GreenPrints:
A pathway to Earth centred governance

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Overview

- GreenPrints focuses on a critical question: how can we create governance and legal systems that help us live within our ecological limits and nurture the Earth community?

- While we have ‘blueprints’ to document the design of building and engineering projects, we don’t yet have effective ‘greenprints’ for helping us construct the governance systems we need, to build Earth centred societies that can be sustained in a climate changed world and nurture the Earth community.

GreenPrints

- Created by, and designed for, civil society action first, then advocacy
- It weaves together a range of existing, successful approaches to help us transition to post-growth, truly sustainable human societies
  - Transition Towns, Voluntary Simplicity, industrial ecology, Ecological Footprint system, protected area management, 'caring for country' strategies, New Economy initiatives, ANDI (Australian National Development Index)
  - Earth systems science, Planetary Boundaries, Great Transition, scenario planning
- *It begins not with our aspirations and 'visions' for a better future … but with taking an Earth centred approach to ecological health*

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Our network of 'builders'

- Lovely people!
- Awesome professionals, from many disciplines
- Fantastic First Nations colleagues
- Expert Advisory Group
  - Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe, Griffith University
  - Professor Brendan Mackey, GCCRP
  - NRM – natural resource management advisors
  - First Nations Peoples – advisory group – Adjunct Professor Mary Graham, Ross Williams, Valentine Nona
  - Community economics, community building, New Economy Network Australia
  - Arts, creatives
  - Ecospirituality

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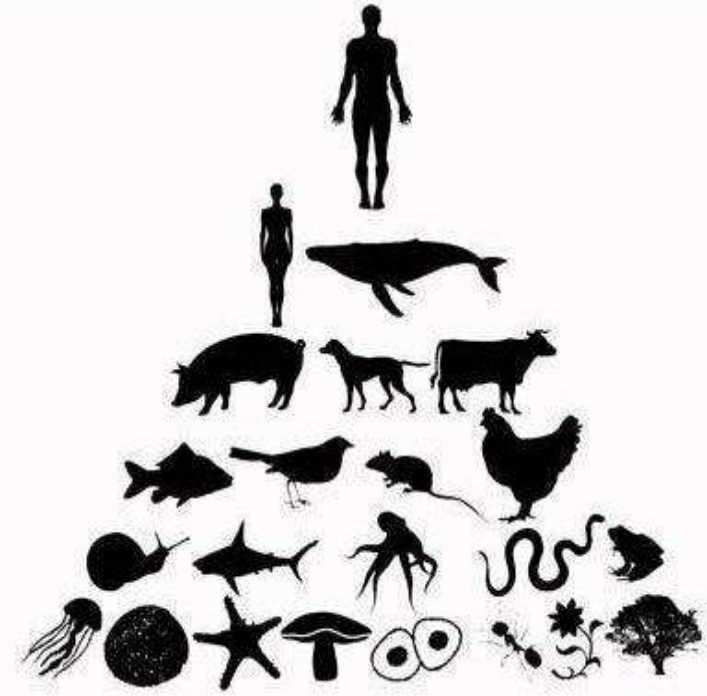
Our first community participants

- Palm Island – First Nations Peoples are working with AELA on a sustainability hub, economic self-determination
- Northern NSW – artists and First Nations Peoples
- Communities in central Victoria

Earth jurisprudence calls for us to examine the root causes of the current ecological crisis and transform our **governance systems (rules, laws, ethics, institutions)** from human centred to Earth centred



Human centred

Earth centred

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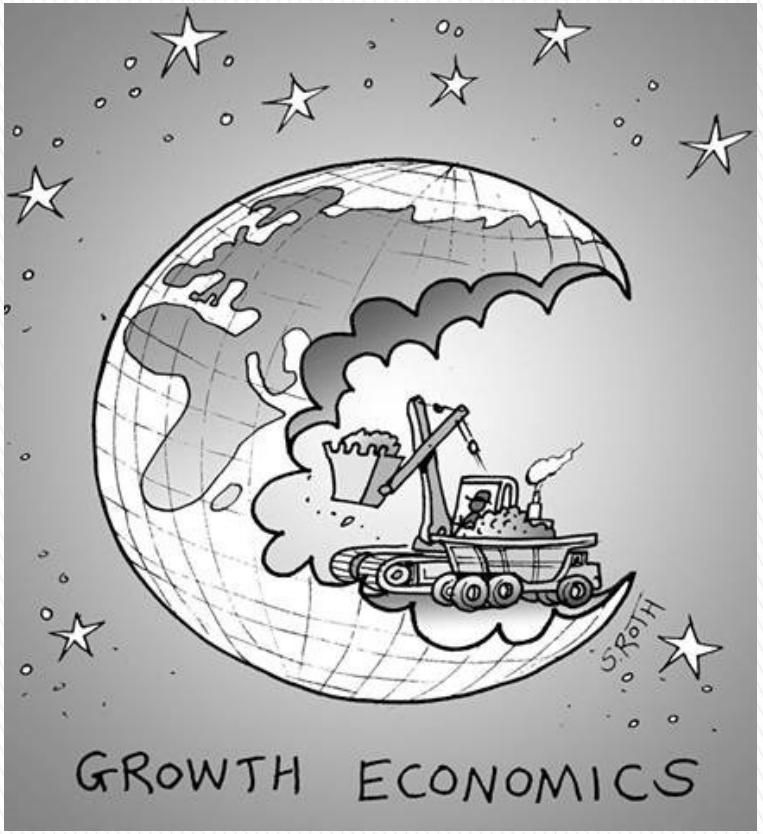
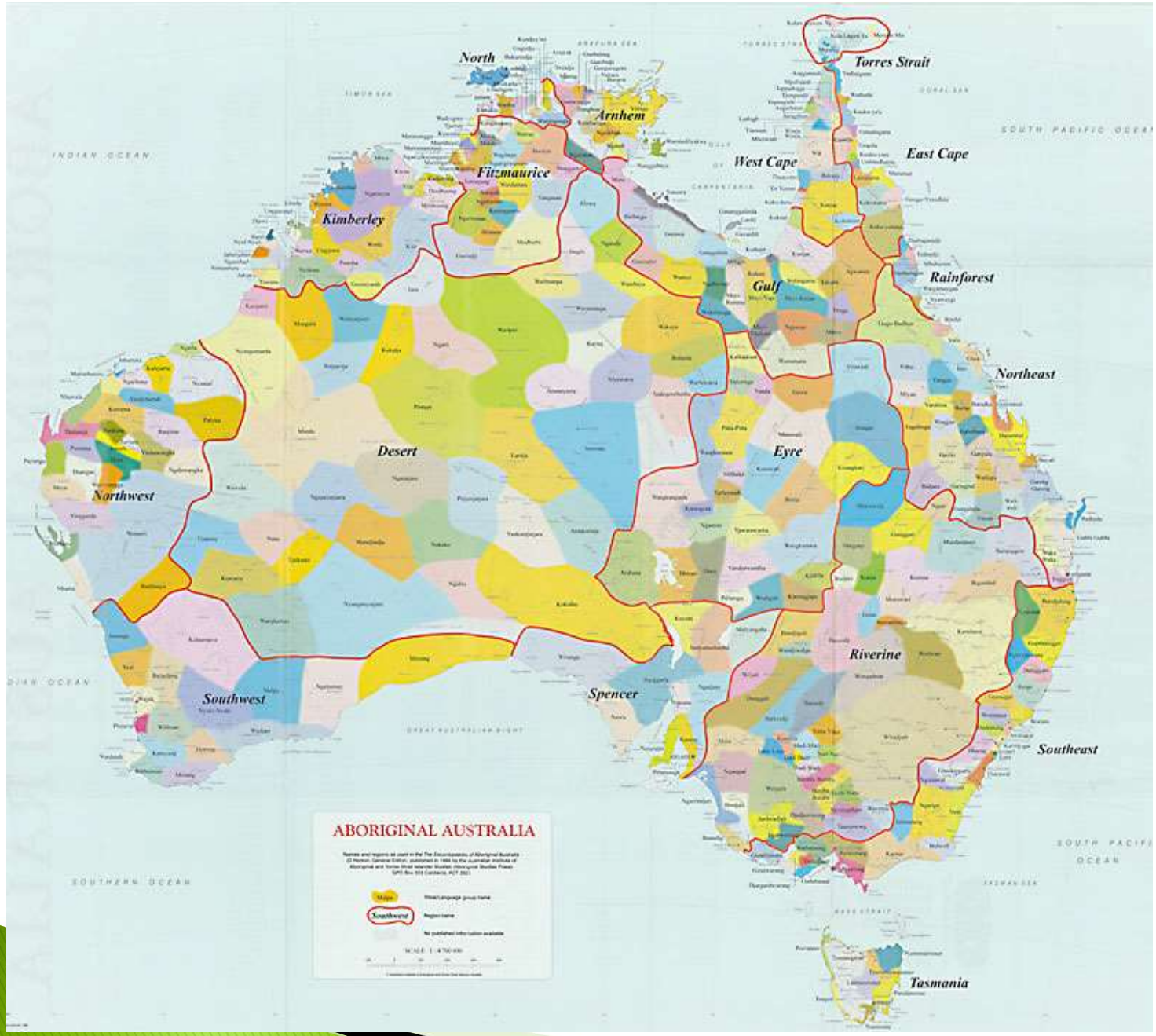
Three ‘big’ problems GreenPrints is addressing

