

Sustainability Matters

Compiled and published by Ray Skinner, FCA

Business achieving a tomorrow for tomorrow's children

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ANZAC Day



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Will COP's Ever Deliver the Climate Outcomes Needed?

"The head of UNFCCC is right. We are in a crisis. But the action he's calling for will never work, can never work. The UN process, the Conferences of Parties (COPs) have been underway for 30 years. In that time, emissions have doubled. Every nation which is Party to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change has a veto. Saudi Arabia, alone, makes a billion dollars every day they delay climate action.

"The UN process will never solve the climate crisis. But we can in our communities, in our companies. This is why I [Hunter Lovins] keynoted the University of Pittsburgh conference on sustainable business last week, meeting with a room full of corporate leaders who do care about creating a finer future.

"The inaction of the world's governments is frustrating because we know how to solve the climate crisis: stop fossil emissions, and the other greenhouse gases, and remove the excess carbon from the atmosphere using regenerative agriculture. Doing these things is better business for all except a few who profit from endangering our future. Studies by Dr. Mark Jacobson of Stanford have shown in 145 countries, transitioning to 100% renewable energy would have a six-year payback. We can feed the world more and more nutritious food with regenerative agriculture which takes carbon from the air and puts it durably back into the soil. We even know better, less polluting ways of making cement.

"There are hundreds of actions, large and small we can each take to roll back the climate crisis. Doing this, no matter how small matters. It matters, because it brings you into the community of people committed to making a difference.

"Surveys show almost three quarters of people in advanced economies (especially young people) believe climate change is real and will harm them personally. Eighty percent are willing to change their lives to do something about it. Less than half believe actions taken by the international community will reduce the effects of global warming.

"At the same time, studies have shown people believe only a few others share their concerns. People who believe no one else cares, say the researchers, are far less likely to act. 'Social norms (what we believe others are doing and thinking) are important and powerful determinants of behaviour.'

"Why don't the governments act? Because they don't think there is the political will to force them to do anything different. By acting together, we make that political will visible. ...

More: Extract from Hunter Lovins newsletter. Unfortunately not available online at <https://natcapsolutions.org/>

Source: Hunter Lovins of Natural Capitalism Solutions newsletter 23rd April.

Editor: Like to see it? Send me a message. Context includes an ordinary non-activist member of the community asking Hunter for help to close an internationally owned cement mill in their local community in Colorado. It seems they have succeeded and now have other initiatives on the go.

Integrating Nature Disclosures: A Strategic Imperative for CFO's and Finance teams

"In this insightful webinar, we delve into the critical need for finance professionals to embrace and integrate nature-related disclosures into their financial decision-making processes.

"Join this panel discussion to:

- Explore the evolving landscape and global trends of nature-related disclosures and their impact on financial reporting.
- Uncover the financial implications of nature-related risks and opportunities.
- Discover how incorporating nature into decision-making processes can enhance long-term financial resilience and stakeholder trust.
- Explore best practices for implementing nature-related disclosures that align with the unique challenges faced by CFOs and finance teams.
- The importance of effectively communicating nature-related disclosures to stakeholders.

When/Where: Tuesday 7th May 2024. Time;

- Australia and other location per their time zones
- New Zealand 7:00pm - 8:00pm
- UK 8:00am - 9:00am

The webinar will be recorded and distributed to registrants after the event.

More: <https://store.charteredaccountantsanz.com/ONLINE-EVENT-CA-Sustainability-Community-Integrating-Nature-Disclosures-A-Strategic-Imperative-for-C>

Source: CA ANZ 16th April 2024.

AI Energy Use Soars — and Mostly Secret

"A recent article in *Nature* raises concerns about the high energy cost of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology: 'one assessment suggests ChatGPT, the chatbot created by OpenAI in San Francisco, California, is already consuming the energy of 33,000 homes. It's estimated a search driven by generative AI uses four to five times the energy of a conventional web search. Within years, large AI systems are likely to need as much energy as entire nations.'

"Draft legislation (Artificial Intelligence Environmental Impacts Act of 2024) in the US by Democratic Senator Ed Markey proposes the 'National Institute for Standards and Technology to collaborate with academia, industry and civil society to establish standards for assessing AI's environmental impact, and to create a voluntary reporting framework for AI developers and operators.'

