

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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66 Good News Stories You Didn't Hear About in 2023

"A lot of things went right this year [2023]. Almost none of them made the news.

"The news is supposed to tell us what's happening in the world. It doesn't. It tells us what's going wrong. Thanks to a combination of commercial pressures, cognitive biases and cultural habits, news organisations have become modern-day doom machines, showcasing the worst of humanity, without highlighting any progress, healing or restoration. Yes, journalism is supposed to hold truth to power and when terrible things happen we shouldn't turn away. But when we only hear stories of doom, we fail to see the stories of possibility. We deny ourselves the opportunity to do better.


"The American journalist Krista Tippett says we're all fluent enough by now in the language of catastrophe and dysfunction, and what's needed are more of what she calls 'generative narratives.' This year [2023], we found over 2,000 of those kinds of stories, and shared them with tens of thousands of readers in a weekly email. Not dog-on-a-surfboard, baby-survives-a-tornado stories, but genuine, world changing stuff about how millions of lives are improving, about human rights victories, diseases being eliminated, falling emissions, how vast swathes of our planet are being protected and how entire species have been saved.

"We rounded up 400 of our favourites, and then crammed all of those again into this final list of 66. We think many of them will surprise you, and a few might just change the way you think about the world. It's been a difficult year, but in so many ways and in so many places, we've made progress too.

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More: <https://futurecrunch.com/goodnews2023/>

Source: Bruce Gilkison, 19th January 2024.

Editor: A 30 minute read and in addition to the stories (NZ and Australia feature!) see the wonderful photos. 


Transformative Program Evaluation for Sustainability Degrees

"On 26th January at 9:00 - 10:15 am EST, the Global Council for Science and the Environment (GCSE) will host a virtual briefing and panel discussion about the past year of progress on our Pathways toward Accreditation initiative.

"This event will provide an exclusive first look at professional development materials on the Key Competencies in Sustainability Education. Our panel discussion will feature voices of diverse thought leaders and experts in sustainability education who will provide their insights and feedback. The panel will conclude with brief Q&A for our Zoom audience.

When/Where: 26th January, 9:00 - 10:15 am EST. Online


More: www.gcseglobal.org/event/sustainability-education-briefing-january-26 *A Proposal Statement on Key Competencies in Sustainability Guidance on the Accreditation of Sustainability and Sustainability-related Programmes in Higher Education:* www.gcseglobal.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Working_KCS%20Statement.pdf February 2024. 40 pages 1.54Mb. **Recording available.**

Source: GCSE, 20th January 2024. 

James Shaw Steps Down as Greens Co-Leader

Former Climate Change Minister James Shaw will step down as the Greens' co-leader in March. He will stay in Parliament for the time being to support a member's bill drawn from the ballot last year to improve the Bill of Rights by including the 'right to a sustainable environment'. James has achieved more gains in reducing GHG and climate change impacts than any other politician. He has significantly advanced the groundwork of others, especially that of Jeanette Fitzsimons (Dc'd).

More: www.stuff.co.nz/politics/350163004/i-was-angry-lot-inside-political-mind-james-shaw

Source: Numerous sources, 30 and 31/1/2024. 


Australian Climate-related Financial Disclosure: Exposure Draft Legislation

"Commonwealth Treasury has just released its final policy statement on mandatory climate-related disclosures and draft legislation for consultation. Reporting periods are anticipated to begin from 1st July 2024, capturing larger entities and will progress to a wider range of entities by 1 July 2027. The Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) has also released its exposure draft standards which outline what these entities must report.

Consultation closes The Treasury, 9th February 2024

AASB, 1st March 2024

More: <https://treasury.gov.au/consultation/c2024-466491> for four supporting documents. Plus www.aasb.gov.au/admin/file/content105/c9/AASBESR1_10-23.pdf 103pages 1.32Mb

Source: Debbie Kandawu, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 19th January 2024. 

In Juneau, Alaska, A Carbon Offset Project Which is Actually Working


"When Kira Roberts moved to Juneau, Alaska, last summer, she immediately noticed how the town of 31,000 changes when the cruise ships dock each morning. Thousands of people pour in, only to vanish by evening. As the season winds down in fall, the parade of buses driving through her neighbourhood slows, and the trails near her home and the vast Mendenhall Glacier no longer teem with tourists.

