

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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Seeing More Clearly

"In order for humans to fit into the biosphere instead of degrade it, we need to follow two main guidelines: no depletion of so-called 'resources' and no waste. At first glance this seems impossible, but all other participants in the ecosystems have done so for millennia. It will take a lot of creative work to restructure our lives to minimize our consumption, as well to avoid putting any toxic by-products into the environment.

More: www.resilience.org/stories/2023-05-22/seeing-more-clearly

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 27th May 2023. 

Navigating the New Frontier of Sustainability Standards

"The *International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) Sustainability Disclosure Standards* developed by the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) present one of the most significant shifts in reporting businesses in Oceania have ever seen.

"While the practical reality of the standards and how they will transition to legislation in Australia and New Zealand is still underway, we already know much of what the standards will mean, where the key gaps might be for companies in this region and what leading practice integration looks like.

"This paper, the first of our ISSB Matters series, offers practical guidance to assist companies across the region prepare for future ISSB-aligned disclosure.

"There's no doubt the change being brought by the ISSB will be a net good. However, getting ready for the proposed disclosure requirements will be a testing time for many organisations.

"Preparing for IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards is challenging and requires hard work and immense collaboration across business functions. But it is also enormously important. Integrating sustainability and financial information should lead to more nuanced and sophisticated financial reporting. In this sense, the historical changes we are about to make to business and accounting may be the most important of our lifetimes.

More: https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/en_au/topics/climate-change/ey-navigating-the-new-frontier-of-sustainability-standards-final.pdf


Source: Debbie Kandauw, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 26th May 2023. 

Why Ideas of 'Planetary Boundaries' Must Uphold Environmental Justice

"Earth-system boundaries define a safe operating space for humanity. Accounting for the planet's most vulnerable people provides a stark warning of the work still to be done. How many biophysical boundaries does our planet have? What are the limits of, say, carbon dioxide emissions,

More: www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-01749-9 plus www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06083-8

Source: Editor, 2nd June 2023

Editor: Refers to the SDG's, doughnut economics, difficulty of setting numerical values, green growth, post-growth and degrowth. 

Legal Rights to Sea Turtles, Boosting 'Rights of Nature' Movement

"On a Panamanian beach long after dark, a group of undergraduate students dug into the sand to excavate a sea turtle nest.

"The students worked under the guidance of Callie Veelenturf, who founded a group which works to protect leatherback turtles and pushed for a new law in Panama which guarantees sea turtles the legal right to live and have free passage in a healthy environment.

"The new law 'will allow any Panamanian citizen to be the voice of sea turtles and defend them legally', Veelenturf said

"When Panama's president signed the law in March, it was a victory for people who have long argued wild animals should have so-called rights of nature that recognise their legal right to exist and to flourish, and allow for lawsuits if those rights are violated.

"Experts hope it's part of an evolution which sees other countries take similar steps to protect species under threat.

"Business as usual laws aren't doing enough to protect against the extinction crisis and climate change,'

"Wildlife protection laws typically are passed because of some perceived benefit to humans, Lyman said.

"Panama's law instead considers what sea turtles need and the fact humans should curb their behaviour to meet those needs, she said.

"The law gives sea turtles the right to an environment free of pollution and other human impacts which cause physical or health damage, like climate change, incidental capture, coastal development and unregulated tourism.

"What makes the law remarkable is it explicitly says sea turtles, as living creatures, have rights, and with enough specificity those rights can be enforced

More: www.abc.net.au/news/2023-06-03/panama-grants-legal-rights-to-sea-turtles-rights-of-nature/102406340

Source: Bruce Gilkison, 3rd June 2023. 

Letters from the Atmosphere

First and now retired former CEO of Toitū Envirocare, Dr Ann Smith has embarked upon a new project called 'Letters from the Atmosphere' which she commenced on 4th May 2023. In her letters published most weekdays Ann writes about a topic from the news. She intends to profile a climate scientist or a notable organisation on Thursdays.

Beginning her academic life as a marine biologist and eventually becoming a professor of environmental management in the UK she moved to NZ where she was with Landcare Research for 16 years. Toitū Envirocare grew out of that, and she led it for several years. Along the way Ann began to be called 'Professor Zero' and that has stuck.