More: <https://mailchi.mp/eco.org.nz/tieke-eco-news-alerts-events-mar-apr-2024-9451202> plus www.nature.com/articles/d41586-024-00478-x

Source: Tieke, 17th April 2024.

Building of NZ's Largest Solar Farm Started

"Construction has begun on a \$104 million solar farm on the Canterbury Plains, with power set to start flowing by the end of this year.

"About 90,000 solar panels, expected to generate enough renewable energy to power close to 13,000 homes. ...

More: www.rnz.co.nz/news/business/515054/building-begins-on-nz-s-largest-solar-farm-in-canterbury

Source: *NZ Herald*, page A23, 24th April 2024.

The Role of Industry Associations

"More and more businesses are setting ambitious emissions reductions targets, yet many remain part of industry associations or membership organisations which are engaging in harmful climate lobbying, exposing them to legal and reputational risks.

"Just last year, 58% of the Forbes companies assessed by InfluenceMap were found to be susceptible to greenwashing claims due to misalignments between their net zero pledges and their climate policy engagement activities – part of which includes indirect lobbying through third-party organisations.

"Recognising these risks, businesses are now being called on to monitor the climate positions of their industry associations and take corrective action where they are misaligned with the Paris Agreement goals.

When/Where: Wed. 24th April, 14:00-15:30 BST. Register to watch the webinar live or receive a recording afterwards.

Driving Policy Change: 15th May, 14:00-15:30 BST

Disclosing to Stakeholders: 22nd May, 14:00-15:30 BST

More:

<https://info.unglobalcompact.org.uk/webmail/823403/1998052260/a1ca96d19eee4b233e4017a918ad0aa90d4ba687745926f6c28a9461119aaf08>

Source: UN Global Compact Network UK, 18th April. 

The Recloaking Papatūānuku Infographic

"Pure Advantage is thrilled to share a new collaboration with climate science communicator, John Lang, renowned for his impactful infographics that illustrate key environmental issues including work for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

"The Recloaking Papatūānuku infographic highlights the What, Why, How, When, Where and Who of the initiative. It shows together, we have the tools to weave climate and ecological resilience into our whenua, and invest in the future economic and social prosperity of our country.

"The Recloaking Papatūānuku Proposal is a living document open for input as we continue to engage with the Government, Māori, experts, environmental and community groups. This Proposal outlines some possible features thereof, in the expectation of further developing and progressing these in collaboration with stakeholders.

More: <https://pureadvantage.org/recloung-papatuanuku/infographic/>

Source: Pure Advantage 18th April 2024. 

Measuring Through Metering


"Collecting crucial energy and building emissions data starts with good metering. But what does good metering look like?

"NABERSNZ provides clear guidance on how to meter to achieve different types of ratings: base building, tenancy, whole building ratings. It also allows for exclusions to allow for the fair comparison which makes NABERSNZ so useful.

"Come and learn about the importance of metering, how NABERSNZ can support more consistent measurement across the office sector, and some examples and advice from an experienced NABERSNZ Assessor.


When/Where: Noon, Tuesday 7th May. Online

More: <https://nzgbc.org.nz/nabersnz-metering>

Source: NZGBC, 19th April 2024. 

How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us

More: www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/59575939_464_pages_June_2022. Plus www.theguardian.com/books/2022/jun/20/an-immense-world-by-ed-yong-review-the-astonishing-ways-in-which-animals-experience-our-planet

Source: Orion, 12th April 2024. 

High Tide Don't Hide

"In 2019, students in more than 150 countries launched strikes to demand action to avert cataclysmic climate change.

"In New Zealand, filmmakers The Rebel Film Collective started shooting seven months before what became the world's biggest ever climate change strike. We were given intimate access to New Zealand students' meetings, homes and personal video diaries to record how the local movement began.

"We were there when an unexpected turn of events changed the face of the protests. *High Tide Don't Hide* reveals the inner processes of teenagers mobilising record-setting numbers of children and adults while dealing with the looming threat of climate change, interpersonal politics, and the need to just be teenagers.

More: <https://hightide-donthide.com> 1hr 22min plus www.nzae.org.nz/resources/high-tide-dont-hide

Source: Climate Club NZ, 16th April 2024. 

New NZ Government Blocks Efforts to Protect Deep Sea Life from Bottom Trawling

"New Zealand walked away from its own limited 2023 commitment to advance ocean protection from destructive bottom trawling – at the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Agreement (SPRFMO) meeting which occurred in Ecuador, in January.