(1) Problem – pro-growth culture and governance

- Presently, the underpinning governance structures (rules, laws, ethics, institutions) of industrial societies are **anthropocentric and designed to support unlimited growth on a finite planet**
- We must change our governance systems to live within our ecological limits and respect the wider Earth community



(2) Problem – *political jurisdictions and governance* disconnected from ecological reality (ie human centred, pro-growth)



This continent experienced a dramatic shift in governance

From 60,000+ years of effective, local, Earth-centred, Steady-state governance …

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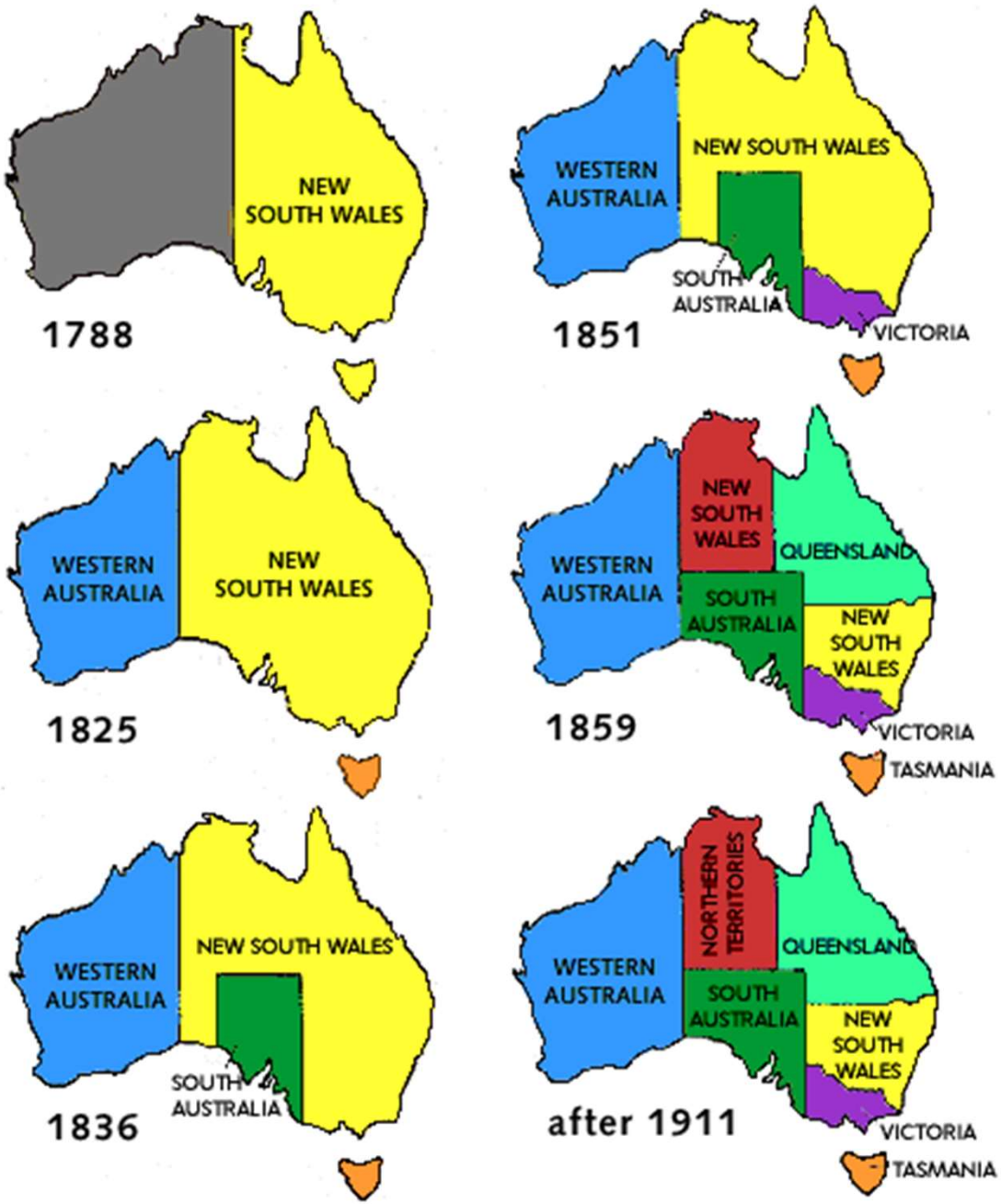

To 230 years of environmentally disconnected governance, based on human centred, pro-growth culture and medieval English laws