"That unique rhythm of Juneau is really striking to me", she said. "It's just kind of crazy to think that this is all a mile from my house."

"But Mendenhall is shrinking quickly: The 13-mile-long glacier has retreated about a mile in the past 40 years. Getting all those tourists to Juneau — some 1.5 million this summer by cruise ship alone — requires burning the very thing contributing to its retreat: fossil fuels.

"In an effort to mitigate a portion of that CO₂, some of those going whale watching or visiting the glacier are asked to pay a few dollars to counter their emissions. The money goes to the Alaska Carbon Reduction Fund, but instead of buying credits from some distant (and questionable) offset project, the nonprofit spends that cash installing heat pumps, targeting residents like Roberts who rely upon oil heating systems.

More: <https://grist.org/energy/in-juneau-alaska-a-carbon-offset-project-thats-actually-working/>

Source: *SnippETS*, 18th January 2024. 

It's Concerning Just How Many Have Been Sucked in by the Anthropogenic Climate Change Fraud

"About four years ago, the then Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern came on TV and declared 'We have a climate emergency.'

"Without any justification for this statement, she sent a high proportion of the country into a panic mode. It was to come out that humans were putting Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere at an unprecedented rate and this was causing global warming which would be catastrophic if allowed to continue. Later, cows were in the firing line too emitting methane which was also contributing to global warming.

"The IPCC reports became the gospels for the government and if the reports said: 'It is highly likely greenhouse gases emitted by human activities were causing global warming', then that was taken as the general consensus and action was urged. Several conferences were held with delegates flying to the conferences in private jets emitting carbon dioxide in copious quantities. The aim of the conferences was to get all countries to make a commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This was achieved at the Paris conference. Some parts are legally binding and some are not. There is no hard enforcement in the Paris agreement. There was also concern about a dramatic rise in sea level. Several countries were predicted to be under water in a short space of time. So panic all round.

"Here are some predictions about climate. Note the dates.

"So there we have it: The movement to destroy capitalism has been going on for some time now. We are heading towards a world government.

"Here is what Dr Ottmar Endenhoffer, a member of the IPCC said in an interview in 2010;


"We (The UN/IPCC) redistribute the world's wealth by climate policy. One has to free oneself from the illusion that international climate policy is environmental policy. This has almost nothing to do with environmental policy anymore.'

"What is the UN's weapon of choice for rapid deindustrialisation? It's called renewable energy but actually the name should be unreliable energy-wind and solar. Token gestures of the folly of green madness designed to force us backwards down the energy ladder to days of human and animal power.

"It appears now the WEF, UN and WHO are acting together to destroy capitalism. The NZ government needs to withdraw from the UN and the WHO as soon as possible. The WHO plan to control most aspects of our medical needs is very concerning. They will be implemented in May next year, and will be compulsory for member states. We need to get out before then [Long article]

More: <https://breakingviewsnz.blogspot.com/2023/10/ian-bradford-its-concerning-just-how.html>


Source: Peter Sewell, 19th January 2024.

Editor: As a side note, perhaps there is a valid case for the destruction of capitalism aside from anything to do with climate change. 

An Ancient Chinese Text Surprisingly Relevant Today

"[I] was taking classes at the University of Iowa on existentialist philosophy and early Buddhist texts. Lao Tzu's very first sentence hooked me: 'Nature can never be completely described, for such a description of Nature would have to duplicate Nature.' The book advised a modest way of life emulating nature's way.

More: www.resilience.org/stories/2024-01-10/an-ancient-chinese-text-thats-surprisingly-relevant-today/

Source: Post Carbon Institute, 26th January 2024. 

Heart of Country

"A film about First Nations people protecting country.

"Water is the heartbeat of this continent and the carrier of songlines across millennia.

"A crisis is unfolding and every day it is getting worse. Water is being fracked, contaminated and poisoned.

"Fossil fuel and nuclear projects risk fracturing First Nations communities' connection with their Country, while destroying nature and damaging the climate.


"*Heart of Country* is an evocative journey across Australia that weaves together the stories and songlines of this huge and ancient continent, and the fight to protect it from damage caused by the fossil fuel and nuclear industries.

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"Share *Heart of Country* with your friends, family, colleagues and community, and help build the movement of people across Australia deepening their understanding of First Nations' resistance – and standing with First Nations people as they protect Country.

