

Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children



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2023 Earthshot Prize Winners Announced

"An agritech startup which helps female farmers in India to cut food waste using solar-powered dehydration equipment is among the five green innovations to scoop the Prince of Wales' prestigious Earthshot Prize.

"The winners of the annual eco-awards were revealed on Tuesday evening [7th November] at a star-studded ceremony at the Theatre at MediaCorp in Singapore.

"Each will walk away with £1 million to scale up their pioneering projects.

"Prince William and his Royal Foundation launched the ambitious 10-year initiative in 2020, with the goal of funding 50 solutions to some of the planet's most urgent environmental problems by 2030.

"I choose to believe future generations will look back on this decade as the point at which we globally took collective action for our planet – the moment we refused to accept the voices of denial and defeatism, and instead became the architects of change towards a healthy and sustainable world', William said during the ceremony.


"This year's winners were chosen from a shortlist of 15 finalists by Prince William and the Earthshot Prize Council, chaired by Christiana Figueres, a former UN climate chief, who played a key role in negotiating the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. Other members of the judging panel include Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan, activist Ernest Gibson and Alibaba founder Jack Ma among others.

"The competition is based around five 'Earthshots', or environmental goals. This year's winners are:

- Protect and Restore Nature: Acción Andina, from Peru. The grassroots project is working in South America to protect native forest ecosystems across the Andes.
- Clean Our Air: GRST, from Hong Kong. The start-up has developed a new process for making and recycling lithium-ion batteries, paving the way 'to make the electric cars of the future even cleaner.'
- Revive Our Oceans: WildAid Marine Program, a global organisation with US-based headquarters. The non-profit combines 'partnership building and knowledge sharing' to support the planet's ocean conservation needs.
- Build a Waste-Free World: S4S Technologies from India. The agritech start-up uses its solar-powered dehydration equipment to cut food waste and help farmers process excess crops into products with a longer shelf life.
- Fix Our Climate: Boomitra, a global organisation with US-based headquarters. The company is 'removing emissions and boosting farmer profits by incentivising land restoration' through the creation of its soil carbon marketplace.

More: <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/11/07/climate/prince-william-earthshot-prize-2023-winners-climate-intl/index.html> plus <https://earthshotprize.org/news/>

Source: Editor, 8th November.

Editor: Jacinda Ardern is one of the nine trustees. 

Advances in Refrigeration at the Farm

"Purpose Capital Impact Fund has made a \$3m investment into Cool Group Ltd. Cool Group is a New Zealand-owned and operated company whose subsidiaries include: CoolSense NZ Ltd, Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) of commercial and industrial chilling systems; CoolCARE NZ Ltd, subscription-based remote data support service; and PAUS Rental Ltd, a freshly launched leasing model in partnership with Fonterra and New Zealand Green Investment Finance (NZGIF).

"Cool Group's chilling system use refrigerants with significantly lower Global Warming Potential (GWP) than existing systems (466 GWP vs up to 3,920 GWP). They also use much less refrigerant (7kg vs an average of 30kgs).

"In combination, the company estimates replacing one legacy system with a CoolSense system instantly removes an average of 90 Tonnes net CO2 equivalent from the average farm. Refrigerants removed from farms are safely destroyed and the scrap metals from the legacy machines are recycled. These changes are an important step in NZ's commitment to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) over the coming years, in line with international obligations under the Kigali Amendment.

"Traditional systems also leak at an estimated 15% per annum while leakage of the CoolSense systems is estimated to be negligible due to the nature of the design.

"CoolSense products reduce energy consumption by approximately 30% compared with current products, saving the farm money and further reducing greenhouse gas emissions (depending on energy source). They also produce hot water as a by-product – a handy benefit for cleaning the milking shed. In addition, the chilling capabilities of the units means milk is snap chilled – benefiting milk processors by enabling higher value goods to be manufactured for global markets.

More: www.purposecapital.co.nz/purpose-capital-invests-in-innovative-refrigeration-manufacturer-cool-group/


Source: Purpose Capital, 7th November 2023. 

The Gulf of Mexico's Revival Starts in Tiny Wetlands 600 Miles Away

"Toxic runoff from Midwestern farms flows all the way to the Gulf. Now, a nature-based solution is making its way downstream.