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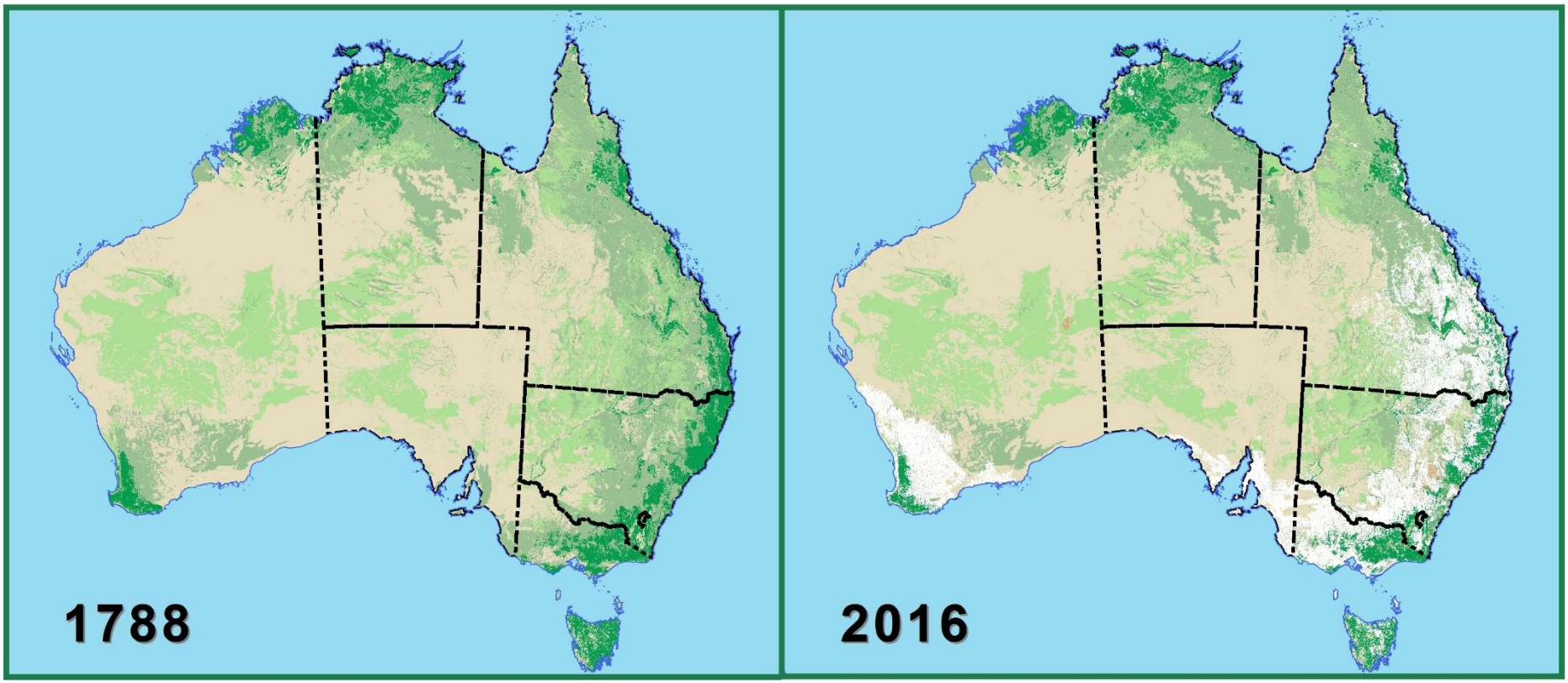
Results of this human-centred governance?



Vegetation Loss in Australia 1788-2016

	Loss
Eucalypt Forests and Rainforest	20.1%
Eucalypt Woodlands	27.8%
Other Forests or Woodlands	10.5%
Other vegetation (no trees)	6.0%
Cleared since 1788	13.0%

RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL

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Australian Koala Foundation

(3) Problem – ineffective models of sustainability

Mickey Mouse Sustainability vs Nested Sustainability

Since the 1980s/90s – governance influenced by 'Sustainable Development' = balancing different *human* values

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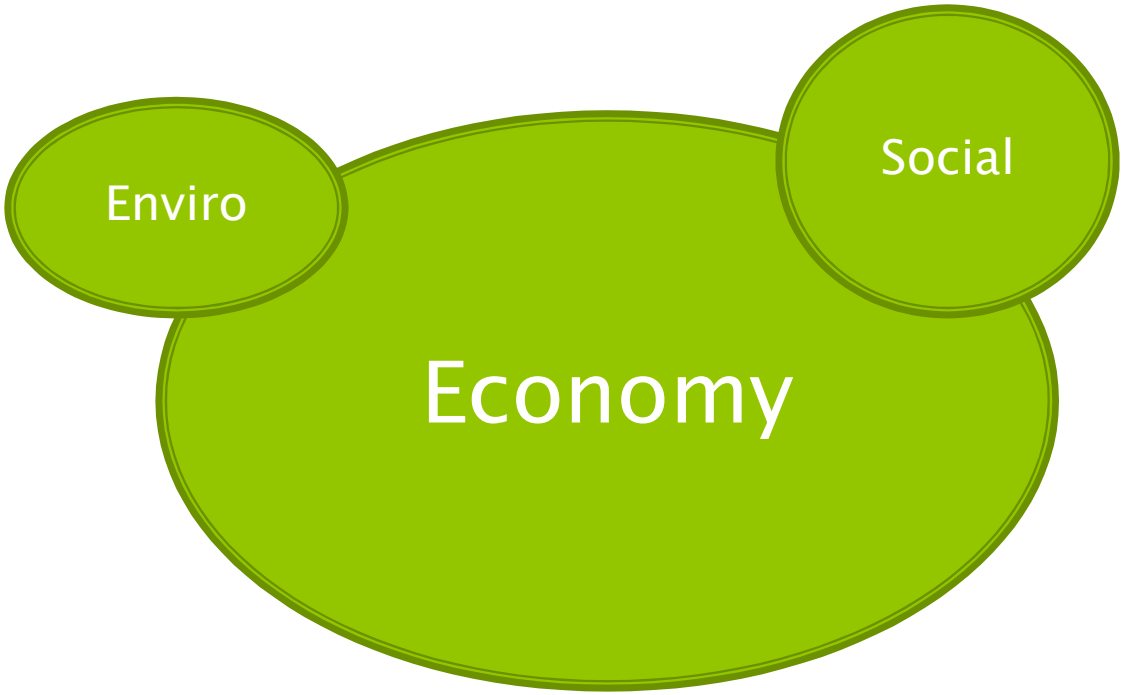
This produced 'Mickey Mouse' sustainability



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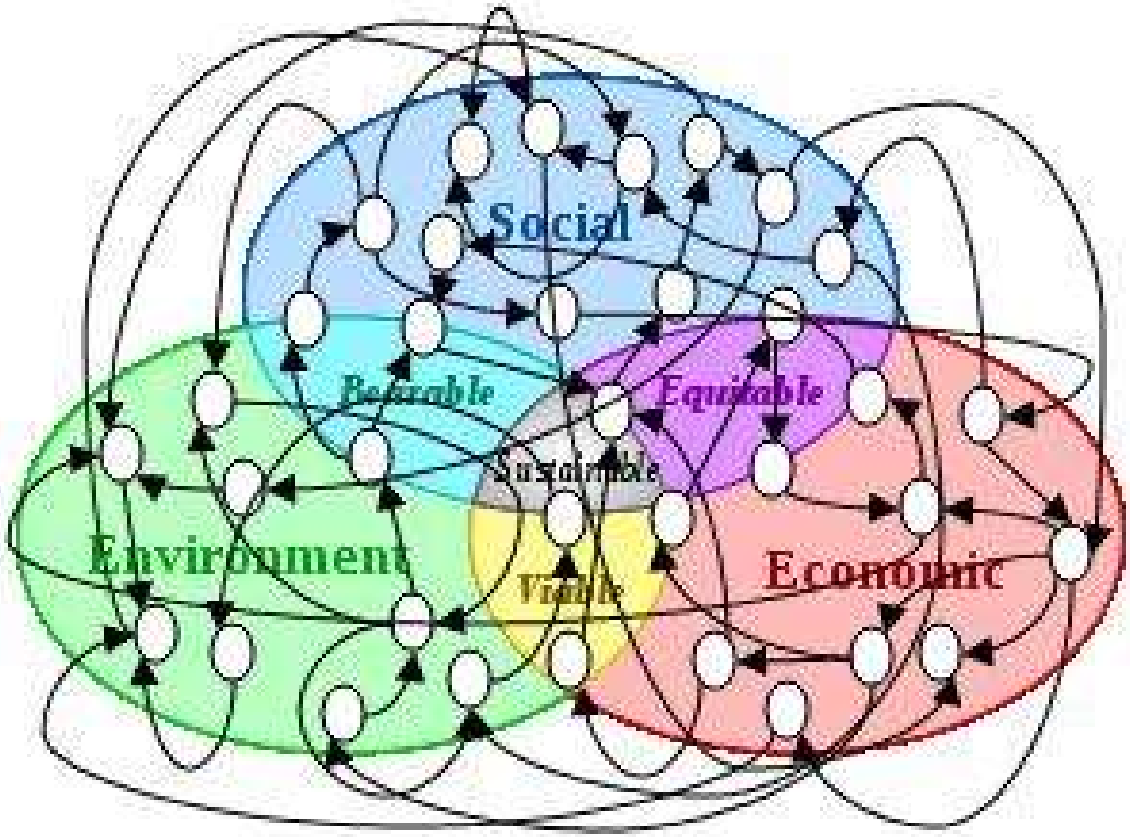
And it hasn't stopped the destruction of the natural world



