

Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

20th July 2023



Designed by
www.vecteezy.com

A Shared North Star: Intergenerational Wellbeing Requires System Change

"Ganesh Nana is chair of the Productivity Commission.

"OPINION: Systems change and systems thinking seem to be all the rage right now. In our A Fair Chance for All inquiry, we considered how well the public management system in Aotearoa New Zealand is operating. Our inquiry engaged extensively with communities and stakeholders across New Zealand to understand how the public management system must continue to evolve, to meet the complex challenges our country faces.

"These challenges are systemic and are likely to persist and intensify. Climate change, natural disasters, and social and economic inequities are becoming the norm. These issues play out at place – locally. So, it was timely to see the release of the independent review into the Future of Local Government, the day after our final report was published.

"In the face of overlapping and compounding crises, the Commission has called for public management system change. We are not building from scratch and the recent release of these two substantial inquiries provide a strong platform for us to do this.

"Systems thinking demands we examine the patterns within and between systems. Although our inquiry focused on the public management system, the parallel between our findings, and those of the Review into the Future of Local Government, is striking. Despite the different terms of reference, scope and modes of establishment, the thematic similarities between each review's findings and recommendations are very evident.

"I note the collective call for better outcomes to be achieved through a stronger focus on stewardship and relationship-building; giving effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi and growing authentic Treaty relationships with hapū and iwi; an acknowledgement communities must be at the heart of efforts to build intergenerational wellbeing; and the need for all parts of government – local and central – to come together to align wellbeing priorities, and channel short and long term investment accordingly.

More: www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/300918629/a-shared-north-star-intergenerational-wellbeing-requires-system-change plus www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/492359/future-for-local-government-review-what-you-need-to-know and www.futureforlocalgovernment.govt.nz/reports/ 135 pages, 17Mb, with a total of 800 pages and www.futureforlocalgovernment.govt.nz

Source: Tim Marshall, 2nd July 2023.

Sustainability Fundamentals: Reporting Toolkit

This second toolkit SBC Sustainability Fundamentals toolkit has to do with sustainability reporting, often a daunting challenge for organisations starting out on their journey. It introduces the concepts of sustainability reporting.

More: <https://sbc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SBC-Reporting-Toolbox.pdf> 6 pages, 1.22Mb

Source: SBC Weekly Pānui, 13th July 2023.

Reshaping the Economy

"At the *Economy for Public Good Conference*, we'll weave a shared purpose for moving beyond a broken 'business as usual' economy.

"If you'd like to build bonds and share ideas with people inspired to progress past GDP, and create an economy where people and nature thrive, this one-day hui is for you.

"This one-day event is a for all of us wanting to mend the economy so it serves society and our natural world – community leaders, policymakers, activists, economists and businesses doing good

"Across Aotearoa and around the world people realise economic progress is more than simply Gross Domestic Product or growth from any source. The mark of an economy that really works, is it works for people delivering a good life for everyone, in a way that is truly sustainable so future generations can also thrive.

"Around the world, governments, communities, and businesses are developing new economic approaches to halt damage to the environment and restore it.

"To solve the big challenges of our age – from climate change and biodiversity loss to inequality and social cohesion - we need to lay down new economic tracks.

When/Where: Thursday 31st August, Auckland

More: <https://forumpoint2.eventsair.com/weall2023/>

Source: Leah Murphy, LinkedIn, 6th July 2023 plus Kath Dewar, 10th July 2023.

2023 Winners of the Ethical & Impact Awards

"This was the third year of the Ethical and Impact Investment Awards.

"The conference panel on climate investment discussed the hard-hitting new report launched by Mindful Money yesterday. The report shows most companies in the fossil fuel industry have failed to make the transition to renewable energy and more than two thirds of companies are doubling down by increasing their exploration and production of oil and gas. There is \$3 billion of KiwiSaver and retail funds invested in those companies

"The annual awards are about raising standards in the investment sector through profiling and celebrating the leaders. The twenty eight judges in eight awards categories brought independence and expertise to the judging process. This third year of the awards has affirmed the important role of these awards in celebrating excellence and highlighting best investment practice.'