"New Zealand, backed solely by the Faroe Islands and the bottom trawling industry, blocked the implementation of measures designed to protect biodiversity hotspots such as seamounts from bottom trawling in the South Pacific. NZ is the only country still bottom trawling in the South Pacific high seas.

"The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) and ECO representatives attended the meeting as observers.


"Barry Weeber of ECO, said: 'New Zealand's willingness to walk away from international obligations it had committed to just last year – despite our own scientists having done the work needed to implement what was agreed – is breathtaking and irresponsible.'

"In a parallel move, New Zealand audaciously proposed its trawlers be allowed to catch three years' quota of orange roughy in a single year, a move which goes against good fisheries management practice globally. Unsurprisingly, New Zealand's proposal failed to get any support at the meeting – apart from the Faroe Is and the bottom trawling industry.

"The DSCC and ECO strongly opposed this plan as reckless.

"SPRFMO did agree to a range of other measures including a Chilean resolution to progress science for protection of the Nazca and Salas y Gomez Ridges in the South-east Pacific in the coming year.

More: <https://mailchi.mp/eco.org.nz/tieke-eco-news-alerts-events-mar-apr-2024-9451202>

Source: Tieke, 17th April 2024. 

Rwanda is on Track to Light Up Every Household

"Over the past 15 years, Rwanda has significantly increased its electricity access from 6% in 2009 to 75% as of March 2024. It's one of the fastest expansions in the world and is thanks in part to investment in renewables and off-grid solutions like solar home systems. The country has also connected 100% of healthcare centres and 84% of schools and small businesses.

More: www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2024/04/10/ingredients-for-accelerating-universal-electricity-access-lessons-from-afe-rwanda-inspirational-approach

Source: fixthenews.com, 22nd April 2024. 

Nepal Unprecedented Decline in Poverty

"National household survey data from the Nepal Living Standard Survey 2022/23 shows a large decline in poverty, from 25% to just 3.6% between 2011 and 2023 (using the 2011 National Poverty Line). The prosperity gap and inequality also decreased over the same period.

More:

www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/publication/nepal-developmentupdate

Source: fixthenews.com, 22nd April 2024.

The Biggest Electric Excavator in NZ Unveiled

"The electric excavator, weighing in at about 360 tonnes, is the latest addition at Oceana Gold Macraes Gold Mine, to reduce their carbon footprint.

The driver perches about 7m above the ground of the machine which has a 22 cubic metre bucket, about 38 tonnes/scoop and a 1km trailing power cable. With infrastructure the cost is in excess of \$10 million.

The excavator is part of the mine's goal to reduce carbon emissions by 30% by 2030.

More: www.1news.co.nz/2024/04/16/oh-for-ore-some-huge-ev-digger-rolls-out-in-otago/ plus www.odt.co.nz/business/stonka-tonka-and-its-electric

Source: TV1 News, 16th April 2024.

Defeated Bill Not the End of Fight for Right to Sustainable Environment – Shaw

"James Shaw's final piece of legislation was, as expected, voted down by the coalition parties at its first reading on Wednesday afternoon [10th April].

"The New Zealand Bill of Rights (Right to Sustainable Environment) Amendment Bill was the only thing which has kept Shaw in Parliament since he stepped down from the Green Party co-leadership a month ago. After picking up the legislation authored by Lawyers for Climate Action and supported by dozens of KCs, he told reporters it was his duty to shepherd it through the house before he leaves.

"Shaw said New Zealand was one of a 'shrinking minority' of countries which haven't recognised the right to a sustainable environment in one way or another.

"I think over 130 other countries around the world already have, either at the national or state level. We are behind the curve.'

"In 2022, New Zealand and 160 other countries supported a motion at the United Nations General Assembly to recognise the right to a sustainable environment. Palairot said voting down that recognition at home would be a shame.

"I just think it's a real shame to be cutting it off at its knees at its first reading without allowing us to have this wider constitutional discussion, as a nation, to be honest', she said.

"While this might be the end of the road for Shaw, he doesn't think it's the final death knell for this particular proposal. Between the courts examining environmental and climate issues through a Bill of Rights and human rights lens and the increasing adoption of similar measures internationally, he feels it is only a matter of time before New Zealand catches up.

"There is, I think, an inevitability to this', he said. 'I would say if the bill doesn't pass first reading tomorrow, it is important we lay down tracks for the future.' [It did not pass.]