More: <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/farmland-constructed-wetlands-healthier-watersheds/>

Source: reasons to be cheerful, 8th November 2023

Editor: Likely applicable to NZ and other countries. 

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Australia's Sustainable Finance Strategy

"CA ANZ will be preparing a submission in response to the consultation paper. We are seeking member feedback on the strategy. If you would be interested in providing feedback please get in touch via an email to the business reform team businessreform@charteredaccountantsanz.com

More: <https://treasury.gov.au/consultation/c2023-456756>

Source: Debbie Kandauw, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 3rd November 2023.

Editor: Contributions need to be provided quickly as submissions close 1st December 2023. ©

US Financiers and Others Delight in Increased Arms Sales

"Morgan Stanley and TD Bank hope for aerospace and weapons boon after a 7% value increase from start of Israel-Hamas conflict

More: www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/30/wall-street-morgan-stanley-td-bank-ukraine-israel-hamas-war plus <https://actions.eko.org/a/stop-arms-sales-to-israel>

Source: eko, 4th November 2023. ©

Study to Ascertain Capitals Approach Knowledge Gaps

"In 2022, Capitals Coalition launched their first free online course, *Valuing Nature and People to Inform Decision-Making*, followed in 2023 by *Transforming Business: Valuing Social and Human Capital*. Now, Capitals Coalition and two strategic advisors from INSEAD have conducted a study to measure the skills and knowledge gap in business professionals in sustainability and the capitals approach to transform decision-making.

"The study aimed to identify areas in which decision-makers need to invest in enhancing their team's skills. The research was conducted over two months through semi-structured interviews with 15 different organisations.

"Companies are facing many challenges as they move towards adoption, including a lack of understanding of integrated capital assessments, resource constraints, a focus on compliance, a lack of incentives, and data limitations. Interviewed companies struggled with understanding materiality and quantifying the impact of non-financial capitals on their businesses. Additionally, regulatory compliance took precedence over holistic, systematic assessments of capital impacts.

"These companies also found it challenging to prioritise and quantify material impacts.

"The results showed companies value training materials like case studies, data insights, and practical applications linked to mandatory disclosures. The training delivery models explored included train-the-trainer approaches (....) and direct-to-market strategies. Online training formats were preferred for maximum reach, focusing on simplicity and interaction. Continuous professional development (CPD) and accreditations were considered, emphasising collaboration with reputable institutions and transparent feedback from accredited participants.

"Six key recommendations

"Based on the above key findings and recommendations, the Coalition plans to begin developments of two new capacity building projects:

More: <https://capitalscoalition.org/study-capitals-approach-knowledge/>

Source: Capitals Coalition 1st November 2023. ©

Westpac Becomes First Bank with Zero Deforestation Target

"The Australian Conservation Foundation has commended Westpac for becoming the first Australian bank to set a zero-deforestation target for loans to beef, dairy and sheep farming.

"Westpac's natural capital position statement, released today [6th November], sets new targets for the bank's loans to agriculture (defined as dairy, beef and sheep) and includes 'a commitment to no deforestation, which provides for no further conversion of natural forest to agricultural land use within farm systems from 31st December 2025 for customers in scope of the targets.'

"In addition to the zero-deforestation policy, Westpac has today:

- Further tightened its lending to new coal, oil and gas projects by including restrictions on bonds as well as loans.
- Released more detail on its expectation for all business customers to have a 1.5°-aligned transition plan, but has delayed the deadline by nine months to 30th September 2025.
- Linked a portion of its executive short-term bonuses to achieving climate targets.

"We would expect Westpac's decision to adopt a zero-deforestation policy for beef, dairy and sheep farming to drive a wave of zero-deforestation commitments across Australia's banking sector', said Jonathan Moylan, ACF's corporate campaigner.

"While global best practice is not to lend to businesses which have engaged in deforestation since the end of 2020, Westpac has given its agricultural customers until the end of 2025 to stop land-clearing, which could lead to panic clearing if adopted across the sector.

