

# Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

11<sup>th</sup> May 2023



Designed by  
[www.vecteezy.com](http://www.vecteezy.com)

## XRБ Guidance for Applying NZ Climate Reporting Standards

"The XRБ has created guidance and resources to support entities when applying New Zealand Climate Standards.

"They comprise;

- All Sector Staff Guidance for NZ CS: To support entities required to prepare disclosures in accordance with NZ CS. It illustrates how an entity may approach the required disclosures.
- Getting started on measuring your emissions: This document defines scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions sources and details the steps on measuring and disclosing them.
- Director Preparation guide: This guide is intended to provide directors with a quick reference for key things they need to know about Aotearoa New Zealand's Climate-related Disclosures regime.
- Scenario analysis fact sheet: The scenario analysis fact sheet clarifies the definition and purpose of scenario analysis for Aotearoa New Zealand Climate Standard 1: Climate-related Disclosures (NZ CS 1).
- Scenario analysis: Getting started at the sector level: How to develop consistent and comparable sectoral scenarios for Climate-related Disclosures under NZ CS 1.
- Sector Scenario Analysis: Sector-level scenario analysis for information on what's happening with sector scenario analysis.

**More:** [www.xrb.govt.nz/standards/climate-related-disclosures/resources/](http://www.xrb.govt.nz/standards/climate-related-disclosures/resources/)

**Source:** *Toitū's Take*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**Note:** See also *Climate Scenarios for the Construction and Property Sector* published by NZGBC, 75 pages 2.74 Mb at [www.nzgbc.org.nz/climate-scenarios](http://www.nzgbc.org.nz/climate-scenarios) which has a very long and interesting list of climate and priority drivers and labour heat stressors in two appendices which merit anyone in any sector considering.

NZGBC 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

PS: The chair of their Technical Working Group is an accountant.

*New Zealand Green Building Council develops climate scenarios*" 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at

<https://thefifthestate.com.au/business/new-zealand-green-building-council-develops-climate-scenarios/>

## Pre-election Briefing Paper

"Ahead of New Zealand's October General Election, the Sustainable Business Council and Climate Leaders Coalition have released their joint climate policy priorities for an incoming Government. The briefing paper, created in consultation with the 160+ SBC and CLC businesses, sets out 10 key recommendations to advance a net-zero and climate-resilient future.

**More:** <https://sbc.org.nz/business-leaders-outline-election-priorities-to-drive-climate-action/> plus <https://sbc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/SBC-CLC-Pre-election-Brief-2023.pdf>

**Source:** *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

## Enhancing Social Capital in South Auckland

In an article in the printed version of the *NZ Herald* headed 'Hand up and not a hand out' Initiative at Risk', or the online version 'The deepest cuts in the Auckland Council budget aren't even being talked about' journalist Simon Wilson outlines the success of The Southern Initiative in the Manukau area of Auckland. Showing how a co-ordinated programme is achieving excellent social outcomes to lift low socio-economic individuals in the area. The article's focus is on the seemingly likely reduction of funding by Auckland Council of a programme which is seeing positive outcomes over generations. Withdrawing/reducing the funding by Auckland Council seems likely to have a serious counter-affect to council's roles in building communities and improving lives. Thought provoking.

**More:** [www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/simon-wilson-the-deepest-cuts-in-the-auckland-council-budget-arent-even-being-talked-about/7EVC4S5NUBH7LSUZTIPZKPMEM/](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/simon-wilson-the-deepest-cuts-in-the-auckland-council-budget-arent-even-being-talked-about/7EVC4S5NUBH7LSUZTIPZKPMEM/) [Paywall]

**Source:** *NZ Herald*, page A10, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.

## Grassroots Training Delivers Education to the Illiterate

'Barefoot College' is teaching everything from emergency medicine to solar engineering, a radical new university is serving the needs of India's rural poor, whether they can read or not.

"Not everyone is academically inclined, yet they can be great learners and doers empowering communities, often achieving results superior to those of academically trained students. ....

**More:** <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/the-barefoot-college-reinventing-rural-education/>

**Source:** reasons to be cheerful, 3rd May 2023.

## Environmental Choice NZ is now Eco Choice

"For more than 30 years, Environmental Choice NZ has been the country's official ecolabel, working alongside future-focused industry leaders, to lessen their environmental impact. It has now rebranded to *Eco Choice Aotearoa*, to reflect a more holistic view of the ecosystem and the interconnectedness of people and planet. ....

**More:** <https://environmentalchoice.org.nz/>

**Source:** *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

## In Passing – A 22<sup>nd</sup> Birthday

On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2001 the first edition of the precursor to *Sustainability Matters* was published. Although weekly for a few months, at reader request, publication soon changed to fortnightly. How many editions have been published in those 22 years? Without making a precise tally, it's about 530.

Much has changed in 10 years, let alone 20+, yet importantly much has not and much is occurring too slowly.

For your possible interest the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013 accompanies this edition. As in this edition, banks also feature; *Financing Destruction*. The articles *Be Happier: 10 Things to Stop Doing Right Now* and *A Climate Change's Maths Lesson that Might Just Change the World* particularly appeal.

**Source:** Editor, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023.



## 'Obsession' with Economic Growth Condemned by Irish President

"President Michael D Higgins has condemned the 'obsession' with achieving economic growth in a speech on Friday [28<sup>th</sup> April 2023] which was implicitly critical of the economic policies pursued by successive governments.

"In a reception at Áras an Uachtaráin for Tasc, a think tank dedicated to social change, the President delivered a typically wide-ranging speech which featured a strong critique of economic policy which seeks to prioritise growth, a condemnation of 'neoliberalism' and an evaluation of the shortcomings of the teaching of economics at universities.