Especially see the foundational issues of the letter; 4th, 5th 8th and 9th of May 2023 and ongoing for interesting topics.

More: <https://annsmithlimited.substack.com/about>

Source: Anne Smith, 24th May 2023. 

Review of Australia's Modern Slavery Act

"The statutory review of the Modern Slavery Act (Cth) (the Act) led by Professor John McMillan AO commenced on 31st March 2022. Professor McMillan's report was tabled in Parliament on 25th May 2023 and makes 30 recommendations which will be considered by the government.

"At a high level, the review found the Act's reporting-only approach has not always translated to accountability. In its current form, the Act requires large entities carrying on business in Australia to submit a modern slavery statement (MSS) every year pursuant to seven mandatory reporting criteria. Civil society groups, and other members of the business community, claim Australia's reporting-only regime has resulted in a 'tick-a-box' approach to modern slavery, rather than genuine attempts to identify and manage risk. The review's recommendation to introduce an obligation to adopt a due diligence system is pivotal to steering companies to look deeper into their human rights impacts.


"The absence of penalties within the Act has also been the subject of criticism.

"Professor McMillan found while the Act constituted an important first step to raise awareness of modern slavery risks reform is needed to ensure entities ... are held to account for their actions (or inaction). His recommendations are broadly consistent with global regulatory trends and community expectations of business.

More:

www.nortonrosefulbright.com/en/knowledge/publications/427f2657/review-of-australias-modern-slavery-act plus www.ag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-05/Report%20-%20Statutory%20Review%20of%20the%20Modern%20Slavery%20Act%202018.PDF 140 pages 1.49Mb

Source: Debbie Kandauw, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 26th May 2023.


Editor: See page 125 regarding NZ's consultation paper as well as several other references found by a word search. 

Improved Climate Action Toolbox

This webinar explains what's new and how the Toolbox can help emission reductions. A step-by-step of how the Toolbox works, streamlined results, recommended actions and the new target-setting module.

When/Where: Thurs 29th Jun 2023, Noon - 1:00 pm. Online

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/learn/events/new-and-improved-climate-action-toolbox-launch/>

Source: SBN, 1st June 2023. 

380 New Species Discovered in a Year in Ark of Biodiversity in Greater Mekong

"A thick-thumbed bat, a colour-changing lizard, and a Muppet-looking orchid are just a few of the 380 new-to-science species found and described in the Greater Mekong region between 2021 and 2022.

"In a report released this week by WWF, researchers highlight the remarkable diversity in this underexplored hotbed of life. The report documents the collaborative efforts of hundreds of scientists who ventured into Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam to survey the biodiversity there in what is sometimes called the Indo-Burma hotspot. They identified 290 plant, 19 fish, 24 amphibian, 46 reptile and one mammal species.

"Since 1997, the total number of plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals described in the Greater Mekong region has reached 3,389 species.

More: www.eco-business.com/news/380-new-species-discovered-in-a-year-in-ark-of-biodiversity-greater-mekong/

Source: eco-Business.com, 31st May 2023. 

More than 5,000 New Species Discovered in Pacific Deep-sea Mining Hotspot

"Scientists have discovered more than 5,000 new species living on the seabed in an untouched area of the Pacific Ocean which has been identified as a future hotspot for deep-sea mining, according to a review of the environmental surveys done in the area.

"It is the first time the previously unknown biodiversity of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), a mineral-rich area of the ocean floor which spans 1.7m sq miles between Hawaii and Mexico in the Pacific, has been comprehensively documented. The research will be critical to assessing the risk of extinction of the species, given contracts for deep-sea mining in the near-pristine area appear imminent.

"Most of the animals identified by researchers exploring the zone are new to science, and almost all are unique to the region: only six, including a carnivorous sponge and a sea cucumber, have been seen elsewhere.

"Contracts for mining exploration in the CCZ have been granted to 17 deep-sea mining contractors in an area covering 745,000 sq miles. The companies, backed by countries including the UK, US and China, want to exploit minerals including cobalt, manganese and nickel, in part to sell to the alternative energy sector.


"In July the International Seabed Authority, a quasi-UN body based in Jamaica which regulates deep-sea mining, will begin accepting exploitation applications from these companies.