"While the scope of Westpac's commitment could be broader, it should help rein in Australia's unfortunate status as a global deforestation hotspot by focusing on the main driver of land clearing in Australia: pastoral expansion.

More: www.acf.org.au/westpac-first-bank-with-zero-deforestation-target plus www.westpac.com.au/content/dam/public/wbc/documents/pdf/aw/sustainability/Climate_Change_Position_Statement_and_Action_Plan.pdf 20 pages 538Kb and https://assets.nationbuilder.com/auscon/pages/22067/attachments/original/1686717483/2304_Nature_Ban_kingOnNatureDestructionReport_FOR_WEB.pdf

Source: ACF, 6th November 2023.

Editor: While the plan refers to absolute GHG emission reductions for some sectors, for agriculture it uses reduction in carbon intensity which means emissions could increase. The plan also has an extensive disclaimer. ©

10 New(ish) Book Recommendations for Fall Reading

"Northern hemisphere daylight is waning, leaves are falling, and your favourite comfy chair is calling. The season of long nights and cosy reading is upon us, and Orion has some environmentally-influenced recently published recommendations just for you. Whether you prefer breathy thrillers, dystopian fiction, climate science, natural history, memoir, poetry, or bite-sized delights, there is something for everyone here.

More: <https://orionmagazine.org/article/10-book-recommendations-fall-2023>

Source: Orion, 3rd November 2023.

Editor: The list includes an award winning NZ author. ©

Eco-Business A-List 2022

[Announced 3rd March 2023 in Singapore.]

Read the stories of a remarkable group of people, or perhaps ordinary people achieving remarkable outcomes. They come from a number of countries including NZ.

More: www.eco-business.com/news/the-eco-business-a-list-2022-who-are-asias-sustainability-leaders-of-the-year/

Source: eco-Business.com, 27th October 2023.

Editor: Nominations for 2023 close: 20th Nov. 2023
at <https://form.jotform.com/232958362348466>

The Liveability Challenge 2024

"The 2024 edition of The Liveability Challenge (TLC), a global crowdsourcing platform which identifies and accelerates the commercialisation of innovative solutions to address urban challenges in cities, was launched today [3rd November] at *Cities: Possibilities*, a forum dedicated to sustainable cities.

"Launched in 2018, TLC, presented by Temasek Foundation, is in its seventh edition. This year, the challenge saw more than S\$2 million pledged to support innovative projects and solutions which will have a significant impact on the planet and people.

"Head of programmes at Temasek Foundation Lim Hock Chuan, who officiated the launch, said: 'The Liveability Challenge aims to be a key enabler in sourcing for disruptive game-changing innovations globally to solve pressing climate issues. In its seventh edition, this concerted effort has grown year on year.'

"We are heartened to work with Nurasa and Singapore Food Agency among many other strategic partners in this journey to create a stronger and more meaningful impact for our people and the planet.'

"This year's edition will feature two tracks to seek innovative solutions from around the world – Climate Change and Food & Nutrition. A grand prize of S\$1 million will be awarded to the winner of each track.

Submissions close: 9th February 2024

More: www.eco-business.com/press-releases/over-2-million-pledged-to-support-innovative-sustainable-solutions-at-the-launch-of-the-liveability-challenge-2024/

Source: eco-Business.com, 7th November 2023.

How Corporate Action on Deforestation Stacks Up to New Regulatory Risk

"Eliminating deforestation from supply chains is necessary to achieve global goals for climate and biodiversity – and many of the world's largest companies have commitments to eliminate deforestation from their value chains by 2025.

"Now the European Union's Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) has further raised the stakes for companies and investors alike by legally requiring companies placing products on, or exporting products from, the EU market to prove their products are free from deforestation. This webinar will provide insight into the EUDR and Ceres' new Deforestation Scorecard, which assesses 53 companies from across various sectors on their no deforestation policies and readiness for the new regulatory environment.

When/Where: 5:00am 29th November 2023 NZT. Online

More: https://ceres-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qKJ3c-7jRmyYkFzh1EKkTA#/registration plus https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/regulation-deforestation-free-products_en

Source: CERES, 2nd November 2023.