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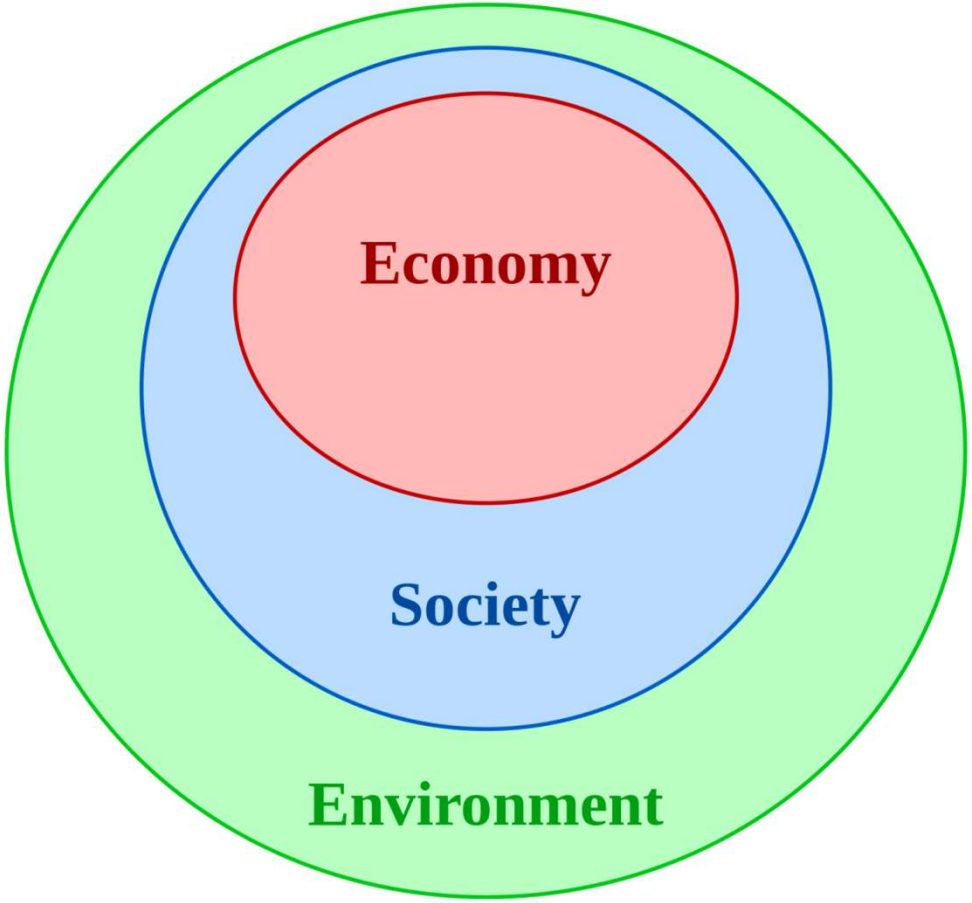
The solution

Nested sustainability – Earth centred governance

‘Strong’ sustainability
Earth centredness = ‘nested’



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Simple overview of GreenPrints

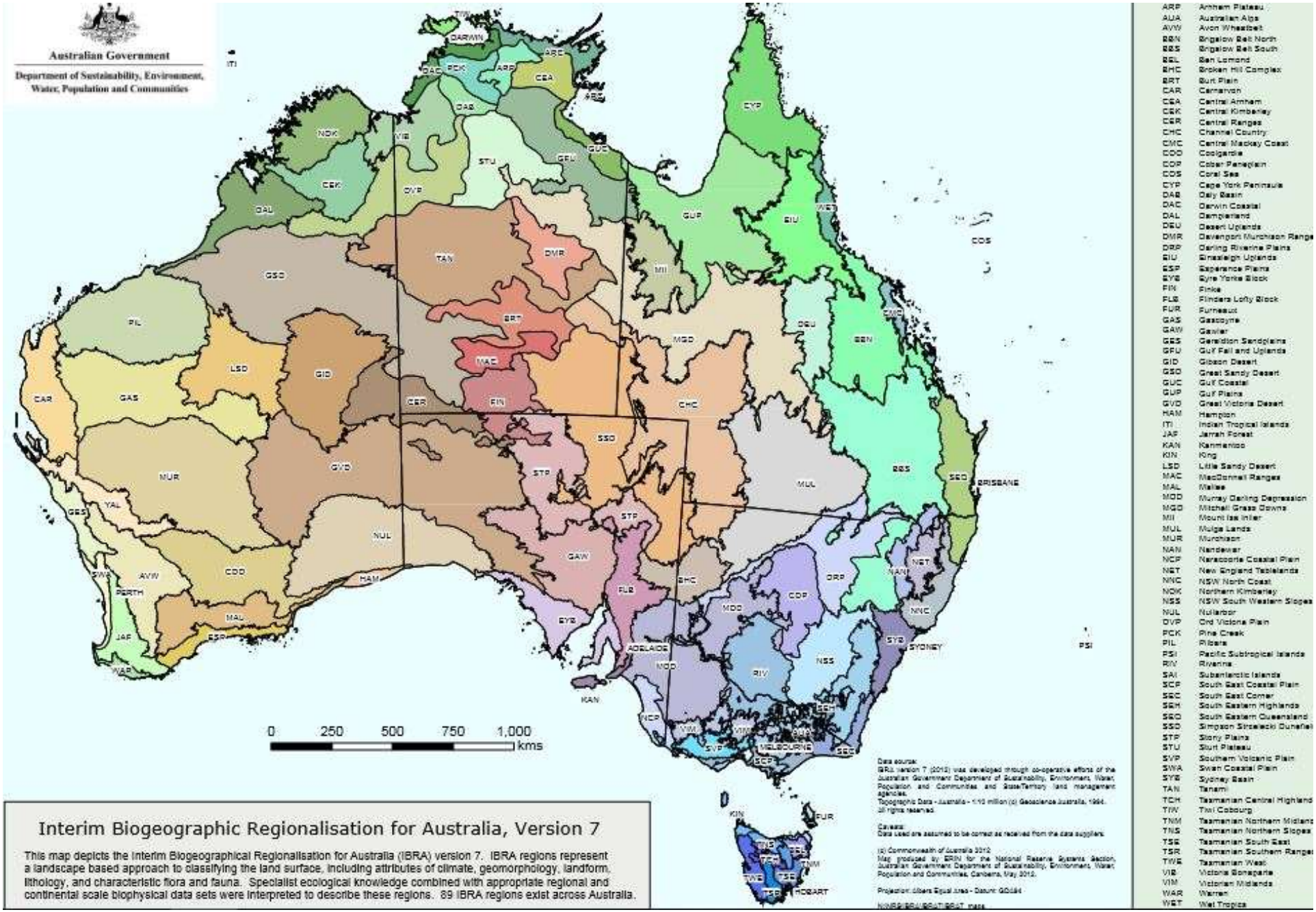
Starting with bioregional ecological health, to set ‘parameters’ around human activities

What is a bioregion?