"The award winners show innovation and leadership in ethical and impact investing. There is justification for public concern over greenwashing and exaggerated claims around ethical investment – the winners showed what it looks like when investment providers walk the talk. The awards showed there has been real progress in higher standards, more choices for individual investors and scaled up positive impacts for the climate, environment and social issues.'

More: <https://mindfulmoney.nz/learn/media-release/>

Source: Editor, 6th July 2023.

A Filter Could be a Simple Solution to Your Laundry Releasing Microplastics

"Worried about your laundry releasing microplastics? A filter could be a simple solution

"An external filter, retrofitted to your washing machine, is an immediate way of stopping microfibrils going down the drain

"You might not know it, but installing a washing machine filter might be one of the simplest defences against microplastics entering the ocean.

"Scientists estimate there are 14m tonnes of microplastic on the ocean floor, and a further 24tn grains floating on the surface of the ocean. Microplastics come from many sources – they can shed from clothes, sneakers and bags made from synthetic materials; or they can be the product of larger pieces of plastic breaking down into smaller and smaller particles.

"But 35% of microplastic pollution in the ocean is thought to come from the turbulence and friction of putting our clothes, sheets and towels through the washing machine, which release microfibrils – a subcategory of microplastics.

"A white paper delivered to the European Commission last month [June] argues washing machine filters are the only effective near-term solution to reducing the release of microfibrils into the environment and should be mandated (the technology exists but inbuilt filters are extremely scarce).

.....

"If you don't have the space to install an external microfibre filter, another way to reduce microfibre pollution is by using a Guppyfriend bag. Place your polyester or synthetic garments inside a bag before placing it in your washing machine. The bag catches any microfibrils that may break off during the laundry cycle.

More:

www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/may/23/worried-about-your-laundry-releasing-microplastics-a-filter-could-be-a-simple-solution plus www.consumer.org.nz/articles/8-easy-ways-to-reduce-microplastic and www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/65821849

Source: Eko, 9th July 2023.

Plastic Waste Briefing

"We have just published the latest issue of *The Ethical Corporation* magazine in which we examine the increasingly urgent drive to tackle the plastic waste epidemic.

"With just 9% of plastics produced being recycled, we look at the complex challenges that need to be overcome by governments and industry, and the promising technologies and startups that could help deliver recycling solutions at scale.

"While this edition of the magazine covers a wide range of issues related to plastic waste it points to 'chemical companies the world over investing hundreds of billions of dollars in new plastic factories', the millions of people who rely on plastic waste picking for their challenging livelihoods, about increased tyre wear as a result of various types of EV's being far heavier than internal combustion powered vehicles with governments not wishing to talk about it and 'According to the *Breaking the Plastic Wave*' report by Systemiq and The Pew Charitable Trusts, more than 800 species are already known to be affected by marine plastic pollution, including all sea turtles and 44% of marine bird species, while the social and environmental impacts of marine plastic could be as high as \$2.2 trillion per year.'

More: <https://1.reutersevents.com/LP=35476> 48 pages. 7.58MB

Source: Reuters Events, 1st July 2023

Editor: When I was a child and a teenager there was NO plastic packaging.

In the Market for Solar power? Don't Fall for These Tricks

"If you're looking at solar panels for your home, it's easy to become confused. The quotes you receive, while beautifully laid out, can contain a bamboozling array of information. You put a lot of trust in companies. And while our last mystery shop of the industry painted it in a good light, there are things you still need to be careful of.

"To figure out exactly what you should be looking for – and any pitfalls to avoid – we played around with the software many solar panel companies use, to see how easy it was to make it look like you're getting a better deal than you really are.

More: www.consumer.org.nz/articles/in-the-market-for-solar-power-don-t-fall-for-these-tricks

Source: Consumer, 8th July 2023.

Brands Put Brakes on Bioplastics Over Biodiversity and Recyclability Concerns

"Global bioplastics production set to grow from around 2.23 million tonnes in to about 6.3 million tonnes in 2027.