Editor: This could be a 'major' for some NZ exporters. Visit www.mfat.govt.nz/en/trade/mfat-market-reports/implementation-of-the-eu-deforestation-regulation-september-2023/

2023 Take Charge Christchurch Expo

"The *Take Charge Christchurch Expo* will showcase the latest and greatest in battery electric vehicles and give people a chance to see first-hand the vehicle technology available right now to make the switch from fossil-fuelled vehicles.

"There will be 46 battery electric cars, vans and a ute on show at the expo, making it the biggest display of new battery electric vehicles in the country. The vehicles will cover a range of price points.

"Abarth, Audi, BMW, BYD, Citroen, CUPRA, Fiat, Ford, Genesis, GWM, Hyundai, Jeep, Kia, Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, MG, Opel, Peugeot, Polestar, Porsche, Skoda, Subaru, Tesla, Toyota, Volkswagen, Volvo, LDV, will be among the four-wheeled brands represented at the expo.

"There will also be a range of electric vehicle chargers on show and battery electric outboard motors.

"There will be prizes available, courtesy of a number of the exhibitors and entry is free.

When/Where: Christchurch, weekend of 25th to 26th Nov.

More: <https://ccc.govt.nz/news-and-events/whats-on/event/take-charge-christchurch>

Source: Kevin Crutchley, 1st November 2023.

Leadership in Sustainable Business Course

"Leadership in sustainable business is one of today's most challenging and rewarding endeavours.

"The Sustainable Business Network has years of experience training some of the most dynamic and successful sustainability leaders in New Zealand.

"Our course has been designed, developed and honed specifically by and for New Zealand based sustainability professionals.

"It is ideally suited to Aotearoa's economic, cultural and ecological context.

"Throughout your time with us you will be challenged and supported to deepen your personal connection to the ecological issues of our time.

"You will be given access to the world's best tools for bringing that insight and passion into your everyday work.

"You will walk away with the knowledge, confidence and commitment to wield real influence on sustainability at all levels in your organisation.

When/Where: Two only 3 day workshops over 3 months 13th Mar– 9th May. Second intake 24th July to 26th Sept 2024. Auckland/Waiheke.

More: https://sustainable.org.nz/media/p5zn1gkm/leadership_brochure-2024.pdf

Source: SBN, 6th November 2023.

GRI Standards Certified Training Course

"This course takes a holistic and practical approach, weaving together the GRI Standards with concepts of value creation, strategy, reporting and practical application into an engaging and interactive training style. Participants receive a GRI certification on completion.

"Given the increasing number of businesses opting for the GRI Standard to communicate their non-financial effects, this course presents a valuable chance to build in-house expertise.

"Credibility: The GRI standards are the world's most widely used and recognised sustainability reporting framework, used in 90 countries for over 20 years.

When/Where: 16th – 17th November, Auckland

More: www.proxima.global/courses-and-training/gri-reporting

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 2nd November 2023.

Home Roofing – A New Marketing Ploy


"A Florida roofing company expects to pick up more business this month after it launched a promotion Wednesday offering an AR-15 and a turkey to anyone who buys a roof.

"Roof EZ president Jason Polly said in an interview the company's 'Roof and Gobble' promotion is for customers to protect their homes with a roof, bring their families together over a turkey and protect them with an AR-15.

"Everybody should have an AR-15', Polly said. 'Everybody should have the means to protect their homes and their family. It's not really catered to anybody, any state, any political view, anything like that. It's all about safety.'

"After two business days, the Cape Coral business has sold eight roofs and had about 50 inquiries about the promotion, Polly said. During a normal month, it sells 30 to 50 roofs, but Polly hopes the promotion will help sell 60 to 100.

More: www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/florida-roofing-company-launches-promotion-offering-ar-15s-turkeys-rcna123431

Source: atAdvocacy, 4th November 2023. 


A Concerted Effort to Build Social Cohesion is Needed

"Social cohesion is straining at the seams in New Zealand. It has been particularly evident during the election campaign. In this article, Koi Tū discusses some of the causes of decreasing cohesion, particularly the social and economic well-being of communities, and the external threats including climate change and the advance of technology. The increase in misinformation is both a cause and effect, all undermining trust in each other and in government.