"He also urged those present to 'envisage our future utopia', suggesting the Ireland must "rebalance economy, ecology and ethics". ....

"Many economists remain stuck in an inexorable growth narrative, or at best a 'green growth' narrative', he said. 'A fixation on a narrowly defined efficiency, productivity, perpetual growth has resulted in a discipline which has become blinkered to the ecological challenge – the ecological catastrophe – we now face.

"That narrow focus constitutes an empty economics which has lost touch with everything meaningful, a social science which no longer is connected, or even attempts to be connected, with the social issues and objectives for which it was developed over centuries. It is incapable of offering solutions to glaring inadequacies of provision as to public needs, devoid of vision.' ....

**More:** [www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/04/28/president-condemns-obsession-with-economic-growth/](http://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/04/28/president-condemns-obsession-with-economic-growth/) plus [www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/04/30/senator-defends-president-michael-d-higgins-after-economists-disparage-speech/](http://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/04/30/senator-defends-president-michael-d-higgins-after-economists-disparage-speech/) and <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/speech-at-a-reception-for-tasc-think-tank-for-action-on-social-change> for full speech

**Source:** Leah Murphy, comment, LinkedIn, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Editor:** Seems to have received no coverage in mainstream media outside of Ireland. 

## The Future of Business is Low Emissions

"At Gen Less, we're on a mission to help Kiwi businesses reduce their energy-related emissions.

"We know many in the business community are already bringing action and innovation to decarbonisation. We've gathered seven business leaders from across New Zealand who are already on their journey, to share what they've learned so far.

"The secret, they say, is simple – you just start.


"Our research shows even businesses who want to take climate action can feel stuck. Cost, lack of knowledge or finding it too difficult to start are the biggest barriers to getting started.

"But these businesses are missing out on the win-win. As we head towards a low-emissions future, the organisations that are tackling the challenge head on are finding that their energy costs are reducing, they are future-proofing operations by staying ahead of regulation and expectations, and they are adding value by meeting growing demand for low carbon products and services.

"Sustainability isn't a 'nice to have' anymore, it's an absolute must for business', says Juliette Hogan, founder of the well-established Kiwi fashion brand. 'You choose a place to start, and you build on from there.'

"We've pulled together the motivation, and the information, to help Kiwi businesses get the ball rolling. ....

**More:** <https://genless.govt.nz/the-future-of-business-is-low-emissions/>

**Source:** GenLess, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023. 

## Launch of the Tourism Adaptation Roadmap

"Aotea Circle launches its *Tourism Adaptation Roadmap*, designed to help the sector adapt to the impacts of climate change.

"This work furthers New Zealand's understanding of how the tourism industry may be impacted under different climate change scenarios and leverages a cross-section of experts to propose ways forward for the industry.

"With the roadmap actions being taken up, we forge a path to ensuring a sustainable, thriving industry which is ready for different iterations of climate change, whilst providing an enriched visitor experience where our green credentials are stronger than ever.

"Speakers include: ....

**When/Where:** Wed. 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, 9:00-10:00am. Online

**More:** [www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/the-aotearoa-circle-webinar-launch-of-the-tourism-adaptation-roadmap-tickets-623349995617](http://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/the-aotearoa-circle-webinar-launch-of-the-tourism-adaptation-roadmap-tickets-623349995617)

**Source:** Aotea Circle, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023. 

## Mapping Tools for Climate Adaptation

"Find out more about how place-based mapping tools are being used in climate adaptation projects across Scotland.


"In this final webinar of the place-based tools series, we will be exploring how mapping tools can be used across various locations and with different groups of people for climate adaptation. If you want to know what place-based tools are, or you're thinking of using them in your own projects, this webinar will help you understand what tools are available and how you can use them.

"Come and hear from a variety of speakers, including: .....

**When/Where:** 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 11:00pm to midnight. Online

**More:** [www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/place-based-tools-webinar-series-mapping-tools-for-climate-adaptation-tickets-618936615077](http://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/place-based-tools-webinar-series-mapping-tools-for-climate-adaptation-tickets-618936615077) plus [www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/about-us](http://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/about-us) and [www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/climate-change-adaptation/](http://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/climate-change-adaptation/)

**Source:** Editor, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023

**Editor:** Scotland seems to be several years ahead of NZ. 

## Banking on Climate Chaos

"The 2015 Paris Climate Agreement was considered a historic breakthrough in putting the world on a trajectory to limit global warming to no more than 1.5°C, the level scientists say is required to prevent irreversible climate chaos.


"Yet since then, the world's 60 largest banks have ploughed \$5.5 trillion into fossil-fuel financing, including expansion projects, tar sands oil, Arctic and Amazon oil and gas, offshore drilling, fracking, liquified natural gas, and coal mining, according to the *2023 Banking on Climate Chaos report*. ....

**More:** [www.greenamerica.org/blog/big-banks-are-driving-climate-chaos-you-can-back-people-planet](http://www.greenamerica.org/blog/big-banks-are-driving-climate-chaos-you-can-back-people-planet) plus [www.bankingonclimatechaos.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/BOCC\\_2023\\_vFinal-4-19.pdf](http://www.bankingonclimatechaos.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/BOCC_2023_vFinal-4-19.pdf) 103 pages 14.3Mb

**Source:** Green America, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**Editor:** Behind and within all these banks, fossil fuel companies and companies which support them are accountants, lawyers and members of other professional bodies such as those for engineers. Plenty to think about there in terms of ethics, morality and more.

The Big 4 Aussies banks receive some mention. They are though minnows in the big picture.

