

Sustainability Matters

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Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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Rod Oram – A Remarkable and Highly Esteemed Journalist – Tributes



Rod died on Tuesday 19th March following a heart attack while cycling two days earlier in Auckland.

He was superb journalist admired by many for his craftsmanship, humanity, enthusiasm, positivity, love of New Zealand (his adopted home), values and beliefs, love of family.

Well read, thorough, accurate, inciteful, a joy to thousands.

A strong conscience prodder to politicians, business folks and others.


There are numerous online tributes all encapsulating the essence of who Rod was – each far better than any I could craft. A few of them follow.

Public Celebration: Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell Auckland Friday 5th April at 11:00am. Per notice *NZ Herald* Saturday 23rd March 2024.

More:

- <https://newsroom.co.nz/2024/03/20/prominent-columnist-and-environmentalist-rod-oram-dies/> with 33 comments
- <https://sustainable.org.nz/learn/news-insights/rod-oram-a-tribute/>
- <https://www.greaterauckland.org.nz/2024/03/20/rod-oram-a-legacy-to-live-up-to/>
- www.thepost.co.nz/business/350219968/tributes-paid-veteran-climate-and-business-journalist-rod-oram
- www.rnz.co.nz/news/alert-nat/512186/journalist-and-commentator-rod-oram-dies-after-cycling-accident
- www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetoon/audio/2018930887/tribute-to-rod-oram
- www.nzherald.co.nz/business/obituary-rod-oram-a-champion-of-business-climate-journalism-and-inaugural-business-herald-editor/BMWR6HUDLRCZJGRDRGNTPCNTOU/ Paywall

Source: "Numerous".


Editor: Rod presented to the Sustainability Work Group (a special interest group attached to the then NZICA). In 2006 and 2011 in the engrossing style and manner for which he was well known. 

Nations Are Undercounting Emissions, Putting UN Goals at Risk

"Contributing writer Fred Pearce examines how countries are grossly underestimating their greenhouse gas emissions in reports to the U.N. The data from most countries is unreliable and typically inconsistent and incomplete, according to a growing body of research. By one count, Pearce finds, national inventories add up to just 70% of actual emissions, while the other 30% remains unaccounted for.

"The result of this lax reporting, analysts say, is the world is flying blind on emissions, unable to verify if individual countries are meeting their targets under global climate agreements.

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/undercounted-emissions-un-climate-change>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 22nd March 2024. 

Tackling the Challenge of Ethical Sourcing


"The Warehouse Group (TWG) is NZ's largest general merchandise retailer, aiming to help Kiwis live better every day. With 260+ retail stores across the motu, and thousands of products in each store, TWG's supply chain is vast and as complex as you might imagine – but that hasn't stopped its Ethical Sourcing team from working to ensuring the integrity of the supply chain.

"For its private label programme, The Warehouse partners with nearly 700 different supplier factories, primarily located in China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Pakistan, which employ around 350,000 people. The biggest risk with these suppliers is noncompliance with local labour, environment, health and safety regulations, explains TWG's Head of Ethical Sourcing Trevor Johnston.

"Especially in developing countries, central and local governments often lack either the political will, or the capability, to enforce their own laws and regulations. Hence companies with responsible sourcing policies, like The Warehouse, are compelled to compensate for these weaknesses through their own due diligence and remediation activities.'

More: <https://sbc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/The-Warehouse-Group-Supply-Chain-and-Ethical-Sourcing-case-study.pdf> 7 pages


Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 14th March 2024.

Editor: Trevor Johnson presented twice to the Sustainability Work Group (a special interest group attached to the then NZICA). He highly engaged the audience. 

Landmark Legal Opinion Paves Way for Nature to Enter the Boardroom

A recently published [UK] landmark legal opinion recognises nature-related risks are relevant considerations for directors when discharging their company law duties.

More: www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/comment-landmark-legal-opinion-paves-way-nature-enter-boardroom-2024-03-20/ plus <https://pollinationgroup.com/global-perspectives/company-directors-and-nature-risk-a-landmark-english-law-legal-opinion/> 117pages, 961KB

Source: *Reuters*, 23rd March 2024. 

