflectance, which Ruan says opens the door to whole new domains of commercial application..... ultra-white paint reflects the sun's rays entirely, sending the thermal energy outside the atmosphere

More: www.goodnewsnetwork.org/paint-is-so-white-it-reflects-heat-so-humans-dont-need-as-much-cooling/

Source: *SnippETS*, 27th October 2022. 

Sustainability for 'Finance Hat Wearers'

"As a subgroup of Deloitte and the Sustainable Business Council's CFO Climate & Sustainability Programme, Business New Zealand and Deloitte Private are piloting the Sustainability for 'finance hat wearers' course for Auckland based SMEs this November.

"The course recognises small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face different challenges when it comes to Sustainability and with SMEs making up 70% of New Zealand businesses, it is critical to equip 'finance hat wearers' with the knowledge and confidence to drive sustainability action forward in their organisations.

"Over the course of four engaging, 1.5 hour lunchtime sessions together, we will establish a pathway forward to embed sustainability and maximise opportunities for your business, while addressing the real challenges that SMEs are facing in this space.

"When/Where

- Session 1, online 12 – 1:30 pm 9th November, Climate and Sustainability 101 – This session is provided in conjunction with the CFO Climate & Sustainability Programme.
- Session 2, in-person at Deloitte Auckland 12 – 1:30 pm 23rd November, Understanding the 'why' for SMEs and where value lies
- Session 3, in-person at Deloitte Auckland 12 – 1:30 pm 30th November, Accounting for sustainability – finding your value
- Session 4, in-person at Deloitte Auckland 12 – 1:30 pm 7th December, Reporting and Frameworks – looking at the role of finance hat wearers, accountability and how to embed sustainability.

More: <https://sustainability.bnzn.org.nz/event/sustainability-for-finance-hat-wearers/>

Source: SBC Weekly Pānui, 27th October. 

It is Possible for Nations to go 100% Organic

"Jacinda Ardern once told the United Nations 'We are determined to show we can be the most sustainable food producers in the world'. But, when she made that promise in 2019, the title was already taken, and is still firmly held by a state in northeast India, called Sikkim.


"Every single one of Sikkim's 66,000 farms is organic, free from agrichemicals and synthetic fertilisers, which are banned. The Sikkim Government is the first government in the world to achieve its vision of 100% certified organic farmland state-wide.

"As we grapple with the climate, water and biodiversity crises, learning from Sikkim's success has never been more important. Sikkim is proof that with concerted effort, it's possible to ditch industrial agriculture and its destructive addiction to agrichemicals and synthetic fertilisers, and shift to regenerative organic farming, which works with nature rather than against it.

"It wasn't something which happened overnight. It didn't happen because Sikkim's shoppers suddenly decided to buy organic food or because its farmers woke up one day and decided to switch to organic with no support. It happened because the Sikkim Government used policies, public investment and a transition plan to make it happen.

"New Zealand has had far more resources at its disposal. However, despite Ardern's promise that our agriculture sector would become 'sustainable', this government has been heavy on the greenwash and light on the action.

More: www.greenpeace.org/aotearoa/story/the-state-that-proved-its-possible-to-go-100-organic/ plus <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikkim>

Source: Greenpeace, 29th October 2022. 

2022 Scorecard on Insurance, Fossil Fuels and the Climate Emergency


"Insurance company restrictions on oil and gas are finally starting to catch up with those on coal, according to new data from the Insure Our Future campaign. Ahead of COP27, the campaign coalition argues insurers must now fully exit new coal, oil and gas, and demonstrate the industry is ready to deliver on its net zero commitments.

"Insure Our Future's annual scorecard ranks the top 30 global fossil fuel insurers on the quality of their fossil fuel exclusion policies. This year Allianz, AXA and Axis Capital rank best for their coal exit policies, while Aviva, Hannover Re and Munich Re come out on top for their oil and gas exclusions.

"At the bottom of fossil fuel rankings are a group of insurers which have yet to adopt any restrictions on providing cover to coal, oil or gas projects, including US insurers Berkshire Hathaway and Starr and Bermudian carrier Everest Re. The UK's Lloyd's of London also scores very poorly, having announced a coal exit framework in 2020 but then backtracked by declaring it optional.

"Liberty Mutual, Chubb and Tokio Marine have adopted some restrictions on coal but actively insure the expansion of the oil and gas industry. Chinese insurers PICC and Sinosure have not adopted any fossil fuel restrictions but, following Chinese government policy, will no longer cover new coal power plants overseas.

More: <https://global.insure-our-future.com/with-new-coal-uninsurable-insurers-start-to-move-on-oil-and-gas/> plus <https://global.insure-our-future.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/10/2022-Scorecard-Final-Online.pdf> 36 pages 5.99Mb

Source: SumOfUs, 28th October 2022. 

Why Investors Now Want Companies to Disclose Plastic Pollution Risk

Outlines plastic pollution. Posits a virgin plastic tax or extended producer responsibility fees to help cover the cost of collection and safe disposal. Refers to CDP expanding its global environmental disclosure system, which currently asks companies to report their climate, forests, and water risk, to in addition extend those to the plastic pollution problem by building on existing reporting frameworks.

More: www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/comment-why-investors-now-want-companies-disclose-plastic-pollution-risk-2022-10-18/

Source: Reuters Events, 22nd October 2022. 

Biomimicry to Inspire and Design Better Systems

"Janine Benyus is the co-founder of Biomimicry 3.8 and Biomimicry Institute. She is a biologist, innovation consultant, and author of six books, including *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*. Since the book's 1997 release, Janine's work as a global thought leader has evolved the practice of biomimicry from a meme to a movement, inspiring clients and innovators around the world to learn from the genius of nature.