"But more important, Koi Tū has a comprehensive, if aspirational, set of ideas to build social cohesion – see page 13 of the full report. This includes seeking political accord on long term issues, strengthening compliance with the Official Information Act, resolving the roles of central and local government, civics education and much more.

More: https://ipananz.org.nz/Story?Action=View&Story_id=150706 plus www.thepost.co.nz/a/nz-news/350020403/election-year-social-cohesion-straining-seams-aotearoa-new-zealand and <https://informedfutures.org/challenges-to-social-cohesion/>

Source: IPANZ e-Update, 1st November 2023.

Editor: This edition of IPANZ e-Update has several other very interesting and timely articles. 


Winners of 14th Reuters Events Responsible Business Awards

"The ceremony took place last night [1st November] with over 280 industry leaders in attendance and it was quite the evening! It was wonderful to meet so many of this year's finalists and see them celebrating their inspiring and transformative work.

"The Responsible Business Awards look to celebrate the sustainable excellence from across the globe, and was reflected in the scope of winners we saw last night – with countries being represented included Germany, Nicaragua, Gabon, USA, New Zealand, Taiwan, Canada, Kenya, Bangladesh, Botswana, Singapore, Uruguay, Switzerland, and more! Seeing their ambition and impact gives hope we can meet the challenges and goals that lie ahead.

More: <https://events.reutersevents.com/sustainable-business/responsible-business-awards/winners?>

Source: Reuters Events, 3rd November 2023

Editor: Plenty of inspiring achievements. 


Plain Language Awards 2023

The 2023 awards were announced at Parliament on 26th October. Plain language is important in many spheres in 'getting the message across' including 'sustainability'. There were eleven categories. Among those thinkstep-anz was the winner of 'Plain Language Champion – Best Organisation' Best Plain Language Annual Report Winner was Ministry for Culture and Heritage for its 2021/22 Annual Report.

Several awards went to staff at Auckland Council.

Use of Plain Language is important for writers of all documents not only those which are 'technical', 'legal, or 'academic'. NZ has its Plain Language Act 2022. Guidance is provided at www.publicservice.govt.nz/guidance/plain-language-act-2022-guidance-for-agencies/

More: www.plainlanguageawards.org.nz/winners/2023-awards plus www.thinkstep-anz.com/resrc/news/best-plain-language-organisation-award-2023/

Source: TechCom, 30th October 2023. 

The Behavioural Crisis Driving Ecological Overshoot

"As the world grapples with multiple ecological crises, it's clear the various responses over the past half century have largely failed. Our new research argues the priority now should be addressing the real driver of these crises – our own maladaptive behaviours.

"For at least five decades, scientists have worked to understand and document how human demands exceed Earth's regenerative capacity, causing 'ecological overshoot'.

"Those warnings of the threats posed by the overshoot's many symptoms, including climate change, were perhaps naive. They assumed people and governments would respond logically to existential threats by drastically changing behaviours.

"The young researchers in the 1970s who published the Limits to Growth computer models showed graphically what would happen over the next century if business-as-usual economic growth continued. Their models predicted the ecological and social disasters we are witnessing now.

"Once people saw the results of the research, the authors believed, they would understand the trajectory the world was on and reduce consumption accordingly. Instead, they saw their work dismissed and business-as-usual play out.

"Logically, the same behavioural strategies which fuelled consumerism can do the reverse and create the necessary desire for a stable state.

"Understanding the many dimensions of the behavioural crisis, including the influence of power structures and vested interests in a market economy, is crucial. Defusing and even co-opting those forces to reform the economy and reverse the damage is the challenge.

"It will require a concerted multi-disciplinary effort to identify the best ways to produce a rapid global adoption of new norms for consumption, reproduction and waste. The survival of complex life on Earth is the goal.

When/Where: 15th Nov, 2023, 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Online.

More: www.ourclimatedeclaration.org.nz/behavioural_crisis_driving_ecological_overshoot plus <https://theconversation.com/slow-solutions-to-fast-moving-ecological-crises-wont-work-changing-basic-human-behaviours-must-come-first-215055> and <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00368504231201372>

Source: Our Climate Declaration, 29th October 2023. 