Transitioning Your Business to a Social Enterprise

"Five things to think about when transitioning to a social enterprise.

"We're hosting an online social lunch about the top things to consider if you want to transition from a conventional company to a social enterprise model.

"Our social lunches allow people to get together and discuss topics in a casual online environment. Fiona Napier, our Business Advisor, will provide a short presentation before we move to an open discussion.

When/Where: Noon on 10th April, UK time. Online

More:

<https://email.socialenterprise.org.uk/q/17EUyBTDMqma9LXpwbHB4j/wv>

Source: SAN, 15th March 2024.

Belgian Farmer Takes TotalEnergies to Court, Seeking Climate Damages

"Speaking of climate change effects on Europe's farmers, a Belgian farmer is taking TotalEnergies to court, seeking compensation for climate change-fuelled damage to his farm and a legal order for the company to halt investments in new fossil fuel projects.

"The case, is the first climate change-related lawsuit in Belgium to target a multinational company.

"Hugues Falys, who farms a herd of cattle in the municipality of Lessines, argues, as one of the world's top 20 CO₂-emitting companies, TotalEnergies is partly responsible for damage extreme weather did to his operations from 2016-2022.

"During that period, successive droughts reduced the yield of his meadows where he grows fodder for the animals – forcing him to buy feed and, eventually, reduce the size of his herd.

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More: www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/belgian-farmer-takes-totalenergies-court-seeking-climate-damages-2024-03-13/

Source: Reuters Sustainable Switch, 15th March 2024.

Liverpool is Building the World's Largest Tidal Power Project – A Million Homes

"The River Mersey and the Bay of Liverpool are the largest assets this famous English city possesses, and attempting to beat the British government to a net-zero economy, Liverpool City Region have entered phase 3 planning stage to build the largest tidal power plant on Earth.

"Schemes to harness the predictable power of the tides in Liverpool Bay date back to 1924, and with one of the largest tidal ranges of any coastal city in the UK, government utility Mersey Tidal Power believe they can power 1 million homes and protect the city from floodwaters, all without disturbing the local estuarine ecosystem. ...

"Little information on the plans thus far, but Eletrek reports a large dam would be a barrier between the Irish Sea and a tidal basin. Underneath the dam would be large turbines and sluice gates which would open as the tide comes in, pulling water onto the turbines to generate energy.

"The gates would close as the 10-metre-high tide finishes, and four hours later, the gates would open, causing it to rush past the turbines a second time, generating more clean energy.

More: www.goodnewsnetwork.org/liverpool-unveils-plans-to-build-the-worlds-largest-tidal-power-project-to-power-a-million-homes/ plus www.edie.net/green-industrial-revolution-liverpool-unveils-proposals-for-worlds-largest-tidal-project/

Source: atAdvocacy News, 16th March 2024.

How Do We Assure Sustainability Reporting?

"Standard setter Mark Babington places just as much importance on the quality of an organisation's sustainability reports as he does on the quality of their financial accounts.

"Sustainability information is being used for capital allocation decisions in the same way financial information is being used', he says. 'People want to know what the impact is on the planet of the company's activities and is an important consideration for some investors about whether or not they put their money there.'

"Babington and his colleagues are aiming to develop a framework of ethics and independent standards for sustainability reporting, equivalent to those which apply to financial audits. They are facing several challenges.

"For instance, just as IESBA doesn't want auditors providing assurance over their own records, it also doesn't want sustainability professionals 'marking their own work'.

"There is also the issue of using information from third parties for Scope 2 emissions – incurred in generating electricity for use by the organisation – and Scope 3 emissions – the emissions of customers and suppliers.

"You've got to be able to evaluate whether you can place reliance on that person's work. Have they got the appropriate competence and the skills to do the work? Are they subject to any conflicts of interest? Is there anything that might undermine their independence or objectivity?'

"Babington notes the ethical standards apply to both those who prepare the sustainability reports and those who provide assurance. Just as auditors need to consider the risk of non-compliance with laws or regulations in financial accounts, sustainability assurance professionals will also need to verify reports are compliant.

More: www.acuitymag.com/business/How-do-we-assure-sustainability-reporting

Source: CA ANZ, 14th March 2024.