The report is endorsed by about 300 NGO's at least two from Australia and one from NZ. Can you spot them? Interesting which NGO's are NOT in the list – that may have been logistical factors. 

## ***The Limits of Degrowth***

"Humanity's greatest challenge is to meet its needs within the limits of the Living Earth. But currently both sides of that relationship are heading fast in the wrong direction.

"Our population could grow by another 20% to some 10 billion people by 2050; and the way we use the Earth's resources is ever more rapidly diminishing the Earth's ability to support us and all other forms of life.

"The quest for a healthy relationship between people and planet takes many forms such as degrowth and other changes in behaviour, economics, values, technology, and other drivers of human activity.

"In this session, Rod Oram will examine the weaknesses of degrowth in particular; and offer some other ways humanity can re-establish its right relationship with the Living Earth.

**When/Where:** 17th May 7:00 – 8:30pm. online

**More:** [www.ourclimatedeclaration.org.nz/limits\\_of\\_degrowth](http://www.ourclimatedeclaration.org.nz/limits_of_degrowth)

**Source:** Our Climate Declaration, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023. 

## **Post Incarceration Support Success**

**More:** <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/minnesota-all-square-prison-entrepreneurs/>

**Source:** reasons to be cheerful, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023. 

## **A Common Talking Point About Climate Change Gets It All Wrong, New Study Says**

"There's no solid evidence that framing the global problem as a local one prompts people to act. So, what does?

"Common wisdom says the average person doesn't care about climate change because they think its effects will unfold in the far-off future or in faraway places. So, to get them to do something, you have to make those effects – the floods, the heat, the fires – feel immediate and personal. This point is repeated *ad infinitum* in tips about how to talk about the climate crisis, in books, articles, and guides for public officials.


"While this approach feels right, its success has been 'vastly overestimated', according to a study published in the journal *One Earth* on Friday. Researchers in the Netherlands surveyed 30 studies to see if emphasizing climate change as a pressing, localised problem would motivate people to support environmental policies, donate to environmental organisations, or switch to lower-carbon practices like cutting down on driving. More than 80% of these studies failed to find evidence the strategy worked.

"One problem? The tactic's premise is misplaced: According to international polls, most people already believe they're seeing the results of climate change where they live, or at least will soon.

"Spreading messages which say the opposite – that people think of it as a distant threat – could backfire, said Anne van Valkengoed, a co-author of the paper and a postdoctoral researcher studying environmental psychology at the University of Groningen. If people think other people think it isn't a pressing problem, they may be less likely to take action themselves, whether putting solar panels on their home or calling up their elected representatives. It's simply a matter of fitting in.....

"The study recommends researchers, communicators, and officials start talking more about 'the finding many people already perceive climate change as occurring here and now', leveraging popular support to accelerate the shift to a lower-carbon world. 'You want to give people the sense they're not alone in combating climate change', van Valkengoed said. 'It's something a lot of people actually care about.'

**More:** <https://grist.org/language/climate-talking-point-wrong-psychological-distance-study/>

**Source:** Orion, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023. 

## **For Farming, is Net Zero Ambitious Enough?**

"Lake Hāwea Station, a New Zealand sheep and beef farm, demonstrates how being carbon positive can also be profitable.

"With the world facing climate catastrophe, is it enough for businesses in well-off areas to be carbon neutral? Agriculture is a major source of greenhouse gases, producing around 18% of global emissions. As a proportion it's lower in Australia, around 13%, dwarfed by energy production. But in New Zealand a massive 50% of emissions come from agriculture – most of this as methane, belched by grass-eating livestock.


"The owners of Lake Hāwea Station, a large sheep and beef farm in New Zealand's South Island, believe farming, rather than contributing to the climate crisis, can be part of the solution. Not only that, but the journey to being climate positive can bring financial benefits – as well as for nature, for future generations and for the planet. ....

"Well done, but is it enough? Carbon neutrality, the family decided, is 'insufficiently ambitious'; the goal is to be 10 times carbon positive. And there's a plan to achieve this through protecting vegetation, planting 10,000 trees a year, electrification, reduction of methane emissions through use of seaweed, genetics and restoring soils. ....

"Justine adds, 'We've got eight years left to meet our national climate targets and we want to do our bit and influence change. To sequester more carbon than we emit is the single biggest koha [gift] we can make to the world.'

"The farming sector faces some major challenges, including the risks of irreversible climate change and loss of biodiversity. It is heartening to know a farm can be climate positive, can protect and enhance biodiversity, and succeed financially as well. This really might set an example – to other farmers in Aotearoa, Australia and further afield. And that would be positive for us all.

**More:** [www.acuitymag.com/business/For-farming-is-net-zero-ambitious-enough](http://www.acuitymag.com/business/For-farming-is-net-zero-ambitious-enough)

**Source:** *Acuity Newsletter*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Article by Bruce Gilkison. 

## **Naming NZ Butterfly Species**

"Ninety-three percent of New Zealand's native butterflies and moths are unique to Aotearoa! They are found nowhere else in the world – and if they die out, they can never be reintroduced.

"The family of copper butterflies is a great example. They are native to NZ whereas the monarch and cabbage white butterflies are not.

"Some native butterflies are already teetering on the edge of survival', said Brian Patrick, the MBNZ's Biodiversity Advisor. 'There's a tiny purple copper butterfly which now exists only in one coastal carpark in the South Island. It needs our protection – but firstly it needs to be identified!'


"We all need our butterflies to thrive so they can continue their important work as pollinators, food for birds and to brighten our summers.