"She addresses the question of 'What Could Possibly Go Right?' with thoughts including:

- The inspiration we can take from systems in nature for ourselves and communities
- The value of a biomimetic approach to infrastructure development and business operations
- The difference in designing systems for positive output, beyond simply net zero ...

More: www.resilience.org/stories/2022-10-17/what-could-possibly-go-right-episode-88-janine-benyus/ 42min podcast ad YouTube with transcript

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 26th October 2022. 

2022 CFO Sustainability Snapshot Survey

"The transition to a more sustainable economy continues to impact organisations.

"This 'snapshot survey' of New Zealand CFOs provides insights on the progress of their organisations, how they see their role, their contributions as CFOs and barriers to progression. Last year in our inaugural CFO Sustainability Snapshot Survey, we reviewed the current state.

"As was the case in 2021, the 2022 survey confirmed the view CFOs are well-positioned to take a leadership role in driving timely and effective sustainability transitions, given risk management and value creation are core to their role. Customers, employees, investors and others are demanding greater and faster action, and legislation is quickly changing to ensure organisations truly manage climate risk and adopt sustainable practices.

"In 2022, we opened the survey again, with one additional 'spotlight section' on 'reporting readiness'. Overall the findings from the 2022 survey reinforce 2021 insights and the need to progress from 2021. This result is surprising given the increased emphasis on sustainability. The survey re-confirmed most organisations and CFOs have begun their journeys, but there are opportunities for CFOs to accelerate their impact and pace of change.


"CFOs are able to identify barriers to progression, but addressing them is the difficult part. This year, we urge CFOs to lead their organisations by focusing on the material issues and to look outwards to partners your organisation can collaborate with for positive sustainable outcomes.

"We hope both the survey itself and this snapshot report emphasise the unique role and value of the CFO in driving sustainability action – and encourage CFOs to pause, celebrate progress to date, reflect on their role and contributions and continue their journeys forward.

More:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/nz/Documents/sustainability---climate/2022-cfo-sustainability-snapshot-survey-report.pdf> 20 pages, 1.09Mb

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 20th October.

More: Interestingly no mention is made of support which might be able to be provided, or potential leadership roles, of peak accounting and education bodies. 

One year of Wildfires Undid Decades of California's Emissions Policy

"The visible physical damage wrought by forest fires is plain to see. But they have a further, invisible cost which is not as frequently quantified as the number of lives and value of properties lost. Trees and other vegetation extract carbon from the air. When they go up in flames, the carbon stored within their woody cells combines with oxygen to once more form carbon dioxide – adding to the environmental toll of the fires. 'Dust to dust', the saying goes. For trees, it is 'gas to gas'.

"This cycle means raging wildfires are a considerable and often ignored source of emissions, and a growing one, too. In California, according to a new analysis published in *Environmental Pollution*, a journal, wildfire emissions are estimated to have wiped out the benefits of more than a decade of efforts to reduce emissions from energy, homes, waste, transport and industry (see chart).

More: www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2022/10/19/one-year-of-wildfires-undid-decades-of-californias-emissions-policy plus www.scientificamerican.com/article/californias-2020-wildfires-negated-years-of-emission-cuts/

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

Start with Us

"Take the first step. The world needs your work now. It needs all of us.

"TURN YOUR BELIEFS INTO ACTION IN YOUR EVERYDAY WORK.

"The Sustainable Business Network is the go-to place for small and medium businesses to learn, connect and take action on sustainability. We have the tools and resources you need to get started. All you need to do is take the first step.

"Step One. Read a resource. Sustainability can feel overwhelming. There are so many things to consider and so many places you can start. Take the first step and do one thing right now. Choose a resource relevant to your business and start with that. If you have an understanding of where you are at right now, the path to sustainable business will be much easier to follow.

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/take-action/start-with-us/>

Source: SBN, 20th October 2022. 

Fair Chance for all: Breaking the Cycle of Persistent Disadvantage

"The Government has asked the Productivity Commission to undertake an inquiry into economic inclusion and social mobility – A fair chance for all – with a focus on helping those experiencing persistent disadvantage. This report brings together our interim findings on this wide-ranging and complex topic and seeks public comment and feedback on a way forward.

"We all want to live fulfilling lives where we have a strong sense of identity, are able to contribute to our families and communities, have the things we need to realise our aspirations, and grow the next generation of New Zealanders. As New Zealanders, justice and caring for others is part of our cultural identity. We all share a responsibility for looking out for each other and not leaving anyone behind.

"While many of us are thriving, there are too many in New Zealand who are not. About 17% (724 000) of New Zealanders experienced persistent disadvantage in both 2013 and 2018. Young people, families and whānau can face multiple disadvantages which hold them back, which can turn into a cycle of persistent or intergenerational disadvantage. People and families face impossible choices every day, just trying to get by....

"To address the barriers, we propose further changes are needed to the design and operation of our public management system.

"While reforms in discrete areas of policy, such as those in the health sector, show promise for making a difference, we believe more fundamental change to the 'macro'-level settings of the public management system is required.

"We characterise the system shifts which are needed as to:

- Re-think overall system settings to prioritise equity, wellbeing and social inclusion ...
- Re-focus public accountability settings to activate a wellbeing approach
- Broaden and embed a wellbeing approach across policymaking and funding frameworks
- Enable system learning and improvement through monitoring and evaluation

Feedback by: 11th November 2022.

More: www.productivity.govt.nz/assets/InquiryDocs/EISM-Interim/A_fair_chance_for_all_Interim_report_OVERVIEW_FINAL.pdf plus www.productivity.govt.nz/assets/InquiryDocs/EISM-Interim/Productivity-Commission-A-fair-chance-for-all-Interim-Report.pdf 170 pages 3.04Mb

Source: Productivity Commission, 20th October 2022. 