A People's Review of Kāinga Ora: In Defence of Public Housing

"A People's Review of Kāinga Ora: In Defence of Public Housing is a collaboration between researchers, housing advocates and people who have been working on the frontlines of the housing crisis, to tell another story about public housing and its essential role in providing decent, stable and truly affordable housing to people in our communities. It is filled with quotes and stories from people on the waitlist, living in public housing, private renters and homeowners who speak to their experiences of and hopes for public housing.

"From its inception, public housing* has been a key solution to the housing crisis, however, successive governments have under-resourced it, and consistently made decisions which prioritise private market profits over making sure everyone has a home. This report calls on the Government to properly resource Kāinga Ora so we can build more and better public housing for the collective good of everyone in Aotearoa. [Extract from the Executive Summary [Page 4]

More:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64b65a49e3f77b64ccfb17a2/t/6600b1f8ac80cf4b9144693c/1711321622588/A+Peoples+Review+of+Ka%CC%84inga+Or+a+In+Defence+of+Public+Housing+V1.pdf> 71 pages 8.31Mb

Source: Action Station, 26th March 2024.

Editor: The government's own independent review led by former Finance Minister and Prime Minister Bill English is expected to be issued at the end of March. This report is an alternative view.

Reporting Emissions - Getting the Right Data is Critical: Here's How to Fill the Gaps

"Painting a comprehensive picture of the financial sector's progress on decarbonisation will be a highly complex process involving huge amounts of data. But more critical than quantity is the quality of the data.

"It's a typical example of the chicken and egg dilemma. Financial institutions postpone calculating their emissions until they have access to higher quality data, but until more financial institutions measure these emissions, data scarcity remains an issue.

"Differences in data types, collection methods and reporting standards across industries and regions have historically undermined the reliability and credibility of sustainability reports. This form of sustainability measurement is also still relatively nascent, and many of the data collection techniques lack the sophistication required to capture accurate evidence.

"Within the financial sector, meaningful comparisons are hamstrung by challenges unique to the industry. The greenhouse gas emissions financial institutions are responsible for predominantly come from their financing activities, and attributing these emissions involves assessing the entities they finance, which span multiple industries and geographies.

"But a wide gap remains between small and medium enterprises and bigger corporates. Ultimately, the cost of emissions must either be tackled with regulation or embedded in the profit and loss statements of companies. Only then will investment shift to more sustainable options and affect systemic change.

"While data challenges pose significant obstacles to meaningful sustainability reporting, the strategic use of estimations and approximations in the near-term remains a vital stage of the process to achieving greater precision.

"Coupled with innovation, robust collaboration between the public and private sectors, and deeper regulatory action, emissions reporting will reach the necessary level to more accurately track decarbonisation in the real economy. And ultimately, data will act as the vehicle which carries the international financial sector forward towards a net-zero emissions economy.

More: www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/comment-getting-right-data-is-critical-reporting-emissions-heres-how-we-can-fill-2024-03-19/

Source: *Reuters Sustainable Switch*, 23rd March 2024. 


What's Missing from Your Bank Statement

"*Bank Statement 2024: Is your bank funding climate change?*

Banks play a critical role in keeping the fossil fuel industry afloat by lending to and investing billions of our savings in coal, oil and gas extraction. Our full research provides a comprehensive view into each [bank's impact, including plans around exiting thermal coal, lending to companies with expansion plans, sustainable finance offerings info about Kiwisaver and much more. Since 2016, the four Australian-owned banks have loaned over \$56 billion to the fossil fuel industry. This has enabled over 20 billion tonnes of emissions – more than 250 times the annual emissions of New Zealand. Sign up to find out if your bank is supporting climate criminals, and switch to a Fossil Free bank!

More: <https://350.org.nz/fossil-free-banks/> plus <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/19-03-2024/is-asking-banks-to-stop-funding-fossil-fuels-working>

Source: 350 Aotearoa, 26th March 2024

Editor: Imminent mandatory climate related disclosures in NZ and Australia will foster improvements? 