"Sadly, successive governments have invested too little in research and taxonomy, the naming of species', said Angela Moon-Jones, who is spearheading a campaign to save our NZ butterflies. 'We are far behind most other countries.'

"We need the support of caring New Zealanders now to save our precious butterflies.'

"The Moths and Butterflies of NZ Trust is campaigning to raise \$15,000 ....

**More:** [www.nzbutterflies.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Media-Release-20230426.pdf](http://www.nzbutterflies.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Media-Release-20230426.pdf)

**Source:** Jacqui Knight, 24<sup>th</sup> April; 2023. 



## Mindful Money Conference & Awards 2023

"The Mindful Money Conference focuses on how the finance sector can channel investment towards the climate transition. It aims to engage participants in exploring strategies for the investment sector to meet the challenge of funding climate solutions, rather than perpetuating a high-emissions economy.

"Following the conference, the third annual Mindful Money Awards ceremony will take place, honouring funds and individuals leading the movement to establish responsible investing as the new standard and positioning impact investing at the progressive forefront.

"The Mindful Money Awards celebrate the role ethical and impact investing are playing in making money a force for good. They reflect the growing movement to re-orient investment finance towards sustainability and well-being, providing solutions to the mounting crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and inequality. ....

"Includes Climate spokespersons from Labour, National and Green Party.

**When/Where:** Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2:00 – 7:30 pm. Auckland

**More:** <https://events.humanitix.com/mindful-money-conference-and-awards-2023>

**Source:** Barry Coates, LinkedIn post mid-April 2023. 

## Coconut Coir Helping Stop Coastal Erosion

"Along South Riverside Drive in Neptune, New Jersey, until last fall, at high tide on the Shark River, water almost lapped the edge of the road, yards away from a row of houses. ....

"To strengthen the shoreline, the organisation led a project to build up the riverside dune and expand and raise the beach with new sand. To encourage marsh vegetation to grow at the water's edge, teams also installed shaggy logs made of a fibre that you're more likely to see in Bali than along the Jersey Shore: shredded coconut husk.

"Coir, as the material is known, is a common ingredient in an approach to combating coastal erosion through habitat restoration. An increasingly popular alternative to hard barriers like concrete bulkheads, these so-called 'living shorelines' utilise natural elements like rocks, reefs and plants to fortify the shore against erosion. Biodegradable yet sturdy, coconut fibre frequently plays a role as a temporary buffer which can help build up soil layers and give vegetation a stable place to take root. ....

**More:** <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/fortified-with-coconuts-living-shorelines-are-stopping-coastal-erosion>

**Source:** reason to be cheerful, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**Editor:** Could have application in NZ and other places. 

## Product Stewardship in your Business


"This SBN workshop is about businesses taking responsibility for the products they make, sell and buy so they're not ending up in landfill. That means designing and making products to last, then putting systems in place to enable them to be reused and recycled when they are worn out.

"The workshop will cover:

- An introduction to product stewardship
- The pros and cons of different approaches to product stewardship
- How to implement product stewardship to your business

**When/Where:** Wed 7<sup>th</sup> Jun 2023, 9:00 – 11:00 am. Online

**More:** <https://sustainable.org.nz/learn/events/product-stewardship-in-your-business/>


**Source:** SBN, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023. 

## The Climate King: King Charles' Influence Over the Hearts & Minds of Business Leaders

"In 1971, aged just 21, the then-Prince of Wales used his first public speech to raise concerns about planetary degradation. While many of the claims were met with scepticism back then, his concerns about river pollution, air pollution and plastic use could be repeated verbatim today with little need for revision.

"Since then, King Charles III's views have remained consistent; he has continued to be a powerful advocate for tackling the challenges our planet is facing. The new monarch has a certified history of promoting better outcomes for our planet, tackling deforestation in the Global South via the successful Prince's Rainforest Project and launching the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI) in 2020. ....[And more.]

**More:** [www.edie.net/the-climate-king-king-charles-influence-over-the-hearts-and-minds-of-business-leaders/](http://www.edie.net/the-climate-king-king-charles-influence-over-the-hearts-and-minds-of-business-leaders/)

**Source:** edie, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. 

## Leading UK Lawyers Refusing to Work for Fossil-fuel Clients

"In March two UK activists, Morgan Trowland and Marcus Decker, were jailed for climbing the Queen Elizabeth II bridge over the River Thames and causing huge traffic disruption as part of a Just Stop Oil protest last year.

"The pair were jailed for three years and two years seven months, respectively, with Judge Collyer KC making it clear that the tough sentences were designed to deter copycat protests. Just Stop Oil described the punishment as draconian. ....

"The decision came a month after one of the rocks on which the British legal system rests, the cab rank rule, was called into question by a group called Lawyers Are Responsible.

"Although barristers – with one or two exceptions – are duty-bound to take the next brief they are offered, 120 leading lawyers (the figure has since risen to 160) launched a 'declaration of conscience', saying they would refuse to act for new fossil fuel projects or prosecute anti-fossil fuel campaigners. ....


"None of these fossil-fuel projects would come into being without lawyers to act as midwives', says Jolyon Maugham, director of the Good Law Project and a signatory of the declaration. ....

"In the United States the Law Students for Climate Accountability has estimated that since 2017, leading law firms globally have facilitated \$1.63 trillion in fossil fuel transactions. The group, whose goal is to force the legal profession to face up to its role in exacerbating climate change, has produced a climate change scorecard on the 100 top law firms in the U.S., and is set to launch a similar report on UK firms later this month. ....

"If law firms can be criticised for doing this work which is destroying the planet, it will be much, much more difficult for them to recruit young people," adds Maugham of the Good Law Project.