- a region defined by characteristics of the natural environment rather than by man-made divisions

- relatively large land areas characterised by broad, landscape-scale natural features and environmental processes that influence the functions of entire ecosystems.
  - These patterns in the landscape are linked to fauna and flora assemblages and processes at the ecosystem scale, thus providing a useful means for simplifying and reporting on more complex patterns of biodiversity.
  - (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage)

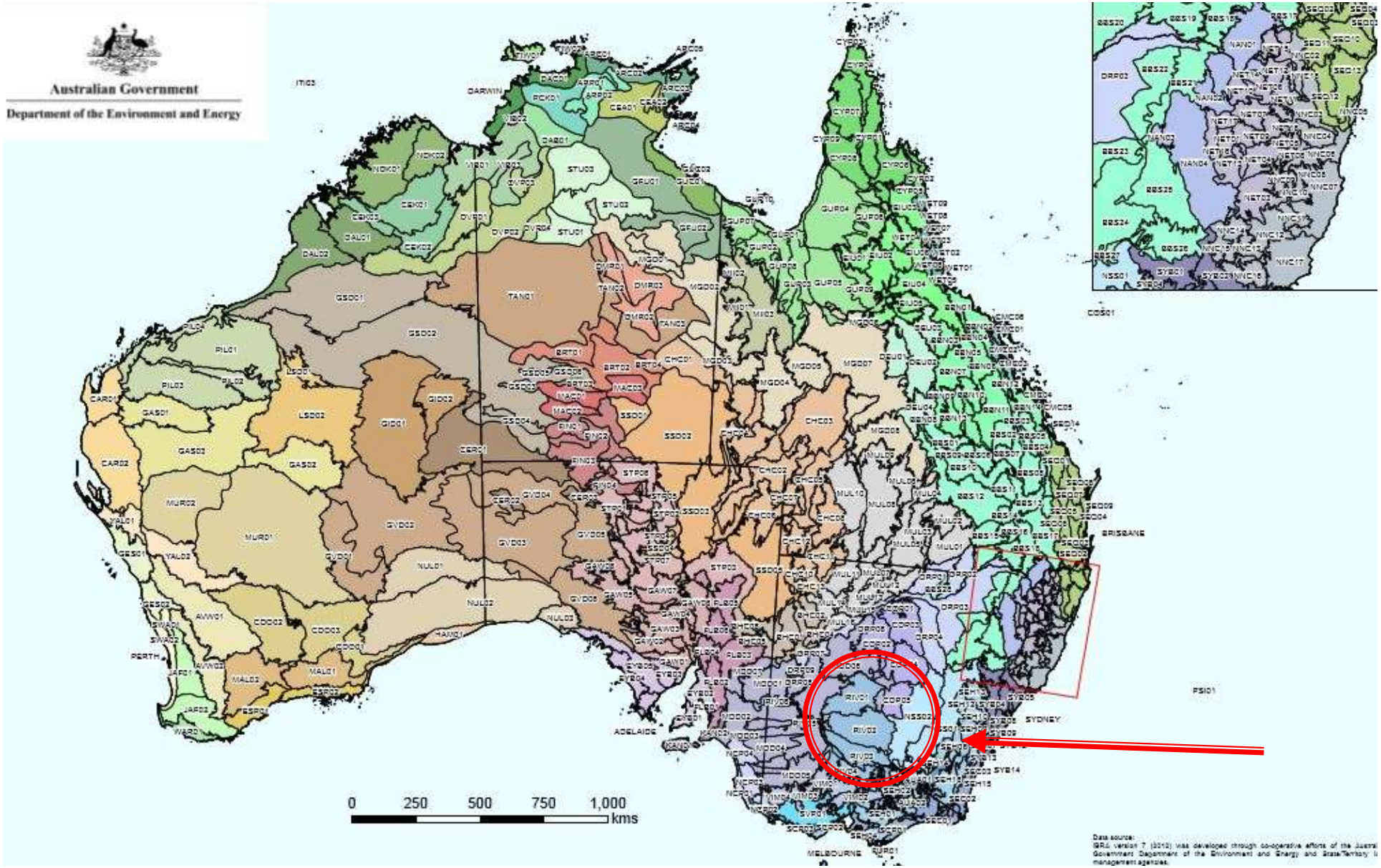
Australia has 89 bioregions



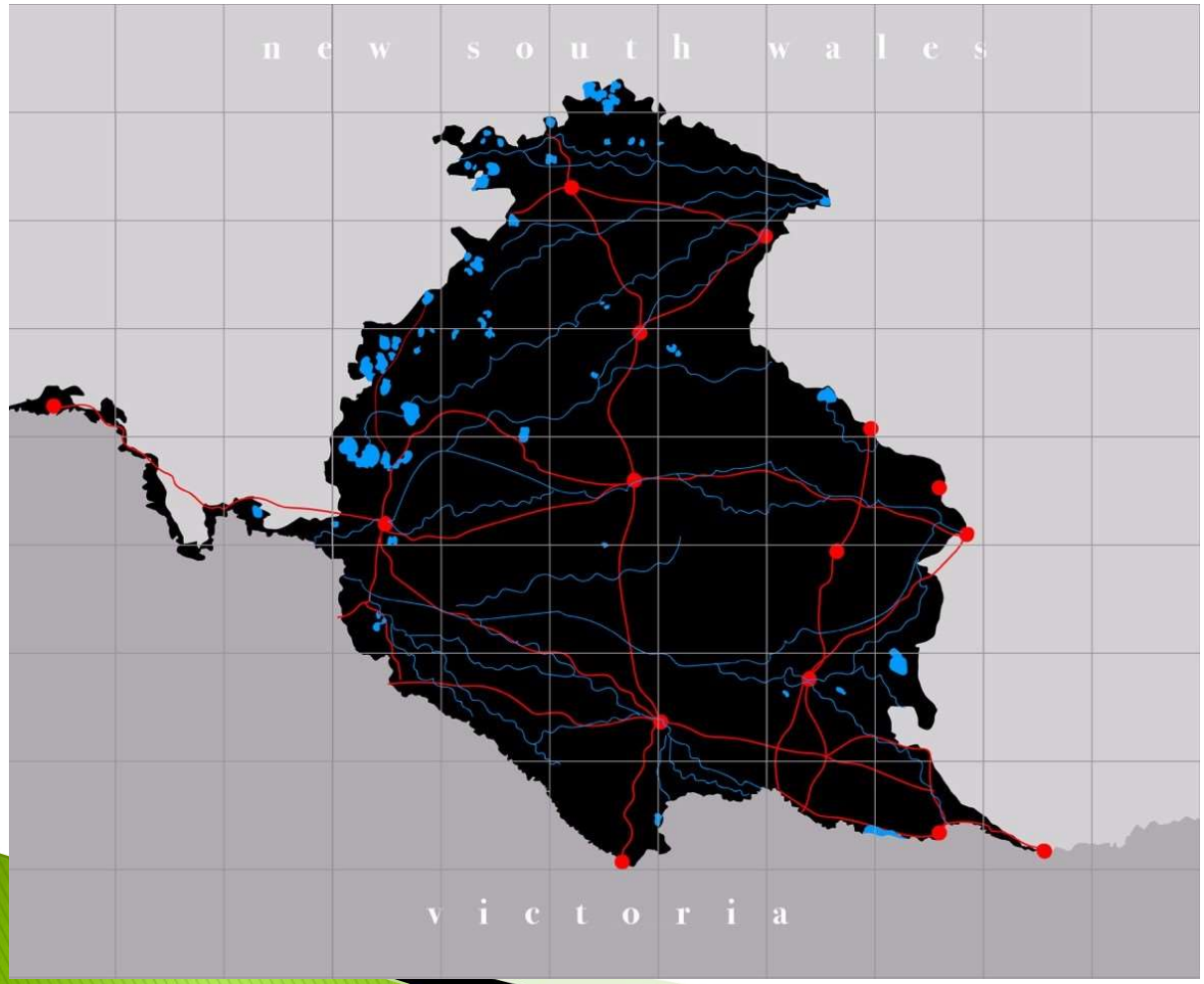
Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia, Version 7