"This 4-page guide steps you through some ideas for sharing this film with others in your community, and turning their viewing experience into powerful action.

More: www.acf.org.au/heart-of-country plus www.acf.org.au/heart-of-country-action and www.acf.org.au/heart-of-country-guide

Source: ACF, 16th January 2024. 

Starting out on Sustainability Workshops

"Learn the basics and more – A workshop series which brings together top SBN tools, resources and experts to kick-start your business' sustainability journey. You'll have the option to complete a Sustainability Action Plan and receive feedback from our experts.

- 06 Mar Introduction to sustainability in business
- 03 Apr Your business and the circular economy
- 01 May Sustainable certifications and your business
- 05 Jun Product stewardship in your business
- 03 Jul Make your business' buying more sustainable
- 07 Aug How your business can regenerate nature
- 04 Sep Taking climate action in your business
- 02 Oct Impact and sustainability reporting for your business
- 06 Nov Tell your business' sustainability story.

The workshops are 2 hours and held online.

More: <https://sustainable.org.nz/learn/training/starting-out-on-sustainability/> which provides more info on each workshop


Source: SBN, 17th January 2024. 

2024 Annual Trends Report: The Next Steps for Sustainable Business

"Twenty-twenty-four may very well become a breakthrough year for sustainability. Although, as always, the world's sustainability transformation will labour forward amidst many other pressing concerns, this year inherited considerable momentum from 2023, including the historic outcomes of COP28 and the decisive global embrace of simultaneous action on climate, nature, and equity.

"Still, many other issues will compete for attention. Perhaps more than anything else, geopolitics

More: www.sustainability.com/globalassets/sustainability.com/reports/trends-2024/ermsi-annual-trends-report-2024.pdf 66pages, 43.8Mb

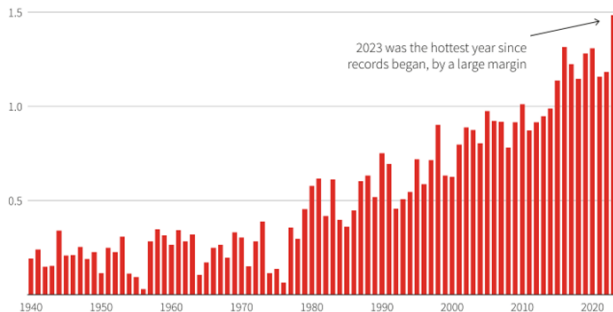
Source: ERM Sustainability Institute, 26th January 2024. 

2023 was World's Hottest Year on Record, EU Scientists Confirm

- Climate change, El Nino fuel record temperatures in 2023
- Last year broke previous record by large margin
- Surging temperatures exacerbate heatwaves, floods, wildfires.

2023 was the world's hottest year on record

Global surface temperature increase versus the average during the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period (°C)



Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service/ECMWF

"Last year was the planet's hottest on record by a substantial margin and likely the world's warmest in the last 100,000 years, the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said on Tuesday. "This has been a very exceptional year, climate-wise... in a league of its own

"Each fraction of temperature increase exacerbates destructive weather disasters. In 2023, the hotter planet aggravated deadly heatwaves from China to Europe, extreme rain which caused floods killing thousands of people in Libya and Canada's worst wildfire season on record.

"Comparable small changes in global temperatures have huge impacts on people and ecosystems', Friederike Otto, a climate scientist who co-leads the World Weather Attribution global research collaboration, said.

"Every tenth of a degree matters', she added.

More: www.reuters.com/business/environment/2023-was-worlds-hottest-year-record-eu-scientists-confirm-2024-01-09/

Source: Reuters Sustainable Switch, 11th Jan. 2024.

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) Explained

"CSRD is a new reporting framework which the European Union has implemented across the bloc, replacing the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD).

"The CSRD aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of a company's sustainability performance.

"The Directive was first proposed by the EU Commission in 2021 and was officially adopted in November 2022. CSRD came into force on 5th January 2023 and reporting for businesses covered under the NFRD commenced 1st January 2024. It will expand to cover other large businesses from 1st January 2025.

"But why does CSRD matter? What are the key requirements of CSRD? What businesses are required to follow CSRD? What does CSRD mean for UK businesses? And, how does CSRD tie in with other reporting frameworks?