"To better understand the impact of mining this fragile ecosystem and its newly discovered inhabitants, an international team of scientists has built the first 'CCZ checklist' by compiling all the records from expeditions to the region. Published in the journal *Current Biology*, it includes 5,578 different species, of which an estimated 88% to 92% had never before been seen.

More:

www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/may/25/more-than-5000-new-species-discovered-in-pacific-deep-sea-mining-hotspot plus [www.cell.com/current-biology/pdf/S0960-9822\(23\)00534-1.pdf](http://www.cell.com/current-biology/pdf/S0960-9822(23)00534-1.pdf) 20 pages 2.93Mb.

Source: *atAdvocacy News*, 29th May 2023

Editor: See conclusions on page 8. 

Electricity Being Made from Thin Air

"A team of engineers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst has been making clean electricity from thin air.


"According to the university, 'nearly any material can be turned into a device which continuously harvests electricity from humidity in the air'.

"The key, it says, lies in being able to fill the material with nanopores less than 100 nanometres in diameter. The researchers have dubbed it 'the generic Air-gen effect'. [Less than a thousandth of the width of a human hair.]

"In the research paper, it is explained, 'air humidity is a vast, sustainable reservoir of energy which, unlike solar and wind, is continuously available'.

"But until now, exploring the energy potential of air has been a complex process – requiring, for example, the development of unique material synthesis and consequently hindering scalability.

More: www.euronews.com/next/2023/05/26/scientists-have-found-a-way-of-making-electricity-from-thin-air plus www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/05/230524181948.htm and www.researchgate.net/publication/370552540_Generic_Air-gen_Effect_in_Nanoporous_Materials_for_Sustainable_Energy_Harvesting_from_Air_Humidity

Source: *NZ Herald*, page A14, 29th May 2023. 

Talking the Talk But Not Walking the Walk – The Absence of Net Zero Financial Disclosures

“Companies around the world are setting net zero by 2050 targets.

“Despite that, our analysis shows of 134 carbon-intensive public companies, none are preparing their financial accounts in line with the world achieving this climate goal. Only three companies provided investors with sensitivities of what achieving net zero by 2050 might mean in their FY2021 reports – showing it can be done. This blog looks at those three reports and shows the feasibility and necessity of financial reporting against achieving net zero that investors can look for in upcoming FY2022 reports.

More: <https://carbontracker.org/reports/talking-the-talk-but-not-walking-the-walk-the-absence-of-net-zero-financial-disclosures/>

Source: CarbonTracker, 31st May 2023. 

2023 Global Slavery Index

“In May 2023, Walk Free published the Global Slavery Index 2023, a flagship report published every five years, to evaluate the global situation regarding modern slavery and forced labour, and progress made.

“The report estimates 50 million people globally were living in modern slavery on any given day in 2021, and found compounding crises, such as COVID-19, armed conflicts, environmental degradation, and assaults on democracy, heightened risks of modern slavery, and impacted progress to eradicating it.

“Countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery in 2021 shared some similar political, social and economic characteristics, such as political instability, conflict and/or authoritarianism. In some countries, the government forces citizens to work in different sectors, private prisons or through forced conscription. Other countries are home to large numbers of refugees or migrant workers, who are vulnerable to exploitation. Some countries also have inherited systems of hereditary slavery which continue to be practiced.


“Women, children and migrants remained disproportionately affected by modern slavery, and those belonging to multiple marginalised groups faced even greater risks.

“Forced labour occurred mostly in lower-middle and upper-middle income countries, with a deep connection to demand from higher-income countries via complex and opaque supply chains. Purchasing practices of wealthier governments and businesses was found to fuel exploitation in lower-income countries in supply chains, with G20 nations accounting for more than 75% of the world’s trade.

“Among government responses to modern slavery, Australia’s Modern Slavery Act was found to have the most notable improvement, which requires certain companies to report on modern slavery risks in their supply chain and actions they are taking to respond. However, overall improvements among governments to address modern slavery since the previous Global Slavery Index assessments in 2018 were far fewer and weaker than the situation requires.

More: www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/global-global-slavery-index-finds-limited-progress-on-addressing-modern-slavery-forced-labour/ plus <https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2023/05/17/114737/Global-Slavery-Index-2023.pdf> 172 pages, 35Mb

Source: Debbie Kandaau, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 26th May 2023.

