

The role of the sacred in nurturing ecological law and governance



Ecological Law and Governance Association
Australian Earth Laws Alliance

PROGRAM

- ▶ Introduction and acknowledgement of country – Michelle Maloney
- ▶ "Earth jurisprudence, ecological law and the role of the sacred" – **Michelle Maloney** (10)
- ▶ "The relationist ethos and how sacrelising the living world can form a foundation for society" – **Mary Graham**, Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Philosophy, University of Queensland and Kombumerri First Nations peoples (20)
- ▶ "Encountering Earth as Sacred: The Heart of the Matter", **Mary Tinney**, Earthlink (20)
- ▶ Closing remarks – Michelle Maloney (10)
- ▶ Questions and discussion

Housekeeping

- ▶ Length of webinar – 9am–10.30am
- ▶ Please stay on 'mute'
- ▶ Questions can be typed in the comments during the talks
- ▶ Q&A will be held at the end, to ensure time for our speakers
- ▶ Thank you!



Earth jurisprudence, ecological law and the role of the sacred“



Dr Michelle Maloney
Australian Earth Laws Alliance

Ecological Law and Governance Association

OUR MISSION, OUR VISION

The Ecological Law and Governance Association (ELGA) seeks to provide a forum and a platform for diverse groups to work together and amplify their voices to transform our current human-centered, growth-focused legal paradigm, to an Earth-centered, 'ecological law and governance' paradigm to better protect the foundations of life.

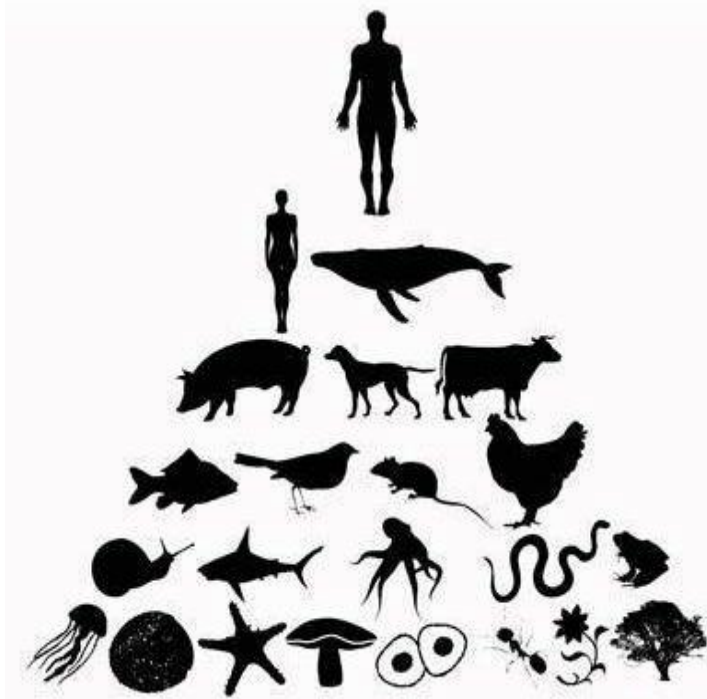
Our vision is a just, flourishing world where state and global governance systems protect the foundations of life.

About AECLA

- ▶ Created in 2012
- ▶ Mission: to increase the **understanding and practical implementation of Earth centred governance** – law, economics, education, ethics and the arts
- ▶ “Earth jurisprudence”
- ▶ AECLA is focussed on creating *systems* change
- ▶ multi/trans disciplinary



Earth jurisprudence is a philosophy that calls for us to examine the root causes of the ecological current crisis and shift our **governance systems** (law, economics, education, culture/fundamental world view)
FROM anthropocentrism or human centred approaches,
TO Earth centred or 'life centred' approaches



Human centred



Earth centred

Anthropocentrism

“The Deepest cause of the present devastation is found in a mode of consciousness that has established a radical discontinuity between the human and other modes of being.”

Thomas Berry, *The Great Work* (1999) 4.