**More:** [www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/society-watch-leading-uk-lawyers-who-are-refusing-work-fossil-fuel-clients-2023-05-02](http://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/society-watch-leading-uk-lawyers-who-are-refusing-work-fossil-fuel-clients-2023-05-02) plus [www.ls4ca.org/](http://www.ls4ca.org/) - see press release

**Source:** Reuters Events, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**Editor:** Broadly similar issues are faced by members of other professional groups, engineers bankers, accountants. It seems the topic merits discussion and debate. For example, accountants can be heavily involved in supporting entities which have adverse environmental and social impacts. Perhaps an ethical and moral 'elephant in the bedroom'? 



# Sustainability Matters

16<sup>th</sup> May 2013

A fortnightly selection of topical **news and views** about economic, social and environmental issues.  
Designed especially for accountants and those who use the services of accountants.

## Sustainability Matters is;

- Partly sponsored by members of the **Sustainability Working Group**, a special interest group attached to the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants (NZICA).
- Compiled and published by Ray Skinner of *Sustainability Matters*, providers of specialist services relating to sustainability and business support. **Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children.**

## "Big 4" Australian Banks Financing Destruction

"Environmental lobby group Friends of the Earth (FoE) says Australia's largest banks are helping destroy Queensland's Great Barrier Reef by funding the mining and gas industry.

"Market Forces, a part of FoE, claims that since 2008 the 'big four' banks have lent \$3.8 billion to coal port owners and gas extraction firms that operate inside the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef area.

ANZ has lent \$1.1 billion, the Commonwealth Bank [owners of ASB Bank] \$1 billion, Westpac \$905 million and NAB \$791 million, the group says.

"..... ANZ Bank says the institution is working with clients to help reduce carbon emissions.

"..... wants the banks to rule out funding new coal and gas export projects that may damage the reef.

"He says the dredging of sand to expand ports and an increase in the number of ships crossing the UNESCO World Heritage Area with mining products put the reef at risk.

"Mr Vincent said the use of coal worldwide also contributes to climate change. 'Australians rightly care about the Great Barrier Reef and want to see it protected,' he said. 'It is unacceptable for the big banks to use Australians' money to bankroll projects that are threatening the reef.'

"An ANZ spokesman said the bank was helping its clients reduce emissions as the nation shifted to a low carbon economy. 'We have a commitment to increase our project lending to renewable and gas-powered energy by 15-20% by 2020. This builds on our existing portfolio of which renewable technologies represent a third of our total funding for power generation projects.'

"AAP says comment has been sought from the Commonwealth Bank, Westpac and NAB.

"UNESCO has said it will decide in the next few months if the Great Barrier Reef should be listed as a World Heritage site in danger, due to the rapid increase in coastal developments.

**More:** <http://350.org/en/about/blogs/big-4-australian-banks-are-financing-destruction-great-barrier-reef> and <http://econews.com.au/news-to-sustain-our-world/foe-attacks-banks-over-barrier-reef-threat/> and [www.marketforces.org.au/MF\\_Financing\\_Reef\\_Destruction.pdf](http://www.marketforces.org.au/MF_Financing_Reef_Destruction.pdf)

**Also relevant:** *How Divestment Happens: The Inside Story from the Uniting Church of NSW & ACT* at <http://350.org/en/about/blogs/how-divestment-happens-inside-story-uniting-church-nsw-act>

**Source:** DCCAG 2<sup>nd</sup> May and *EcoNews* 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013. ❖

## SUSTAINABILITY GROUP EVENTS

Next event – possibly in June by webcast.

Further announcements in 'due course'. ❖

## Sustainable Enterprise at AUT University

"An exciting new Sustainable Enterprise study option starts in July at AUT University. Almost fifty students have elected to take the first course in this new Bachelor of Business major.

"Focusing on leadership for sustainable enterprise, this first course gives students a chance to work out whether they have what it takes to be a change agent in this challenging field. Later courses in the major look at global phenomenon such as climate change, and current and future enterprise strategies, frameworks and tools, as well as the economic basis of sustainability issues and solutions. Students can focus on emergency management, sustainable design, sustainable tourism and environmental law.

"AUT already offers a sustainability specialisation in its popular MBA. National approval is currently being sought for sustainability and change to be offered as a compulsory course. The intention is that all AUT MBA students will get a grounding in sustainability a subject that research shows executives consider increasingly important but find difficult to action. Industry partners are being sought for the kind of work-integrated learning favoured by the AUT Business School. Anyone interested in contributing as a guest speaker, offering student placements or hosting site visits featuring both the successes and challenges of sustainability-related change efforts is welcome to connect with [kate.kearins@aut.ac.nz](mailto:kate.kearins@aut.ac.nz)

**Source:** Professor Kate Kearins, Faculty of Business and Law Auckland University of Technology, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ❖

## Sustainable Farming – Lifting Our Game

NZICA's 1-day Primary Sector Update includes a presentation *Sustainable Farming – Lifting Our Game*

"In August 2010 the dairy industry reached agreement with the government to jointly fund a seven-year, \$170m programme of work aimed at transforming the dairy value chain. A key component of the programme involves reducing the environment footprint of the industry.

"Brigid Buckley, Developer – Sustainability, DairyNZ will discuss the sustainable Dairying Accord and the Upper Waikato sustainable milk plan project, which are just two of the initiatives that the industry is using to improve its environmental performance.