This map depicts the Interim Biogeographical Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) version 7. IBRA regions represent a landscape based approach to classifying the land surface, including attributes of climate, geomorphology, landform, lithology, and characteristic flora and fauna. Specialist ecological knowledge combined with appropriate regional and continental scale biophysical data sets were interpreted to describe these regions. 89 IBRA regions exist across Australia.

419 sub-regions



Example of GreenPrints method: getting to know the Riverina bioregion (+subregions)



Maps
Geography
Different ways of 'knowing'

Arts
Creativity

Local knowledge
Connectedness
Love
Home

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What does bioregional ecological health look like *in this place?*

<u>Approaches</u>
Indigenous knowledge
Science
History

<u>Core issues</u>
Waterways
Vegetation
Soils
Biodiversity

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Scenarios for bioregional health

What does ecological health look like?

- Optimal
- Okay
- Unhealthy

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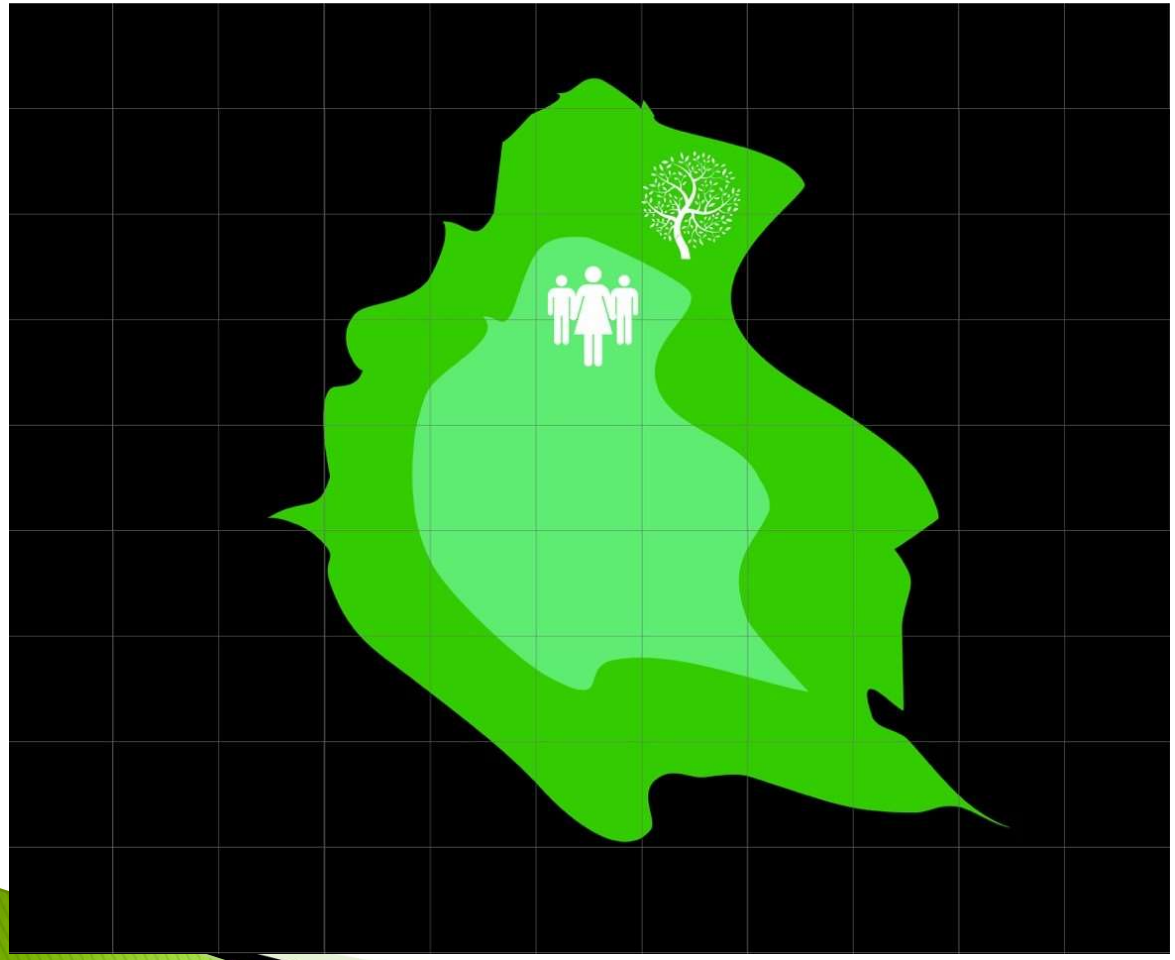
Nesting human society within a healthy bioregion



How much space is left for human activity in our different scenarios?

<u>Questions</u>
Population
Consumption
Space
Lifestyle
Culture
Education
Human health

