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
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
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.
Three ‘big’ problems GreenPrints is addressing
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...
To 230 years of environmentally disconnected governance, based on human centred, pro-growth culture and medieval English laws
Results of this human-centred governance?

Vegetation Loss in Australia 1788-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetation Type</th>
<th>Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eucalypt Forests and Rainforest</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucalypt Woodlands</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Forests or Woodlands</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vegetation (no trees)</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleared since 1788</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(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
This produced ‘Mickey Mouse’ sustainability
And it hasn’t stopped the destruction of the natural world
The solution

Nested sustainability – Earth centred governance
‘Strong’ sustainability
Earth centredness = ‘nested’
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
Example of GreenPrints method: getting to know the Riverina bioregion (+subregions)

Maps
Geography
Different ways of ‘knowing’

Arts
Creativity

Local knowledge
Connectedness
Love
Home
What does bioregional ecological health look like *in this place*?

**Approaches**
- Indigenous knowledge
- Science
- History

**Core issues**
- Waterways
- Vegetation
- Soils
- Biodiversity
Scenarios for bioregional health

What does ecological health look like?

- Optimal
- Okay
- Unhealthy
Nesting human society within a healthy bioregion

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

Questions
Population
Consumption
Space
Lifestyle
Culture
Education
Human health
Create human economies that fit within social goals and eco-health

- New Economy
- Steady State
- Ecological economics
- Industrial ecology

**Questions**
What does our healthy bioregion enable us to:

- Grow
- Water
- Eat
- Cut down
- Import/export
  “do”
How do we create and retrofit laws, rules, ethics and institutions to support this Earth centred governance?

Questions

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?
greenprints
GreenPrints as a pathway

- Ecocentric thinking
- Personal connections with place
- Understanding ecological health and healthy bioregions
- Creating new economies within ecological limits
- Retrofitting governance
- Human values within ecological health
- Connecting with traditional custodians
- Making it all happen

Australian Earth Laws Alliance
Pilot communities have different ‘entry points’ into this pathway

1. Ecocentric thinking
2. Understanding ecological health
3. Science and healthy bioregions
4. Connecting with traditional custodians
5. Personal connections with place
6. Retrofitting governance
7. Creating new economies within ecological limits
8. Making it all happen

Human values within ecological health
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! 😊
Your invitation

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

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