[Long article.]

More: www.reuters.com/sustainability/land-use-biodiversity/brands-put-brakes-bioplastics-over-biodiversity-recyclability-concerns-2023-07-12

Source: Reuters Events, 15th July 2023.

The Rise of Generation Left Could Spell Trouble for National

"With an election just three months away, there's a new Australian research paper which should be compulsory reading for all New Zealand political parties, and the National Party in particular.

"It's called, *'Generation Left: young voters are deserting the right'*.

"Don't be put off by the title. It's not some self-serving polemic from the Australian Labor Party. Rather, it's a serious analysis of demographic voting behaviour released last week by the Centre for Independent Studies, a centre-right think tank based in Sydney.

"It makes for grim reading if you're a political conservative.

"For many years, there's been a fundamental rule in politics in the Anglosphere that most voters move right on the political spectrum as they age. This rule reflects the old adage that if you don't lean left when you're young, you don't have a heart, and if you don't lean right when you're older, you don't have a brain.

"This electoral phenomenon of 'sticky' left voting is not unique to Australia.

"Last year, *Financial Times* undertook a similar analysis of voting patterns in the UK. The results were the same. Boomers and Gen Xers have headed right as they've aged, but Millennials are bucking the trend.

"It seems becoming more conservative with age – what the FT calls 'the oldest rule in politics' – is not for Millennials.

"What's causing this upheaval in demographic voting patterns?

"In the Australian context, many younger voters believe centre-left parties offer better solutions for the problems which concern them – from economic insecurity and climate change to healthcare access and housing affordability.

"Crucially, those concerns do not appear to be going away for Millennials and Gen Zers as they age.

More: www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/ross-stitt-the-rise-of-generation-left-could-spell-trouble-for-national/PHLRUBQYCSCLJPGMETJZ73TG6A/ Paywall

Source: *NZ Herald*, page A18, 7th July 2023.

Greenwashing At the Supermarket: Can We Trust Environmental Claims?

"Planet conscious, green, eco-friendly, compostable – these are just some of the claims we see down our supermarket aisles. But what do they all mean, and are they legit?"

"Consumer NZ shopped for a basket of goods and assessed the green claims on products.


"We were disappointed – but not really surprised – with the number of meaningless environmental claims we found, and how much time it took us to verify them.

"Of course, not everyone has the time or energy to verify environmental claims and we found it took more than a quick Google search. Instead, we needed knowledge of packaging and waste disposal in Aotearoa, as well as knowledge of product standards and certifications. Plus, we needed plenty of time to talk to manufacturers and experts.

"Shoppers should be able to accept green claims based on trust. Claims should be truthful and accurate, and the Fair Trading Act prohibits companies from making false or misleading environmental claims. The act also says companies must have good evidence to back up what they're saying.

"Yet in some instances, consumers' trust is misplaced and it's hitting the planet – and your wallet – where it hurts.


More: www.consumer.org.nz/articles/greenwashing-can-we-trust-environmental-claims

Source: Consumer 1st July 2023. 

Timber Harvests to Meet Global Wood Demand will Bring Soaring Emissions: Study

Has four key points.

More: <https://news.mongabay.com/2023/07/timber-harvests-to-meet-global-wood-demand-will-bring-soaring-emissions-study/> plus www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06187-1
19pages, 6.6Mb

Source: Eko, 18th July 2023. 

Solar-(em)powered: Streetlights Illuminate a Path Towards Climate Resilience

"The necessity for climate-resilient infrastructure is increasingly evident to prepare for the future. Solar-powered streetlights are one such innovation with enormous promise. These lights provide a stable and independent source of illumination by harnessing the sun's energy, even during power outages caused by extreme weather events.

"Their solar-powered lights emphasise efficiency, environmental sensitivity, and technology improvements, all of which offer a hopeful path toward a brighter and more resilient future.