Britain Is the Best Place in Europe To Be An Immigrant

"The idea of Britain as a nation of immigration might seem counterintuitive. Its citizens voted to leave the European Union in 2016 after they were promised a tighter chokehold on inflows of people from Europe. This week politicians in Parliament tussled over a bill which will make it easier to ship asylum-seekers to Rwanda without hearing their pleas – the latest in a string of illiberal laws designed to 'stop the boats'.

"Neither does the country crow about the migrants it has. Other places have grand immigration museums; the one in New York harbour draws millions of tourists each year. Britain's small Migration Museum, which was founded not by the state but by some worthies, sits in Lewisham Shopping Centre in south London, between a discount store and a shoe shop.

"Yet Britain now has a larger share of foreign-born residents than America. One in six of its inhabitants began life in another country.

More: www.economist.com/leaders/2024/03/21/britain-is-the-best-place-in-europe-to-be-an-immigrant

Source: *The Economist*, 22nd March 2024. 

Airborne Microplastics Found in Southern Alps

"They're tiny, toxic and now, scientists have discovered, drifting in New Zealand's pristine mountain air.

"For the first time, airborne microplastics have been detected in the scenic foothills of the Southern Alps – likely to have blown from seas more than 100km away.

"Measuring less than 5mm long – and made up of everything from clothing fibres to broken-down bottles – microplastics are a macro problem.

"Today one of the planet's most pervasive pollutants, they're turning up in the planet's cleanest waters – as well as in our rainwater, food chain and air.

"One sobering study showed a staggering 74 metric tonnes of airborne microplastics – equivalent to three million bottles – were dropping out of the atmosphere and into Auckland each year.

"On average, what they recorded over 24 hours [At Mt St John Observatory] was around six times higher than what they recorded after seven days, meaning much of the material they were capturing was being quickly blown out again.....

"In just the last few weeks, scientists reported they could accumulate in cancer cells and in fatty deposits that build up in arteries, to cause heart disease and stroke.

"You might have intuitively thought these microplastics had come from large cities in the South Island, like Christchurch, but our modelling showed the opposite', she said.


"They were either coming across the Tasman Sea, from the direction of Australia, or from the Southern Ocean, which suggests some of them are accumulating in the oceans and getting lifted into the atmosphere when waves break.'

"Either way, the findings pointed to a global problem outside of New Zealand's own control – and one that posed an obvious issue for a country surrounded by sea.

"In Auckland, some of the city's most popular beaches have been shown to be polluted with microplastics at rates at least 50 times worse than reported elsewhere.

"Microplastics have also been confirmed in the guts and muscle tissue of several species of fish caught in the Hauraki Gulf, where whales were estimated to be consuming around three million particles each day.

More: www.odt.co.nz/star-news/star-districts/airborne-microplastics-found-southern-alps-air

Source: *NZ Herald*, page A2, 26th March 2024. 

A Degrowth Approach to Climate Change

"This webinar will challenge the mainstream response to the climate crisis and outline a radically different approach.

"Sahra Kress has a long term interest in complexity theory and how everything fits together. She divides her time between a career as a midwife in the Kapiti coast and re-localization, restoration efforts and degrowth advocacy.

"Jack Santa Barbara is a retired psychologist, CEO and academic, and has been involved with a variety of environmental and social justice NGO at the national and international level.

"Both Sahra and Jack are founding members of Degrowth Aotearoa New Zealand (www.degrowth.nz)

When/Where: 7:00 – 9:30pm, Wed, 27th March 2024.
NOTE: These webinars are recorded.

More: <https://www.ourclimatedeclaration.org.nz/webinars>

Source: Our Climate Declaration, 21st March 2024. 

The Impact of Offshore Wind Energy

"Join the BEC and PwC as they take a closer look into the impact of offshore wind energy in New Zealand.

"PwC assessed the economic, social and environmental impact of a national offshore wind energy industry for New Zealand and have recently released the impact study report.

"Key findings will be presented by Aaron Webb of PwC followed by a panel to discuss these results. The audience will also have the opportunity to ask their questions.

When/Where: 3.00 – 5.00pm Thurs 11th April, Wellington
More:

<https://events.businessnz.org.nz/TheImpactofOffshoreWindEnergyinNewZealand#/>

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 12th March 2024. 

Are Efforts to Reform the System Misplaced?