**When:** 11.15am, Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013

**Where:** Waikato Stadium – Genesis Energy Lounge Level 4, Gate 5, 128 Seddon Road, Hamilton

**More:**

<https://events.nzica.com/wizard.aspx?ID=LPSOCOWA01&D=1>

**Source:** Events and Prof. Development, NZICA 1<sup>st</sup> May. ❖

## What Is an Environmental Issue? The World is Now Urbanised

"I believe that understanding this question is central to our choice to exist. The majority of us understand an environmental issue as a weather event or natural disaster that creates uncomfortable conditions for us. On a small scale we analyse these impacts on a daily basis. 'It snowed in Manhattan this morning – will my train be delayed?' 'It hasn't rained for a week, will I be able to water my crops?'

"Less often do we consider how our behaviours might negatively affect the environment. This is a bit of an oversight on our part. The reality is that nature's behaviour will always have consequence for us – ultimately, our species is utterly dependent upon nature. The reverse is not true: the planet will go on, with or without us. What remains to be seen, is how long conditions here will remain hospitable to our existence.

"I have harangued audiences in the past with my belief that the question 'can we sustain ourselves?' is in fact a banal inquiry. We have no choice but to be sustainable if we want to survive. No species can exceed its range, particularly one so committed to destroying its range. There is no survival without sustainability; unsustainability leads, unavoidably, to extinction. The choice we do have is between whether we become more sustainable with a sense of grace and compassion or whether we induce rapid systems collapse through rapacious consumption and degradation of the global commons.

"We, as a species, particularly in the industrialised world seem intent on shooting ourselves in the collective human foot by psychologically removing ourselves from nature. Nature has become 'the other', the 'environmental issue', rather than us. This simple fact makes it impossible for us to make reasoned decisions about how we live and how we consume resources. The warning lights are blinking in several countries where the struggle to survive and prosper is no longer an economic issue but rather an increasingly violent struggle for essential resources like land and water.

"Back in my city planning days I used to talk about the battle over pronouns. All the thorny issues were set up as struggles between the pronouns 'I', 'we' and 'they'. While almost every conflict was phrased as 'I' versus 'they', solutions were possible only when the idea 'we' gained currency. The relationship between society and the environment in industrialised cultures has become an 'it' issue. You can see it in the language. Nature is not understood as a shared context for supporting life but rather has become another form of capital. We've even cast natural phenomena in villainous roles like 'killer, cruel, devastating, crushing', as though our existential concerns were something for nature to care about.

"In the brief space of a century or two we have applied our ingenious technologies to live more comfortably in uncomfortable places. We've drained wetlands to build houses by the beach, air conditioned whole cities so we can live comfortably in the desert, cleared forests to build coastal metropolises. We have consumed vast resources to do so, and we require vast resources to maintain status quo. Growth requires adding ever more energy. So we have created our own paradox. The cumulative effects of the interventions that allow us to live comfortably are exacerbating the very conditions we are attempting to overcome. In other words, it is becoming increasingly uncomfortable to live in the places where we've grown comfortable living.....

"Humanity is not going to win a fight with nature. But humility may allow us to coexist.

**More:** [www.environmentalleader.com/2013/04/11/what-is-an-environmental-issue/](http://www.environmentalleader.com/2013/04/11/what-is-an-environmental-issue/)

**Source:** *Environmental Leader*, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013. ❖

"The dramatic shift of the world's population into urban areas is encouraging citizens, city planners, businesses and governments to start looking at visions of 'smart' cities.

"Below we look into what is driving the need to establish these networked environments, how smart city concepts and projects are different in the developing world, and what technologies and systems are needed to make them a reality. [Editor: View the large infographic at the web page.]

For example, there were 5 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide in 2011. Perspective: In India there were 670 million cell phone subscriptions and only 366 million people with access to private toilets.

**Source:** Alison Dalziel, LinkedIn post 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013. ❖

## How Business Leaders Can Create Market Revolutions

"SustainAbility's sister company Volans today [7<sup>th</sup> March] launches a new market intelligence report calling on business leaders to help drive 'breakthrough' innovation, as part of a coming revolution in global markets.

"Our current resource crunch coupled with ongoing population growth means that life will become increasingly turbulent – 'Extreme is the new normal', as *New Scientist* has put it. We must do things differently. But government leadership has been conspicuous by its absence, as illustrated by the failure of last year's Rio+20 summit. Against such a backdrop, business has an increasingly crucial role to play in creating a world fit for the 9 billion people predicted for 2050.

"Volans' latest report entitled *Breakthrough: Business Leaders, Market Revolutions* outlines the context in which business operates today and suggests three possible scenarios for the future:

- **Breakdown** – where business misunderstands the complexity of global challenges and resists change;
- **Change-As-Usual** – where earnest efforts are made, but the overall outcome is little more than a set of patches on the existing, dysfunctional system;
- **Breakthrough** – where business dares to create ambitious ventures with innovators, entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, investors and policy makers, helping drive disruptive change into markets and political systems.

"The Volans team interviewed 120 leaders (ranging from the CEOs of some of the world's largest companies through to innovators determined to disrupt just such companies), representing multiple sectors and geographies. Their focus: the emerging challenges in such areas as energy security, water security, food security and climate security. The Breakthrough report summarises these findings and spotlights how some business leaders are taking the reins, arguing the business case for 'market revolutions' in such heartland areas as accounting, valuation and economics.

**More:** [www.sustainability.com/news/sustain-ability-s-sister-company-volans-publish-breakthrough-report-how-business-leaders-can-create-market-revolutions](http://www.sustainability.com/news/sustain-ability-s-sister-company-volans-publish-breakthrough-report-how-business-leaders-can-create-market-revolutions)

**Source:** SustainAbility, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013. ❖

## Updated Performance Guidelines

An update has recently been issued. AS/NZS 5911:2013 provides guidance for the conduct and declaration of verification, validation and assurance of an organisation's environmental and related performance have recently been issued by Standards New Zealand. They replace those issued in 2005 i.e. AS/NZS 5911(Int):2005.