Editor: New Zealand is ranked as 25th (worst) with estimated 1.6 people per 1,000 population i.e. 8,000 in a population of 4,822,000 (page 68) – same rating as Australia. 

By Fighting the Ozone Hole, We Accidentally Saved Ourselves

The 1987 Montreal Protocol accord has become an unexpected ward against climate catastrophe.

More: <https://hakaimagazine.com/news/by-fighting-the-ozone-hole-we-accidentally-saved-ourselves/>

Source: reasons to be cheerful, 31st May 2023. 


Best Practices in Sustainability Education

“This June, GCSE will host a series of workshops which will give participants the opportunity to learn about and share best practices in applying the Key Competencies in Sustainability framework into pedagogies, assessments, and different content areas.

When/Where: All at 2:00 – 3:30ET. Online

- Wed, 14th June - Pedagogical Approaches
- Tues, 20th June - Assessment Activities
- Mon, 26th June - Curricula and Content Areas

More: www.gcseglobal.org/event/best-practices-sustainability-education-spring-series

Source: GCSE, 1st June 2023. 

Launch of Insights on New Zealand Sustainability Professionals 2023

“Oxygen Consulting, together with the Sustainable Business Network (SBN), Sustainable Business Council (SBC) and Auckland University of Technology (AUT), are launching the results of the fourth year of research into the role of the sustainability professional in New Zealand, including its challenges and opportunities.

“Join us to hear what this year’s insights reveal about the sustainability profession in New Zealand today, including around future capability development gaps, diversity, remuneration, education, wellbeing, job satisfaction, and more.

“For the first time, this year’s research establishes benchmark data for three different sustainability role types:

- General (role is fully focused on organisational sustainability)
- Specialist (specialist expertise on specific aspects of sustainability)
- Additional (role is predominantly focused on other activities but has some sustainability responsibilities)

“Insights on New Zealand Sustainability Professionals is the only research of its kind in New Zealand. The findings provide valuable insights for people working in the profession, those looking to transition into it, and students who want to embark on a sustainability career. ...

When/Where 27th June 2023, Noon - 1:00pm. Online

More: www.oxygen-consulting.co.nz/news-and-blog/spr-2023-survey-launches-ghnrx

Source: Lisa Martin, via LinkedIn 31st May 2023. 

Democratic Innovation: Why We Need It and How We Can Do It

“Trust Democracy and Koi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures invite you to a webinar to learn from two world experts on democratic innovation. The webinar will explore the potential of citizens’ assemblies and Polis to include and empower the public in agenda setting and problem solving. Register to learn from Art O’Leary, who is responsible for the Irish Citizens Assembly, and Colin Megill, who co-created Polis, one of the most promising online platforms for large-scale public discussions that are safe, productive and insightful.

When/Where: Wed. 14th June, 8am – 9am. Online

More: <https://trustdemocracy.nz/2023/05/democratic-innovation>

Source: IPANZ, E-Update, 6th June 2023. 


First Steps Agreed on Plastics Treaty Breakthrough at Paris Talks

"Nation-state representatives have taken the first concrete step toward a legally binding treaty to regulate plastic, described as the most important green deal since the 2015 international climate agreement.

"The banging of a recycled-plastic gavel, on Friday night [2nd June] at Unesco headquarters in Paris, signalled the end of a fraught process, marked by accusations of exclusion and industrial lobbying. Talks threatened to fall apart, but in the end delegates were able to broadly agree on key elements the treaty should contain, laying the groundwork for the future agreement. [A very positive milestone.]

More:

www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jun/06/first-steps-agreed-on-plastics-treaty-after-breakthrough-at-paris-talks

Source: Editor, 7th June 2023. 

Electric Cars Too Heavy for Car Parks

"Heavy electric cars could be banned from old multi-storey car parks, engineers have warned.

"The Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE) has said weight limits should be imposed on older buildings to cope with the increasingly heavy new electric vehicles following a review. Chris Whapples, an IStructE fellow and overseeing consultant for the review, said: 'I think a lot of old owners will opt for imposing a weight limit rather than paying for strengthening measures.'

"New electric vehicles are much heavier than the average petrol or diesel car and EV batteries account for much of this, usually weighing around 500kg.


"They typically make the car much heavier than the ones manufactured in the 1960s and 1970s, when many car parks were built. There are 6,000 multi-storey car parks across the UK, and the review warned the unloved structures are most susceptible to buckling under the added weight.