"[The lights] combine high-efficiency solar panels, efficient LEDs, superior batteries, smart sensors, and remote monitoring capabilities. These lights have been intelligently engineered to vary their brightness based on ambient light conditions and traffic flow, optimising energy consumption. Furthermore, its environmentally friendly design reduces light pollution, which benefits both wildlife and surrounding inhabitants.

"Solar streetlights are a more economically conscious alternative to standard grid-connected lights, especially in new developments. Installation costs are greatly reduced because extensive wiring is not required.

"Cities may improve safety, cut energy usage, and help to mitigate the effects of climate change by embracing these lights.

More: www.optimistdaily.com/2023/07/solar-empowered-these-streetlights-illuminate-a-path-towards-climate-resilience/

Source: atAdvocacy, 5th July 2023. 

Artificial Intelligence Tech Gets Gong for Stopping Wind Turbines Hitting Birds


"German renewable research centre ZSW has been named an 'AI Champion' for a system using artificial intelligence designed to prevent birds from colliding with wind turbines.

"The Centre for Solar Energy and Hydrogen Research Baden-Württemberg, or ZSW, was presented the award by the Baden-Württemberg ministry of economic affairs.

"ZSW's BirdRecorder uses a combination of artificial intelligence and machine learning to detect the species of approaching birds in time to calculate their expected flight path and shut down the necessary wind turbines to avoid collisions.

"Given a wind turbine cannot simply come to an immediate halt, sufficient time to engage its turbine control system is necessary to safely put the wind turbine into coasting mode.....

More: <https://reneweconomy.com.au/artificial-intelligence-tech-gets-gong-for-stopping-wind-turbines-hitting-birds/>


Source: SnippETS, 6th July 2023. 

7 Sustainability Trends 2023

"AccountAbility recently published its *7 Sustainability Trends 2023 Report*, which highlights the key sustainability priorities and issues faced by businesses, and the opportunities they present. We have summarised the key findings;.

- Businesses need to have achievable emissions reduction plans in place as well as targets if they are to maintain legitimacy, competitiveness, and attraction from shareholders. This comes from growing scepticism surrounding long-term net zero targets and their viability.
- Meaningful stakeholder engagement should be a priority as businesses continue to face increasing pressure on all sustainability fronts as stakeholder activism continues.
- There is a greater necessity for the consideration of geopolitics in sustainability strategies and organisational risk management in a post-globalisation era.
- There is a greater mandate for ESG knowledge on Boards with the growing expectation that sustainability should be led from the top. Building up this knowledge will require a diverse range of backgrounds and skills.
- Growing regulatory requirements to report and disclose ESG and sustainability-related information will heighten scrutiny on organisational sustainability practices and data quality.
- Sustainable procurement continues to be a large focus for organisations in the wake of global supply chain disruptions and in efforts to increase resilience and long-term viability.
- Nature is now intrinsically a part of sustainability and asset valuation. Nature focused stocktaking and materiality analyses are essential first steps for businesses trying to understand their nature-related impacts and dependencies.

More: <https://mailchi.mp/2a8484c32ae7/better-business-july-2023> plus <https://aa-public-images.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/AA+7+Sustainability+Trends+2023+Report.pdf> 20 pages, 1.06Mb

Source: Oxygen Consulting, 7th July 2023. 

Limitless 'White' Hydrogen May Soon Shatter All Energy Assumptions

Could be a major energy game changer. The industry, deeming the potential 'astronomical'.

More: <https://news.augustineformayor.ca/>

Source: Daily Telegraph, 14th July 2023. 

Consultation: Proposed Guidance and Expectations for Keeping Proper Climate-Related Disclosure Records

"The Government has introduced a new regime making climate-related disclosures mandatory for certain large entities (known as Climate Reporting Entities or CREs) under Part 7A of the Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013.

"The first climate statements will be lodged by CREs from early 2024.

"We are seeking input from CREs and other interested parties on proposed guidance to help reporting entities to meet their statutory obligation to keep proper climate-related disclosure records at all times.