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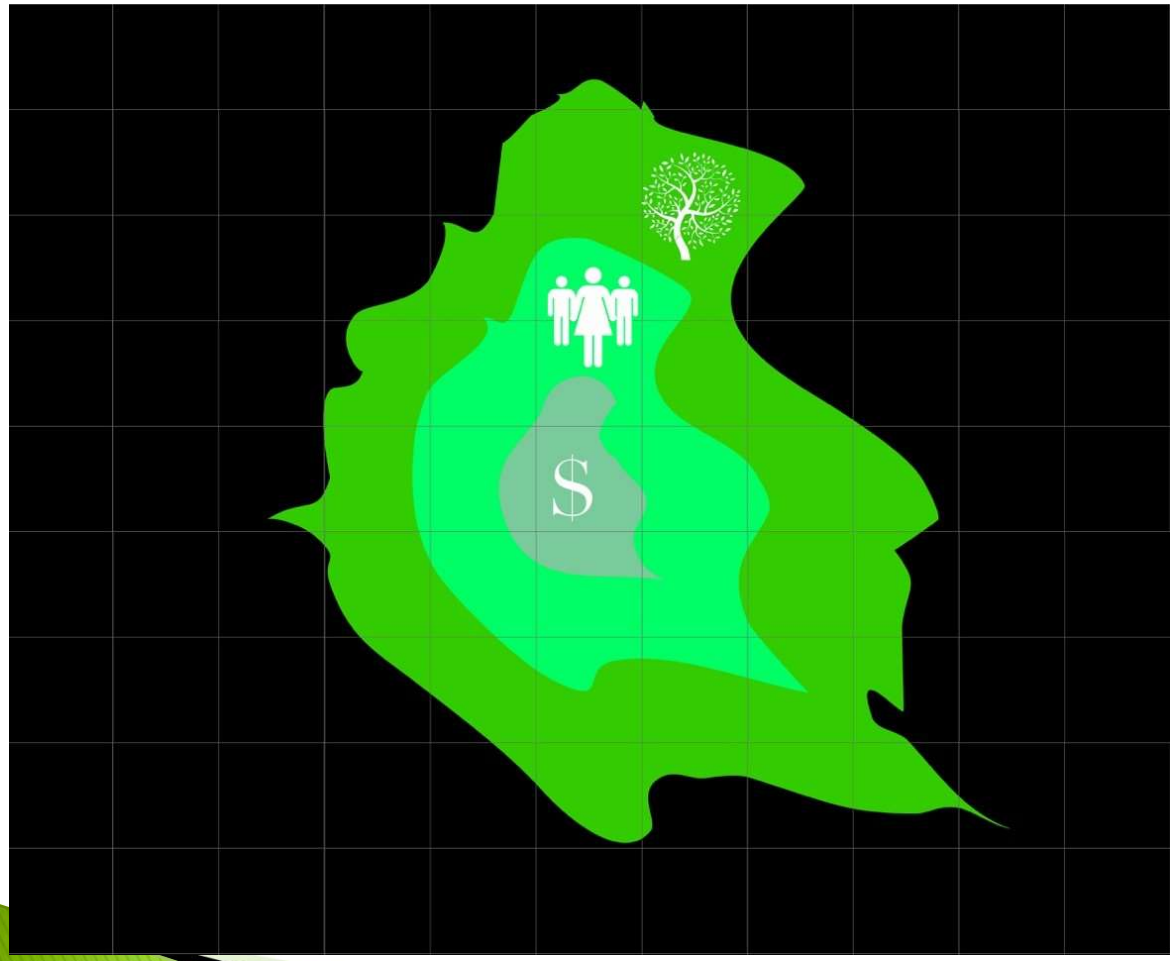
Create human economies that fit within social goals and eco-health



New Economy
Steady State
Ecological economics
Industrial ecology

<u>Questions</u>
What does our healthy bioregion enable us to:

Grow
Water
Eat
Cut down
Import/export
"do"

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Bio-regional governance

How do we create and retrofit laws, rules, ethics and institutions to support this Earth centred governance?

<u>Questions</u>

How do we enshrine rules for healthy bio-regions into new governance?

How can we work within existing local/state jurisdictions but focus on bioregional health?

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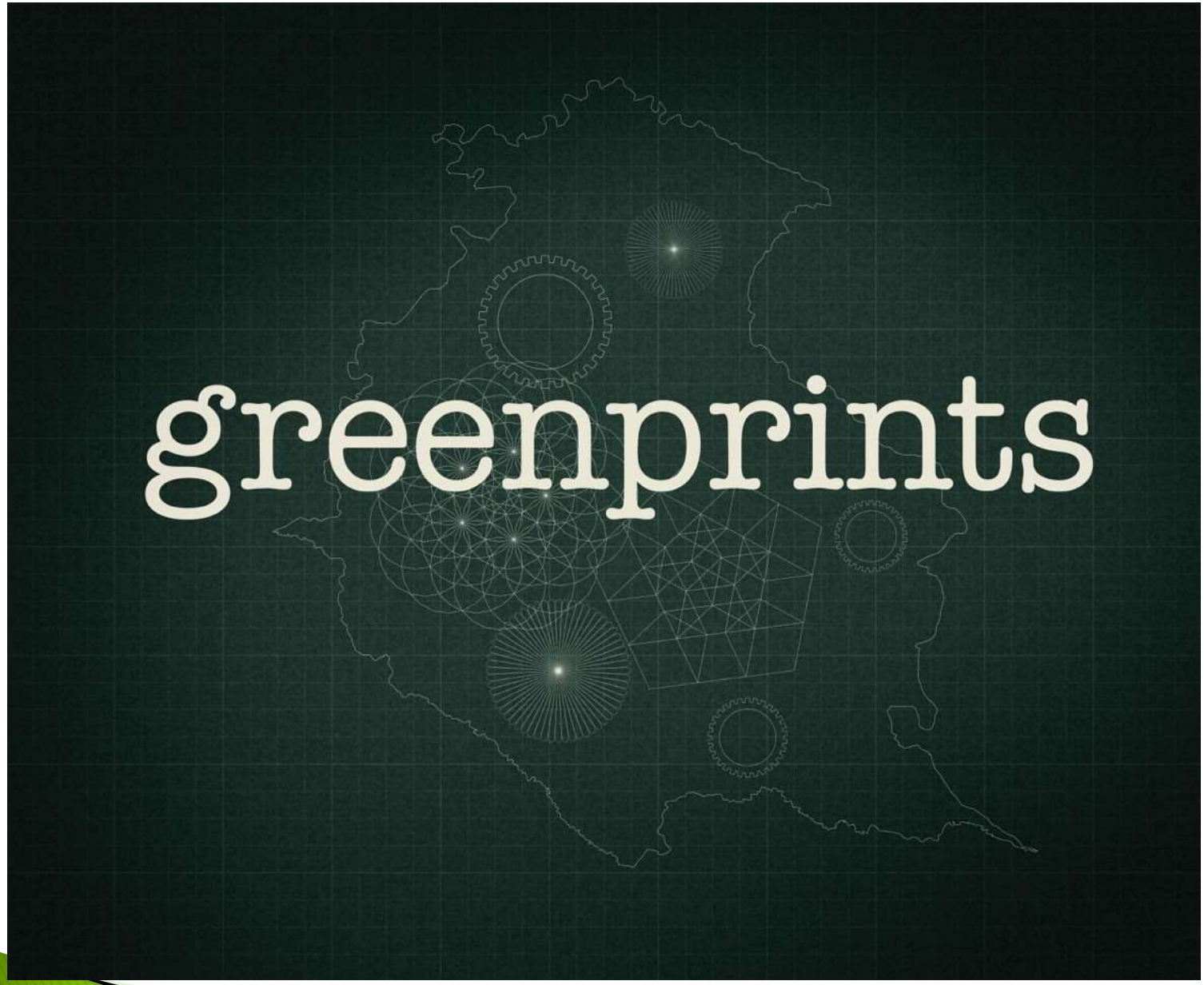