More <https://newsroom.co.nz/2024/04/10/doomed-bill-not-the-end-of-fight-for-right-to-sustainable-environment-shaw/>

Source: Kit Withers, 17th April 2024.

Environment Court Shuts Down Pākiri Sand Mining Appeal

"A sand mining company's attempt to overrule a decision allowing it to keep dredging the coastline north of Auckland has been refused by the Environment Court.

"Sand mining has taken place at Pākiri Beach between Leigh and Mangawhai since the 1940s, providing high-quality sand for concrete production.

"Its advocates have long argued there is plenty of sand and that supply is essential to meet Auckland's growing demand for concrete.

"Opponents argue sand mining wrecks the dunes, unfairly affects mana whenua, destroys the seabed and puts a wide variety of wildlife, including rare fairy terns, at risk.

"The practice hit its first major stumbling block in 2022 after an Auckland Council panel rejected a resource consent application filed by the dredging company McCallum Bros.

"In a 124-page decision, commissioners said it had failed to supply evidence sand mining, which has been going on for decades along that stretch of coast, didn't harm the seabed, the beach, and marine and bird life.

"The interesting thing about this case is the sheer breadth and variety of participants. We do have quite a strong cluster of conservation groups, a strong mana whenua presence, and a lot of local residents', Downing said.

"Gary Taylor, chief executive of Environmental Defence Society, which also appeared in the case, said the case illustrated the value of an independent judicial body.

'Considering the science through expert evidence on cross-examination and reaching a decision based on that.

"That's the antithesis of what we're looking at in the fast-track process where the assessment will be very superficial. Environmental considerations will be relegated below development imperatives and in the end, ministers will be making decisions.'

More: <https://newsroom.co.nz/2024/04/16/environment-court-shuts-down-pakiri-sand-mining-appeal/>

Source: Editor, 17th April 2024.

Editor: Will this project be among those to be included in the schedules in the current Fast Track Approvals Bill? Related to this see 'Fast Track Approval Bill: Government watchdogs seek substantial curbs on ministers' powers' at www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/514929/fast-track-approval-bill-government-watchdogs-see-substantial-curbs-on-ministers-powers

Solomon Islands Tribes Sell Carbon Credits, Not Their Trees

"Australian journalist Jo Chandler reports from the Solomon Islands on how tribes are resisting quick cash from logging, opting instead to sell carbon credits for preserving their forests. For the Sirebe tribe, the long game is at last paying dividends. Families are using the income from the sale of carbon credits to pay for solar panels, toilets, and school fees, all while protecting their ancestral lands. 'If we misuse or destroy this land, we will not have any other', says a tribal leader. 'So we have been committed to protect our lands, our forests, our rivers and streams.'

More: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/solomon-islands-sirebe-carbon-credits>

Source: *Yale Environment 360*, 19th April 2024.

Global Life Expectancy has Increased, Especially in Africa

More: www.healthdata.org/news-events/newsroom/news-releases/life-expectancy-increased-world-addressed-major-killers


Source: fixthenews.com, 22nd April 2024.

Human Rights, Environment Obligations, and Ethical Investment: New Zealand is Going Down the Wrong Path

“Introduction and Summary: A considerable portion of the world’s investments are unethical in that they have inadequate regard for the welfare of people and/or the planet. They invest in companies which abuse workers’ or other stakeholders rights. Their activities destroy our environment. Very few companies are fully fossil free, or operate within ecological boundaries. One of the reasons for this is the term ethical investing is defined by such unvalidated concepts as ESG, or responsible.

More: www.fabians.org.nz/index.php

Source: Dr Robert Howell, 23rd April 2024

Editor: This is a lengthy paper. 

Inside the UK’s First Open-Access, Pay-As-You-Go Factory

“Entrepreneurs Alisha Fredriksson and Roujia Wen spent months in 2022 scouring London for the right space to develop a prototype. Their big idea – to capture carbon emissions from cargo ships by trapping the gas amongst calcium oxide pebbles, through a system fitted on board – required a big, well-equipped space.

“The options their search yielded were less than appealing. Large warehouses which had the high ceilings Fredriksson and Wen needed to build their venture, were typically empty, with tenants needing to fully equip it themselves with the right machinery, plus the electricity to power it. They tended to be in industrial zones with only the likes of auto shops or dark kitchens for neighbours, and they usually required signing a five-year lease.