"Ted Trainer Ph.D. is a retired Australian academic best known for his development of The Simpler Way, an alternative lifestyle which embodies deep sustainability and degrowth principles. He has written several books and numerous articles on these topics and developed an educational site at his home near Sydney, Australia to demonstrate what a sustainable lifestyle looks like.

"In this webinar Ted will argue attempts to reform the current economic system are futile, and efforts should focus on building a new system, Background Reading

When/Where: 7:00 – 8:30pm 3rd April, 2024. Online

More: www.ourclimatedeclaration.org.nz/building_alternatives

Source: Our Climate Declaration, 24th March 2024. 

Electric 'Flying' Ferry for Lake Manapouri

"The Swedish-made electric hydrofoil ferry going into service as Meridian staff transport on Lake Manapouri has a connection to one of the world's most innovative electric carmakers.

"The 30-seat Candela P-12 will provide daily transport across the lake, replacing the existing diesel-powered ferry. According to Meridian it will save 240 tonnes of carbon emissions each year, or the equivalent of taking 52 cars off the road. has 80% lower energy consumption than an equivalent diesel vessel and requires 90% less maintenance cost. a range of 50 nautical miles at 25 knots. It is recharged using an electric car-style DC fast charger.

[Photos]

More: www.drivencarguide.co.nz/news/electric-flying-ferry-for-lake-manapouri-has-an-intriguing-car-connection/

Source: *SBC Weekly Pānui*, 14th March 2024. 

Global E-waste Monitor 2024

"The *Global E-waste Monitor 2024* is the fourth edition of the Monitor. It is an indispensable reference tool for both policymakers and industry which shows the position of the world in terms of the global e-waste challenge. Since 2014, The *Global E-waste Monitor* has been the foremost source of reporting on this pressing issue, and this Monitor provides the most up-to-date overview of global e-waste data, statistics, and progress in policy and regulation. It also provides an outlook of what the future holds if things change or stay the same.

More: <https://globalewaste.org/publications/> 148 pages 15.1Mb plus www.eco-business.com/news/asia-struggles-to-contain-record-e-waste-deluge-un-report-shows/

Source: *eco-Business.com*, 27th March 2024. 

Life Under Water Podcast - Series

"Greenpeace has a new podcast exploring the breathtaking beauty and mystery of the ocean.

"Called *Oceans: Life Under Water* it covers everything from swimming with whales to vibrant coral reefs and investigating life in the darkest depths of the High Seas.


"Over 12 episodes you'll meet an array of marine life including octopus, humpback whales, blue sharks and turtles. All brought to life in a series of interviews with ocean enthusiasts

"This week it's *Mountains Under the Waves*, which focuses on seamounts. We talk about seamounts a lot because they are vital to ocean health, supporting whole ocean communities from corals and sponges to fish and whales.

"We know our health and the health of the planet is dependent on thriving, healthy oceans.

"It's also a reminder that together we can change things for the better.....

More: www.greenpeace.org/aotearoa/oceans/podcast-ocean-life-under-water Click on the images for links to the 5 podcasts to date and text of the narrative.

Source: Greenpeace, 21st March 2024. 

Climate Policy Improves Investment Confidence in Institutional Capital Market

"Summary;

- Investors are more upbeat and confident about Australian climate policy. Policy and regulatory uncertainty as a barrier to clean economy investment in Australia has fallen from 7 out of 10 to 4 out of 10.
- A key policy priority for investors will be Government's sector by sector decarbonisation plans and its 2035 emissions target.
- Investors' emerging policy priorities include;
- Development of mandatory climate-related disclosures is also gaining increased focus with the implementation of legislated requirements in Australia and around the world
- On possible climate solutions, investors see renewable energy as delivering the best long term financial returns. Around 5 in 10 investors are exploring opportunities
- Investors are also seeking investment opportunities in a broad range of technologies and options, notably including many where Australia has comparative advantage, including critical minerals and green hydrogen.
- Nuclear energy is last on the list of technologies investors are seeking exposure too.

More: <https://igcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/FINAL-IGCC-Net-zero-survey-2024-policy-media-brief.pdf> 8 pages

Source: IGCC, 25th March 2024. 