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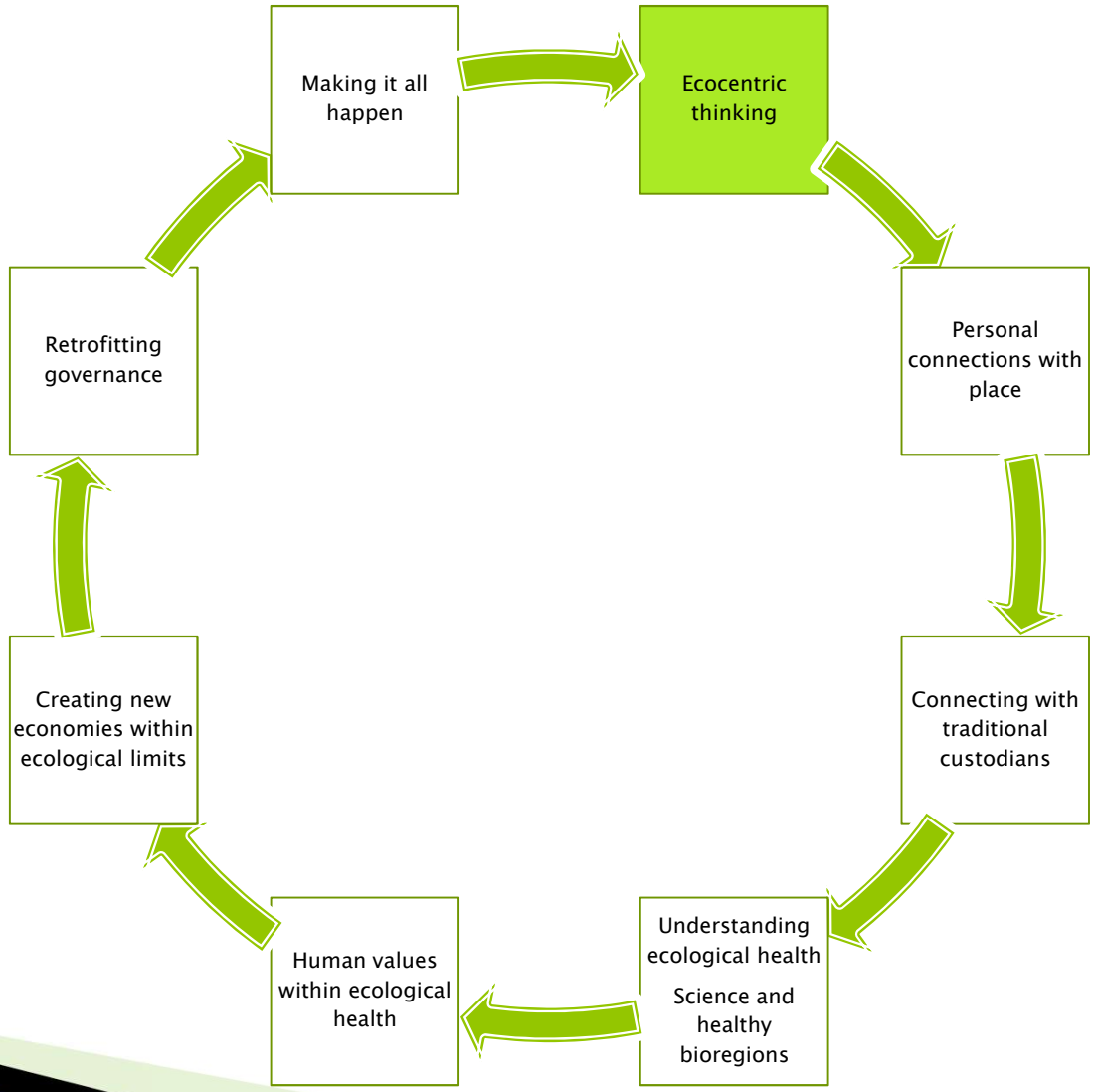
GreenPrints as a pathway



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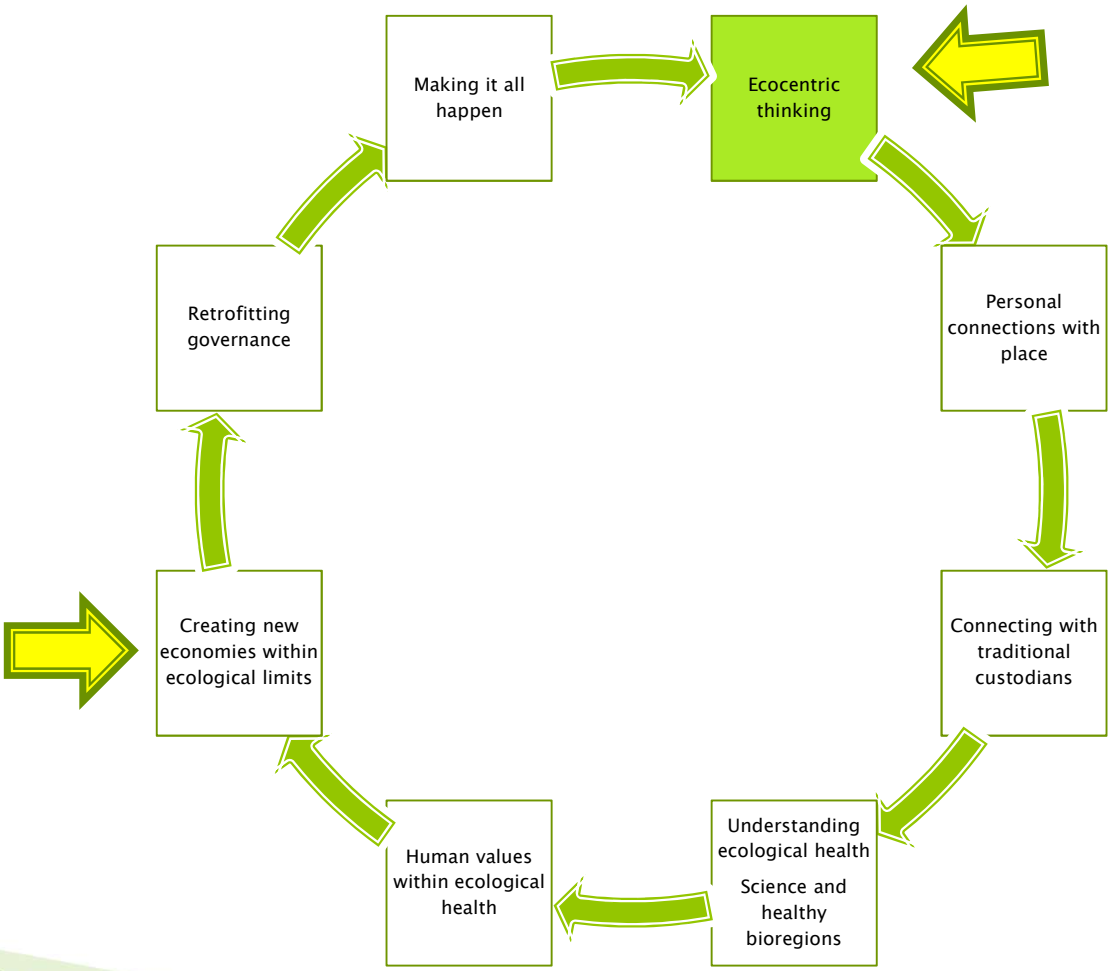
Pilot communities have different ‘entry points’ into this pathway



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2017 and 2018

- Working with handful of groups, trialling how we ‘do this’ in their bioregion
- Open invitation to community members from all professions, traditions, to get involved

- Email Michelle Maloney
- convenor@earthlaws.org.au
- Thank you! ☺

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Your invitation

- Critique our approach
- Comment, make suggestions
- Join us and connect your community
- Tell others
- (give money ☺)

- convenor@earthlaws.org.au
- Thank you!

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