

# Let's Talk About Consumption

1 Day Inter-active Workshop — Brisbane, Friday 28 August, 9am to 5pm  
Griffith University EcoCentre, Nathan Campus, Brisbane



## How do we create human societies that live within their ecological limits?

One of the greatest causes of the destruction of the natural world is the unsustainable consumption of 'natural resources' by human societies. It is estimated that today, we use the equivalent of 1.5 planets to provide the resources we use and absorb our waste (Global Footprint Network). And of course, we only have one precious Earth. If we are to transform our relationship with the Earth community and create a healthy future for all life on Earth, we must reduce our consumption of the natural world.

But how do we do this? Modern Australian society has little experience understanding, or trying to live within, its ecological limits. Our dominant economic, political and legal systems are built on the antiquated notion of 'endless growth', which is powered by unsustainable consumption.

AELA is inviting individuals, community groups, environmental NGOs, regulators, academics and others to our interactive workshop, to discuss the problems caused by unsustainable consumption and map out collective strategies for reducing consumption.

We're inviting you to share your achievements and frustrations in trying to tackle consumption, and provide your views about the role of law and regulation in supporting a sustainable consumption future. The ideas, case studies and recommendations generated by participants will form part of a major publication series, aimed at supporting civil society initiatives and influencing public policy.

This workshop is the first in a national series of workshops and publications being coordinated by AELA in 2015 and 2016. Join us for a positive, informative day of discussion and strategy development.

**Visit:** <http://www.earthlaws.org.au/current-projects/ecological-limits/>

*Photo above: pavement art made out of plastic cups, Lisa Be*

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

Environmental & community advocates, researchers, academics, students, regulators and anyone interested in tackling the toughest environmental issues we face

### TO BOOK YOUR PLACE:

Please visit our online booking webpage: <http://www.trybooking.com/HSLL>

**PLEASE NOTE** - Tea and coffee will be available, but to keep this event free, lunch is not provided. You can bring your own lunch or purchase it at a nearby café

### MORE INFORMATION:

[ecolimits@earthlaws.org.au](mailto:ecolimits@earthlaws.org.au)



australian earth laws alliance

# Program

## “Let’s Talk About Consumption”

### Brisbane, 28 August 2015



8.30-9.00am Registration, tea and coffee

9.00-9.10am Opening remarks and welcome - *Dr Michelle Maloney, National Convenor, AELA*

9.10-9.45am **Framing the conversation - individual or collective responsibility?** *Dr Michelle Maloney, AELA*

How do we address the complexity of consumption - environmental and social impacts, inequities of ‘global consumption classes’, corporate creation of consumption, population growth and individual vs collective responsibility?

9.45-11.00am **So how did we get here? Understanding the causes of unsustainable consumption**

This session examines how we created unsustainable consumption via ‘growth economics’ and the range of approaches that challenge the dominant growth paradigm

*Dr Sam Alexander, University of Melbourne, “Challenging Growth Economics: Degrowth & Voluntary Simplicity”*

*Dr Amanda Cahill, Centre for Social Change, “Building New Economies - Community Responses”*

11.00-11.30am Morning Tea Break - tea and coffee provided, refreshments can be purchased nearby

11.30-1.00pm **How much is enough? How do we know our ecological limits?**

The starting point is not us, it’s the natural world. What do our ecosystems and bio-regions need for ecological health? How do we reframe our efforts, so we consume only within the ecological limits of our biosphere?

*Professor Will Steffan, Climate Council - ‘Planetary Boundaries and a Safe Operating Space for Life on Earth’*

*Professor Brendan Mackey, Griffith University, ‘Making Room for Nature in the Anthropocene: How Much Does Nature Need and What Are the Implications for Human Consumption?’*

1.00-2.00 Lunch - tea and coffee provided, refreshments can be purchased nearby

2.00-4.00 **How do we reduce consumption? Individual vs collection action - Interactive Discussions**

**\*\* See over the page for details about our discussion groups \*\***

How do we create human societies that live within ecological limits and nurture the Earth upon which we depend?

Brief presentations will be provided by a range of speakers from various sectors, followed by interactive groups, so that participants can discuss their own initiatives and recommendations for ways forward. Focus topics will include: the role of planning and catchment management, challenging the consumer culture, civil society’s voluntary simplicity and transition initiatives, regulation and structural reform and activism and politics

- All input will be documented, and participants will be invited to complete online and in-person surveys after the workshop, to continue the conversations and accurately capture people’s experiences and recommendations

4.00-4.30 Afternoon tea - tea and coffee provided, refreshments can be purchased nearby

4.30-5.00 **Conclusions and next steps** - *Dr Michelle Maloney, AELA*

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## DISCUSSION GROUPS

2.00pm to 4.00pm

2.00-4.00pm **How do we reduce consumption? Individual vs collection action - Interactive Discussions**

How do we create human societies that live within ecological limits and nurture the Earth upon which we depend? Brief presentations will be provided by a range of speakers from various sectors, followed by interactive discussion groups, so that participants can discuss their own initiatives and recommendations for ways forward.

**\*\* Participants will be invited to join a discussion group listed below, or to create their own group \*\***

Ideas, suggestions and case studies discussed by participants will be documented, and participants will be invited to complete online and in-person surveys after the workshop, to continue the conversations and accurately capture people’s experiences and recommendations. To complete AELA’s consumption survey, please visit this webpage:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LSLCYMD>

### **PROPOSED DISCUSSION GROUPS INCLUDE:**

- **The role of civil society in creating its own initiatives to reduce consumption** - Discussion Leaders include: Catherine Laurence from The Goodness Inc; Nichola Hungerford from the Queensland Conservation Council and Wiebe ter Bals, Sunshine Coast Environment Council
- **The role of planning and planning law, in linking human settlements to our ecological limits** - Discussion Leaders include: Jo Bragg Environmental Defenders Office and Mark Taylor, Brisbane City Council
- **How science can help us understand the nexus between ecological limits and human consumption** - Discussion Leader: Professor Brendan Mackey, Griffith Climate Change Response Program
- **How NRM bodies and catchment management groups can link their work to local and regional ecological limits** - Discussion Leader: Louise Orr, SEQ Catchments
- **How the arts can challenge consumerism** - Discussion Leaders include: Associate Professor Marian Drew and Lecturer Peter Thiedeke, from the Griffith University School of Arts
- **Designing policy for local governments that addresses unsustainable consumption** - Ben Pennings, Greens Candidate
- **What types of laws and regulations can help us reduce consumption?** - Discussion Leader: Dr Michelle Maloney, AELA
- Other groups as decided by participants at the workshop