"This new edie Explains guide, developed with support from ClimatePartner UK answers all these questions and more. It features best-practice tips on getting to grips with CSRD, outlines its relationship with other reporting frameworks and features an expert viewpoint from ClimatePartner's net-zero lead Chris Pocock.

More: www.edie.net/edie-explains-corporate-sustainability-reporting-directive-csrd/ 9pages 1.32Mb

Source: edie, 18th January 2024.

The Neglected Clean Heat We Flush Down the Drains

"In this part of Vancouver, innovative technology is harnessing heat from wastewater and using it as a renewable energy source to heat homes.

"There's enough heat in the sewerage system to literally heat up neighbourhoods', remarks Derek Pope, manager of neighbourhood energy for the city of Vancouver. 'That's what we've been doing here in False Creek since 2010.'

"The residents of False Creek, a recently redeveloped neighbourhood of Vancouver, get their energy from a rather unusual renewable source – their sewage wastewater. Increasingly, municipalities around the globe are harnessing this underground form of excess heat as they decarbonise their energy networks.

"Residents in the 6,210 apartments in the False Creek neighbourhood get their heat from renewable energy sources, with sewage heat being the largest contributor. ...

"Heat pumps cool down warm sewage at around 20C and concentrate the heat to produce scalding hot water which can be as high as 80C, Pope explains. 'What's really exciting is our heat recovery system operates at efficiencies of over 300%, so for every unit of electricity we put in to run the heat pump, we get over three units of thermal energy or heat out of it. ' Sewage is also consistently warm so heat pumps continue to operate efficiently even on cold wintry days when heat demand is highest – providing a constant source of renewable energy. [Provides other examples of heat recovery.]

More: www.bbc.com/future/article/20240103-sewage-a-low-cost-low-carbon-way-to-warm-homes

Source: reasons to be cheerful, 24th January 2024.

BrandWatch: In Davos, Brands and Faith Groups Join Hands in an Unlikely Alliance

"Rule one of polite conversation is long-established: avoid at all costs talking about religion or politics. Brands would once have said the same, but times are changing.

"In today's social media age, corporations are under increasing pressure to take a public stance on hot political issues, from Russia's invasion of Ukraine

"Now religion looks to be going the same way. Slipped in between the headline sessions on macro-economics and geopolitics, the World Economic Forum (WEF) chose its annual meeting in Davos this week to release an intriguing paper on faith and business.

"A few important clarifications up front. The Faith in Action report, isn't about winning converts or tapping into the power of spirituality. More surprisingly, nor do the conventional stomping grounds of diversity or inclusion feature large, either.

"Instead, the 40-page report presents a compelling case for developing meaningful collaborations between private-sector brands and what the authors define as faith actors, a category that extends from traditional religious organisations to faith-based investors.

"In the past, faiths have been a little scared of businesses, and businesses have felt they have no need of faith', he states. But as they try to address the multiple crises besetting the world, 'we're now seeing they want to do the same things'.

More: www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/brandwatch-davos-brands-faith-groups-join-hands-an-unlikely-alliance-2024-01-16 plus www.weforum.org/publications/faith-in-action-religion-and-spirituality-in-the-polycrisis/ 40 pages 21.6Mb


Source: Reuters Events, 20th January 2024.

Introducing Sustainability: The What, Why and How

“Are you wanting to better understand sustainability, its application in businesses and why it’s important? Join BusinessNZ Network for full day introductory sustainability course. Learn about this critical issue for business and all its facets from carbon and climate change to waste and circular economy, social responsibility, communicating and reporting for sustainability and more. Unpack key terms, get tangible and practical and explore case studies over this 1-day course. Contact ljames@businessnz.org.nz for more information and to register.

When/Where: 14th February, 9:00am-5:00pm, Auckland
19th March, Napier
1st May, Wellington

More: www.businesscentral.org.nz/how-we-help/learning-and-development/hauora

Source: *SBC Weekly Panui*, 18th January 2024. 

Skills Bottleneck Threatens NZ Transition to Renewables


“There is an international acceptance the only practical pathway to achieve zero carbon emissions is a shift from fossil fuels to natural solutions and renewable technologies. This will also require a shift in equipping and educating people so we have a workforce with the necessary expertise.