"It's not the little city electric cars which are likely to be a problem or the average family saloon, but some of the top-end electric vehicles like executive saloons or SUVs which are about three tonnes potentially be overloading some of these older multi-storey car parks'.

"The current Tesla Model 3 weighs 1,672kgs, compared to the 768kg Ford Cortina Mark 1. The Audi E-Tron weighs 2,351kg, compared to the 770kg Vauxhall Viva, while even the Nissan Leaf weighs 1,580kg.

More: www.yahoo.com/news/electric-cars-too-heavy-old-050000158.html 323 comments at 6th June

Source: The Telegraph, 6th June 2023.


Editor: This could also mean roads are not designed for a large proportion of vehicles being heavier. 

NZI EV Fleet Guide: A Comprehensive EV Adoption Guide for Business Fleets

"New research from NZI, a brand of IAG, has found while businesses are switching their Internal Combustion Engine fleets to electric vehicles and hybrids in increasing numbers, there are challenges to going green with a business fleet. Their new EV Fleet Guide looks at how to overcome the challenges to unlock the potential of the new technology.

More: www.nzi.co.nz/content/dam/insurance-brands-nz/nzi/nz/en/documents/misc/nzi-ev-fleet-guide-nz7436-1-0523.pdf 60 pages 8.8Mb

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 1st June 2023

Editor: The guide seems to be fairly high level and does not, for example, point out issues vehicles can be either AC or DC and required different chargers as recently highlighted on the 'Fair Go' TV programme. 

Our Actions Tell a Story – oatas

"Oatas is an all-new sustainability reporting software which is designed to provide a complete Management, Measurement and Reporting platform, whilst also allowing you to find solutions to further improve your impact and tell compelling stories.


"We recognised while companies are increasingly passionate about making sustainable choices, there was no all-in-one sustainability platform on the market to meet their complex needs. This meant tracking, measuring, improving and reporting on all sustainability goals was unachievable for most organisations.

"Our solution was Oatas – a complete, all-in-one planning and measurement framework for organisations to make a sustainable impact in multiple areas, in one powerful platform.

"Oatas doesn't dictate the areas where your business should be making changes, or set targets for you to achieve. We simply give you the tools to design, drive and deliver a sustainability program which suits your organisation.

More: <https://oatas.co/> plus

www.place.net.nz/uploads/2/6/9/4/26944819/our_actions_tell_a_story_-_mitch.pdf

Source: Silvia Purdie, 1st June 2023. 

Microcars Invading Cycle Lanes of Amsterdam

"In Amsterdam, cars have been invading the bike lanes. OMG, yes, even in Amsterdam. But it's not what you think. The culprits are microcars, vehicles so small and slow they can't really mix in with normal cars on the road.

"I know, somehow everything seems wrong about that sentence. But it's true.

"They're smaller than a golf cart and have a top speed of 45km/h. Because they're classed as mobility aids, they're allowed on footpaths and cycleways and no one is worried about it.


"For runabout city uses, microcars are desirable vehicles, especially compared to big SUVs: they make the roads safer, they don't guzzle gas, they don't require enormities of parking space and, if they were widely adopted, they would help with congestion. They're ideal for supermarket shopping.

"There are several on the market, including other Norwegian brands like the Buddy and Think City and the Swiss Microlino, a 'bubble car' which can hit 90km/h.

"And for all those people who don't want to ride a bicycle, microcars are better than bikes – there, I said it. They keep you dry, they carry a bigger load and you can travel with another person.

More: www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/design-for-living-the-microcars-of-amsterdam/BGAGA7U3OFE3ZBTFWUBGDODH5E/ [Paywall], plus www.euronews.com/next/2023/02/01/this-all-electric-microcar-could-solve-parking-problems-in-crowded-urban-areas and <https://ebiketips.road.cc/content/news/microcars-are-massive-in-china-why-not-in-the-uk-4355>

Source: *NZ Herald, Canvas*, page 6, 3rd June 2023

Editor: For some, users can carry the batteries into their homes etc for recharging. 

With Green Prescriptions, Getting Healthier Is a Walk in the Park

More: <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/green-prescriptions-health-nature-parks/>

Source: reasons to be cheerful, 31st May 2023. 