**More:** [www.standards.co.nz](http://www.standards.co.nz)

**Source:** Standards NZ, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ❖



## The Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility

"The Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR) is to be launched in Canberra on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ACCR is a not-for-profit association whose mission is **to promote ethical investment**. Particularly, they facilitate **informed shareholder engagement and advocacy** to promote just and sustainable corporate activity.

"One of the ACCR's goals is to improve company behaviour and performance concerning environmental, social and governance issues. To achieve these changes it is necessary first to generate information regarding corporate activity and then to engage in dialogue with selected companies. If this dialogue is not effective, the next step may be to request that a company distribute a statement to all its shareholders about a particular concern. Alternatively shareholders might request that a resolution be placed at its AGM for consideration.

Thus, the term 'shareholder advocacy' encompasses three activities:

- 'Engagement' which includes dialogue with the company and communication with other shareholders to seek their support
- 'Filing of resolutions' which request a company place a resolution on its AGM agenda
- 'Proxy or electronic voting or physical presence at a meeting' in order to support resolutions or desirable candidates who seek election or re-election as directors.

More: [www.accr.org.au](http://www.accr.org.au)

Source: ACCR eMail 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ❖

## Sustainability Action Overview

"The Quakers Futures Committee has prepared a document which overviews the organisations involved in sustainability action in New Zealand. It is intended as indicative only, and may not be complete. In some cases it refers to other lists of relevant organisations.

"This is an evolving document which will be re-issued from time-to-time. ... We would welcome suggestions for improvement, and would value website ad contact information for new entries.

"The Quakers Futures Committee is particularly interested in the spiritual and psychological dimensions of community engagement in sustainability, and would welcome any information which reflects on the public perceptions of and of and reaction to issues of sustainability, including climate change.

More: An update of the 24<sup>th</sup> April version should be available soon from the link at <http://quaker.org.nz/sustainability>

Source: Gray Southon, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ❖

## A Realisation from China

"Here is a link to a remarkable statement from the former Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress of China. It is a fundamental critique of industrial civilisation and a call for transformation to an ecological civilization. If this thinking is beginning to guide the upper echelons of Chinese political leaders, there may be a better chance of rapid movement on global environmental governance than we now imagine.

"Perhaps the Chinese leaders are beginning to 'get it' in way that Western leaders have not.

[Editor: This is a lengthy article.]

More: [www.solidarityeconomy.net/2013/03/31/china-we-have-come-to-the-profound-realization-that-industrial-civilization-is-unsustainable/#more-915](http://www.solidarityeconomy.net/2013/03/31/china-we-have-come-to-the-profound-realization-that-industrial-civilization-is-unsustainable/#more-915)

Source: DCCAG 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ❖

## Be Happier: 10 Things to Stop Doing Right Now

"**Sometimes the route to happiness depends more on what you *don't* do.**

"Happiness – in your business life and your personal life – is often a matter of subtraction, not addition.

"Consider, for example, what happens when you *stop* doing the following 10 things [NOTE: Heavily abbreviated.]:

1. Blaming
2. Impressing
3. Clinging
4. Interrupting
5. Whining
6. Controlling
7. Criticising
8. Preaching
9. Dwelling
10. Fearing

"Otherwise, today is gone. Once tomorrow comes, today is lost forever.

"Today is the most precious asset you own--and is the one thing you should truly fear wasting.

More: [www.inc.com/jeff-haden/how-to-be-happier-work-10-things-stop-doing.html](http://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/how-to-be-happier-work-10-things-stop-doing.html)

Source: LinkedIn Today, Top Content, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013. ❖

## Behind the Brands

"**Food justice and the 'Big 10' food and beverage companies.** *Behind the Brands* is a call to change the way the food companies that make your favourite brands do business.

"Over the past century, powerful food and beverage companies have enjoyed unprecedented commercial success. But these companies have grown prosperous while the millions who supply the land, labour and water needed for their products face increased hardship. Now, a rapidly changing environment, affected communities and an increasingly savvy consumer base are pushing the industry to rethink 'business as usual'. In this report [52 pages], Oxfam assesses the social and environmental policies of the world's ten largest food and beverage companies and calls on them to take the critical next steps to create a just food system.

The report has recommendations for the food and beverage companies, governments and consumers.

"It is time for companies to get off the starting blocks and compete in a race to the top. With your help we can change the way food companies do business in developing countries so everyone gets a fair deal and has enough to eat.

More: [www.oxfam.org.nz/what-we-do/issues/grow/behind-the-brands](http://www.oxfam.org.nz/what-we-do/issues/grow/behind-the-brands)  
[www.oxfam.org.nz/sites/default/files/reports/bp166-behind-brands-260213-en.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.nz/sites/default/files/reports/bp166-behind-brands-260213-en.pdf)

Source: The Oxfam Campaigns Team, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013. ❖

## Point of No Return: The Massive Climate Threats we Must Avoid

"A report from Greenpeace, with work undertaken by Ecofys, entitled '*Point of No Return*' [60 pages] argues 14 large 'carbon bomb' projects (currently in planning and development stages) are on track to increase global greenhouse emissions 20% by 2020. Plans include giant open cast coal mines in China and Australia, offshore oil and gas extraction in the Arctic and off the coast of Brazil, and controversial plans to expand Canada's tar sands.