“As a six-month-old startup at the time, it was a scary proposition’, Fredriksson recalls.

“Then Seabound found BLOQS, a 32,000-square-foot converted warehouse in the north London suburb of Enfield, fully kitted out with £1.3 million) worth of light industrial equipment for all kinds of manufacturing, including wood processing and metal fabrication, laser cutting and engraving, 3D printing, sewing machines, spray painting and more. If that didn’t already make the case for moving in, the flexible membership structure then quickly sealed the deal for Fredriksson and Wen.

“The initial sign-up is free, with members simply paying a daily rate for the machinery they need to use, as well as for flexible office and storage space if they need it. Raw materials are available to purchase too, price-matched with local suppliers

More: <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/inside-the-uks-first-open-access-pay-as-you-go-factory/> plus <https://bloqslondon.com/>


Source: reasons to be cheerful, 18th April 2024.

Editor: Sounds like ‘Men’s Sheds’ on steroids. 

GLAD Bags Manufacturer in Court for '50% Ocean Plastic' Claims

“The ACCC has instituted proceedings in the Federal Court against Clorox Australia Pty Ltd, the manufacturer of GLAD-branded kitchen and garbage bags, for allegedly making false or misleading representations that certain kitchen and garbage bags were partly made of recycled ‘ocean plastic’, in breach of the Australian Consumer Law.

More: www.accc.gov.au/media-release/glad-bags-manufacturer-in-court-for-50-ocean-plastic-claims plus www.consumer.org.au/articles/glad-bags-manufacturer-in-aussie-court-for-50-ocean-plastic-claims

Source: Consumer, 20th April 2024. 

Our Land 2024

“Previous reports in the New Zealand *Our Land* series have explored [various} pressures and their impacts (2018) and the intensity with which we’re using and managing them (2021). This [2024] report, our third in the *Our Land* series, builds on its predecessors and explores environmental trade-offs and the potential of our natural infrastructure to provide solutions, while also seeking to take full account of the services they provide.


“What the evidence in this report shows us is, when we look after our natural environment, and work within its limits, it has the capacity and resilience to provide for us as well. Examples include our wetlands, which serve as ecological hotspots while providing water filtration and mahinga kai, and our urban greenspaces which supported the mental health and wellbeing of many New Zealanders during the COVID-19 pandemic. And they include our coastal dune systems which protect coastlines during storms, and our highly productive land which underpins our agricultural and horticultural economy. The evidence shows how we’re reliant on the services that nature provides.

“The choices we make today about how we manage our relationship with land are also central to improving outcomes for our freshwater and marine environments and mitigating climate change. The solutions which lie in our natural infrastructure can help us adapt to a future where we are exposed to more frequent natural hazards that pose a threat to our physical security, wellbeing, and economic prosperity.

“Recognising the value nature provides and the full range of benefits we receive from healthy, functioning ecosystems is crucial to building a safer and more prosperous future for everyone. We all have a role to play in shaping that future and we hope the evidence contained in this report helps you understand the environmental challenges and take part in the solutions.

More: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/our-land-2024/> 65pages 9.63Mb, plus www.sciencemediacentre.co.nz/2024/04/11/the-climate-saving-potential-of-our-vanishing-wetlands-expert-qa/

Source: SBC Weekly Pānui, 18th April 2024.

Editor: An easy to read report clearly outlining the damage we have caused and are causing to our land and possibilities to reverse or mitigate impacts. 

Portable Energy Storage System Made with Used EV Batteries

“The unit, produced as part of a collaboration with energy storage innovation start-up Allye Energy, can store 270kWh of energy – nearly a month’s worth of power for the average UK home. It is comparable in size and weight to a typical diesel generator.

“Each unit holds seven used EV batteries sourced from plug-in hybrid Range Rover and Range Rover Sport vehicles. Batteries do not have to undergo additional processing before being used in the BESS.

“The batteries used in the BESS will typically have a 70-80% capacity, meaning they fall below EV requirements but are still safe and efficient to use in other applications.

“Testing has proven each unit can charge up to nine plug-in hybrid cars at a time, as long as these vehicles use the same input as JLR’s existing EV portfolio.

More: www.edie.net/jlr-unveils-portable-energy-storage-system-made-with-used-ev-batteries/

Source: edie, 17th April 2024. 