“The New Zealand Government has recently signed a pledge to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2050. Failing to switch from fossil fuels to renewables is projected to cause one billion climate-caused deaths over the coming century and is expected to affect four generations globally.

“The key global renewables include solar, wind, hydro, tidal, and new green small nuclear. (.....) Solar, wind and electric vehicles, in that order of success, are largely responsible for improved global warming estimates since 2015. One acre of solar panels, for instance, saves up to 140 metric tons of carbon dioxide.

“Global investments by governments and the private sector have provided the drive to launch the renewables revolution. Worldwide jobs in renewables reached 13.7 million in 2022 up from 7.3 million in 2012. New investments in renewables have skyrocketed to US\$358 billion in the first six months of 2023, which is a 22% rise compared with the start of last year and an all-time high for any six-month period. The private sector provides the greater share (75%) of the global investments of renewable energy jobs, which have almost doubled in 10 years.


More: <https://newsroom.co.nz/2023/12/21/skills-bottleneck-threatens-nz-transition-to-renewables/>

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 18th January 2024. 

12 Climate Fiction Stories or Future Ancestors Celebrated

“Grist’s Imagine 2200: Climate Fiction for Future Ancestors short story contest celebrates stories which offer vivid, hope-filled, diverse visions of climate progress. From 1,000 submissions, our reviewers and judges selected the three winners and nine finalists you will discover in this collection. These stories are not afraid to explore the challenges ahead, but offer hope that we can work together to build a more sustainable and just world. Through rich characters, lovingly sketched settings, and gripping plots, they welcome you into futures which celebrate who we are and what we can become — and, we hope, inspire you to work toward them.

More: <https://grist.org/imagine2200-climate-fiction-2024/> provides links to the selected stories

Source: Orion, 26th January 2024. 

Nature Positive Initiative Launches to Promote the Integrity and Implementation of the Global Goal for Nature


“Today [6th Sept. 2023], 27 of the world’s largest nature conservation organisations, institutes, business and finance coalitions have come together to launch a new initiative aimed at driving alignment around the definition, integrity and use of the term ‘nature positive’ and supporting broader, longer-term efforts to deliver nature-positive outcomes.

“‘Nature positive by 2030’ refers to halting and reversing nature loss by 2030 from a 2020 baseline, through measurable gains in the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, ecosystems, and natural processes.

“The newly-announced Nature Positive Initiative, which will open soon for more partners, represents the second phase of work which commenced in 2019, with the development of nature positive by 2030 as the global goal for nature – equivalent to the 1.5C goal that exists for climate.

“Since then, governments, business and civil society have rallied behind the ambition inherent in a nature-positive approach. Calls for action have grown stronger, with reversing biodiversity loss recognised as critical to combating the global climate crisis, preventing future pandemics of zoonotic origin, addressing water and food insecurity, supporting sustainable and equitable development, and recognising and addressing the rights and contributions of Indigenous Peoples. In December 2022, the goal of halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 was codified in the mission of the landmark Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Its adoption under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity has been described as the ‘Paris moment’ for nature.

More: <https://www.naturepositive.org/news>

Source: Debbie Kandaau, CA ANZ, Weekly Digest for Climate & Sustainability, 19th January 2024. 

Sustainability Communications and Disclosure Handbook 2024

“Businesses are under increasing pressure to provide more information on their environmental credentials – whether to digital native consumers who want to spend their money with purpose-led brands, or increasingly ESG-minded investors, or simply to comply with new legislation.

“As more standards, frameworks and certification options emerge for businesses, it can be difficult to keep track of the latest developments and then translate the science, data and trends into easy-to-understand and actionable soundbites and messages.

“With more commitments comes more scrutiny, and companies are at risk of greenwashing if they’re unable to showcase data and reports which back up their claims. Additionally, sustainability professionals will need to develop softer skills which help translate the science and jargon which make up sustainability reporting into messages that resonate, gain buy-in and inspire sustainable actions in the long run.

“With this in mind, this edie handbook explores how businesses of all sizes and sectors can be clearer in their sustainability-related marketing, engagement and communications, outlining how they can better use sustainability-related language in a manner which engages key stakeholders. This will help them build trust, gain credibility, increase transparency and leverage behaviour change.

More: www.edie.net/sustainability-communications-and-disclosure-handbook-2024/ 16pages 1.74Mb.

Source: edie, 25th January 2024. 