More: [www.greenpeace.org/australia/PageFiles/480942/Point\\_Of\\_No\\_Return.pdf](http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/PageFiles/480942/Point_Of_No_Return.pdf)

Source: CSEAR E-Newsletter, page 10, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013. ❖



## The Social Progress Imperative

"Numerous studies have found a high correlation between economic growth and a wide variety of social indicators, yet there is growing awareness that economic measures alone do not fully capture social progress.

"The Social Progress Imperative's mission is to advance global human wellbeing, by combining national social performance and capacity indicators with solutions-oriented outreach to sector leaders, and grassroots champions, who together can effect large-scale change. Social progress is defined as the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, establish the building blocks that allow citizens and communities to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and create the conditions for all individuals to reach their full potential.

"The first major effort of the Social Progress Imperative is the Social Progress Index, launched 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at the Skoll World Forum in Oxford, UK. The Social Progress Index is a tool that we hope will be widely used to inform and influence policies and institutions around the world. The Index is founded on the principle that what we measure guides the choices we make. By measuring the things that really matter to people – their basic needs, their food, shelter and security; their access to healthcare, education, and a healthy environment; their opportunity to improve their life – the Social Progress Index is an attempt to reshape the debate about development.....

[Editor: One of the key people is Professor Michael E. Porter of Harvard Business School.]

**More:** <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org>

**Source:** Derek Handley via Dave Breuer 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013. ❖

## Fonterra Bringing in Greenpeace ex-boss

"Fonterra is flying in a veteran Australian environmentalist and former head of Greenpeace to help its farmers see the value in sustainable practices.

"Paul Gilding, an international business adviser, author and speaker, will headline a series of seminars being held around the country this month.

"The Fonterra Shareholders' Council said its 'Grow Your Minds' seminars were designed to give farmers a better understanding of current sustainability and commercial issues.

"We want to be leaders in this space and in order for this to happen it is important our farmers see the value in sustainable practices," said chairman Ian Brown.

"It was also important for farmers to hear views from outside the Fonterra Co-Operative, Brown said.

"Gilding, who served as executive director for Greenpeace International in the early 1990s, said Kiwi dairy farmers must embrace sustainable farming practices if they wanted to keep a strong foot in the market.

"Demand from both general consumers and major corporates like Unilever was heading in one direction – towards sustainably produced dairy products, he said.

"The point of my speaking tour is to say, 'This is going to happen in the global market and if you want to hand on a healthy farming business to your kids, you need to embrace the future in this way'. ....

**More:**

[www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=3&objectid=10883293](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10883293)

**Source:** NZ Herald, page B3, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ❖

## "Stunning" Difference of GM from non-GM Corn

"A comparison of US Midwest non-GM with GM corn shows shockingly high levels of glyphosate as well as formaldehyde, and severely depleted of mineral nutrients in the GM corn *Dr Mae-Wan Ho*.

**More:** [www.isis.org.uk/Stunning\\_differences\\_of\\_GM\\_from\\_non\\_GM\\_corn.php](http://www.isis.org.uk/Stunning_differences_of_GM_from_non_GM_corn.php)

**Source:** Facebook post Malcolm Rands, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013. ❖

## A Climate Change's Maths Lesson that Might Just Change the World: DO THE +MATHS TOUR

"It's simple maths: we can burn less than **565** more gigatons of carbon dioxide and stay below **2°C of warming** – anything more than that risks catastrophe for life on earth. The only problem? Fossil fuel corporations now have **2,795 gigatons** in their reserves, five times the safe amount. And they're planning to burn it all – unless we do the maths to change our future.

"In November 2012, Bill McKibben and 350.org hit the road in the USA to build a movement strong enough to change the maths of the climate crisis. The *Do the Math Tour* was a massive success, with sold out shows in every corner of the US.

"Australian coalmining has become a 'rogue industry' and most of the coal slated for export must stay in the ground if the nation is to tackle climate change, according to prominent US environmentalist Bill McKibben.

"Many coal projects, and coal infrastructure projects in Queensland, are expected to run for decades, and are only now gaining development approval.

"But the federal government has pledged to reduce Australia's greenhouse output by 80% by the middle of the century, putting it on a collision course with the resources expansion.

"If the world ever takes climate change seriously, that coal simply has to stay in the ground', Mr McKibben said. 'There's no physical way to burn it, or Canada's tar sands, or Venezuela's shale oil, and not go over the red line that almost all governments, including Australia's, have drawn at two degrees'.

"Australian-mined coal burned overseas generates about 711 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, but when new mines are taken into account, that total will be up to 1431 million tonnes in 2020, and 1738 million tonnes in 2025.

"Mr McKibben, the author of the first mainstream book about global warming, *The End of Nature*, will visit Australia [and NZ] in June to galvanise local campaigns for action against climate change. He is travelling to Australia with 350.org, the group he helped found in 2008.....

**Auckland:** Epsom Girls Grammar hall, 7:00pm 11<sup>th</sup> June

**Wellington:** The Embassy, 7:00pm 13<sup>th</sup> June

**Dunedin:** University of Otago, 12<sup>th</sup> June, Time TBD

**More:** [http://act.350.org/event/do\\_the\\_math\\_film/Trailer\\_2:01\\_and\\_bookings](http://act.350.org/event/do_the_math_film_Trailer_2:01_and_bookings) and [www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/coal-gets-rogue-status-in-fight-for-clean-earth-20130408-2hfiz.html](http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/coal-gets-rogue-status-in-fight-for-clean-earth-20130408-2hfiz.html)

**Source:** DCCAG 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013. ❖

Contributions and feedback are welcomed.

Send your news items, handy hints, case studies, suggestions, comments and questions to Ray Skinner of *Sustainability Matters*.

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