"The purpose of the proposed guidance is to set out the principles and expectations relating to creating, keeping, and maintaining proper records to provide evidence that a CRE's climate statements comply with:

- The legislative requirements in Part 7A of the Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013
- The reporting standard requirements set out in the Aotearoa New Zealand Climate Standards.

Submissions close: 5pm, Friday 4th August 2023

More: www.fma.govt.nz/business/focus-areas/consultation/consultation-proposed-guidance-and-expectations-for-keeping-proper-climate-related-disclosure-records/

Source: Debbie Kandauw, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 7th July 2023. 

Consultation on a Biodiversity Credit System for Aotearoa New Zealand

"We have thousands of native species under threat, or at risk of, extinction in Aotearoa New Zealand. Many of our most threatened species and habitats are found outside of conservation land.

"Despite best efforts, our biodiversity and ecosystems continue to decline. More investment from a broad range of sources could increase protection and restoration efforts.

"The Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation are seeking public feedback on:

- Whether a biodiversity credit system should be introduced for New Zealand
- How it could be set up to support trust in biodiversity credits
- What role the Government could play in the system.

"A biodiversity credit system could help to conserve important habitats and species by enabling landowners who protect, restore and enhance native ecosystems to earn credits for their actions.

"Private companies, charities, investors, philanthropists and others who wish to support biodiversity protection could buy biodiversity credits from landowners and choose to make certain claims about their positive impact, for example, in marketing.

"Projects covered by a biodiversity credit system could relate to biodiversity on land such as:

Submissions close: 3 November 2023.

More: www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2023-consultations/biodiversity-credits-conservation-efforts/

Source: Debbie Kandauw, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 7th July 2023. 

A Guide to Just Transitions for Communities in New Zealand

"Motu Research has just released a new research-based and action-oriented guide to help communities and organisations run their own just transition processes in response to challenges like climate change, rapid technological change, employment changes in regions and the transition to renewable energy.

"The guide offers practical ideas, methods, and tools enabling communities to come together to solve problems in ways which work better for everyone.

"It draws on tikanga and mātauranga Māori and includes brief case studies of transitions led by iwi, hapū and Māori communities as well as other communities around Aotearoa.


"The idea of 'just transitions' has been around for decades. Responses to major challenges including climate change are amplifying its importance to communities.

"What does it mean today for Aotearoa New Zealand?

- How is it shaped by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori the Māori worldview?
- What actions are communities already taking?
- And how could communities mobilise the vision and leadership to change how we approach the challenges and opportunities ahead and ensure no one is left behind?

"The guide was commissioned by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

More: <https://motu.outreach.co.nz/?Ns=&Na=view-msg-public&SMESG-oid=22254&S> plus www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/just-transition/just-transitions-guide 36Mb

Source: Motu Economic and Public Policy Research, 12th July 2023. 

Climate Change Adaptation: Impact of Extremes

"At the recent Aotearoa Circle online Partner Hui, we had the privilege of hearing from Dr Rob Murdoch, General Manager of Science and Deputy Chief Executive at NIWA.

"His presentation was an eye-opening and data-driven exploration of the extreme effects of climate change in Aotearoa New Zealand. It served as a poignant reminder of the importance and urgency of our work. If you were unable to attend the session, you can watch the recording

More: <https://vimeo.com/841049868> 26:59

Source: The Aotea Circle, 6th July 2023. 

Shelter in Our Changing Climate: Challenges and Pathways

"In August our guest is Scott Willis, a director of Climate Navigator, a sustainability and climate risk consultancy, based in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Scott has worked to deliver climate solutions since the mid 2000s, focussing on rural transitions, energy solutions and climate safe housing.

"In this webinar he will talk about the current housing crisis, situate it within the metacrisis / collapse in eco-social systems, and look at current Government programmes and pathways for affordable, climate safe shelter.

When/Where: Wed, 2nd August, 2023, 7:00pm. Online.

More: www.ourclimatedeclaration.org.nz/shelter-in-our-changing-climate

Source: Our Climate Declaration, 16th July 2023. 