Elements:

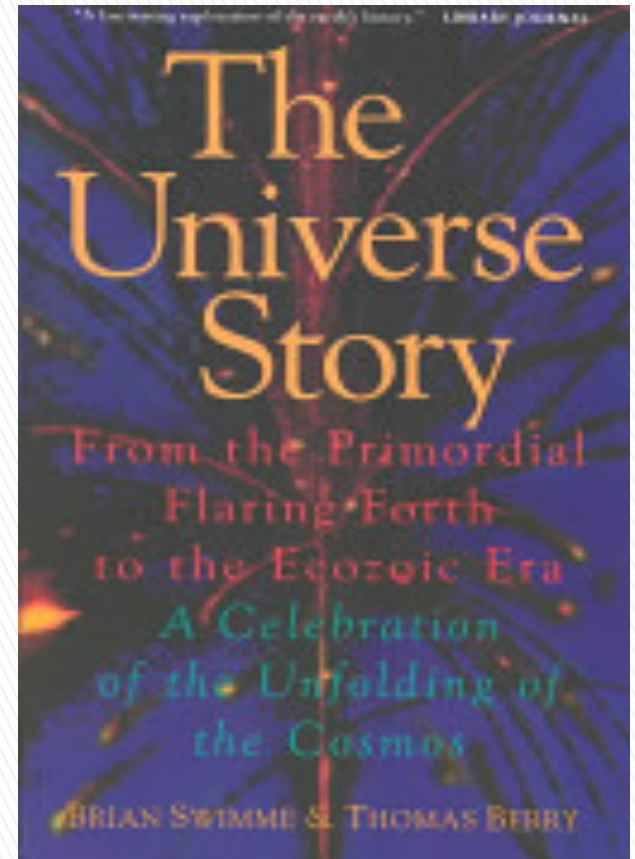
- ▶ Human beings are the central fact of the universe.
- ▶ Final aim and end of the universe.
- ▶ The earth exists to satisfy human needs and desires.



Thomas Berry – deep ecologist and
'geologian'; coined the term
"Earth jurisprudence" (Earth laws)

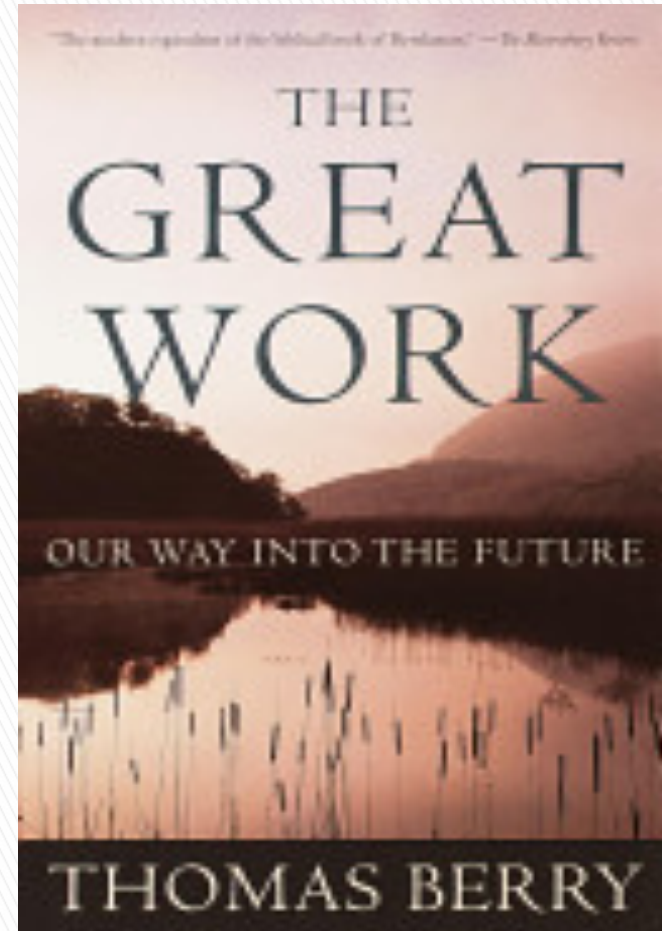


Thomas Berry
(1914–2009)



The Great Work: Our Way into the Future (1999)

- ▶ Critique of the underpinning structures of industrialised society
- ▶ Looked at all four of the fundamental establishments that control human affairs:
- ▶ **Law and Government**
 - Legal system is supporting exploitation rather than protecting the natural world from destruction
- ▶ **Economics** – neoliberal growth economics; power of corporations
- ▶ **Universities** – perpetuate current system, teach and reward focus on consuming the earth
- ▶ **Religion** – Perpetuate human dominion and alienation from nature.
- ▶ Anthropocentrism + pro-growth



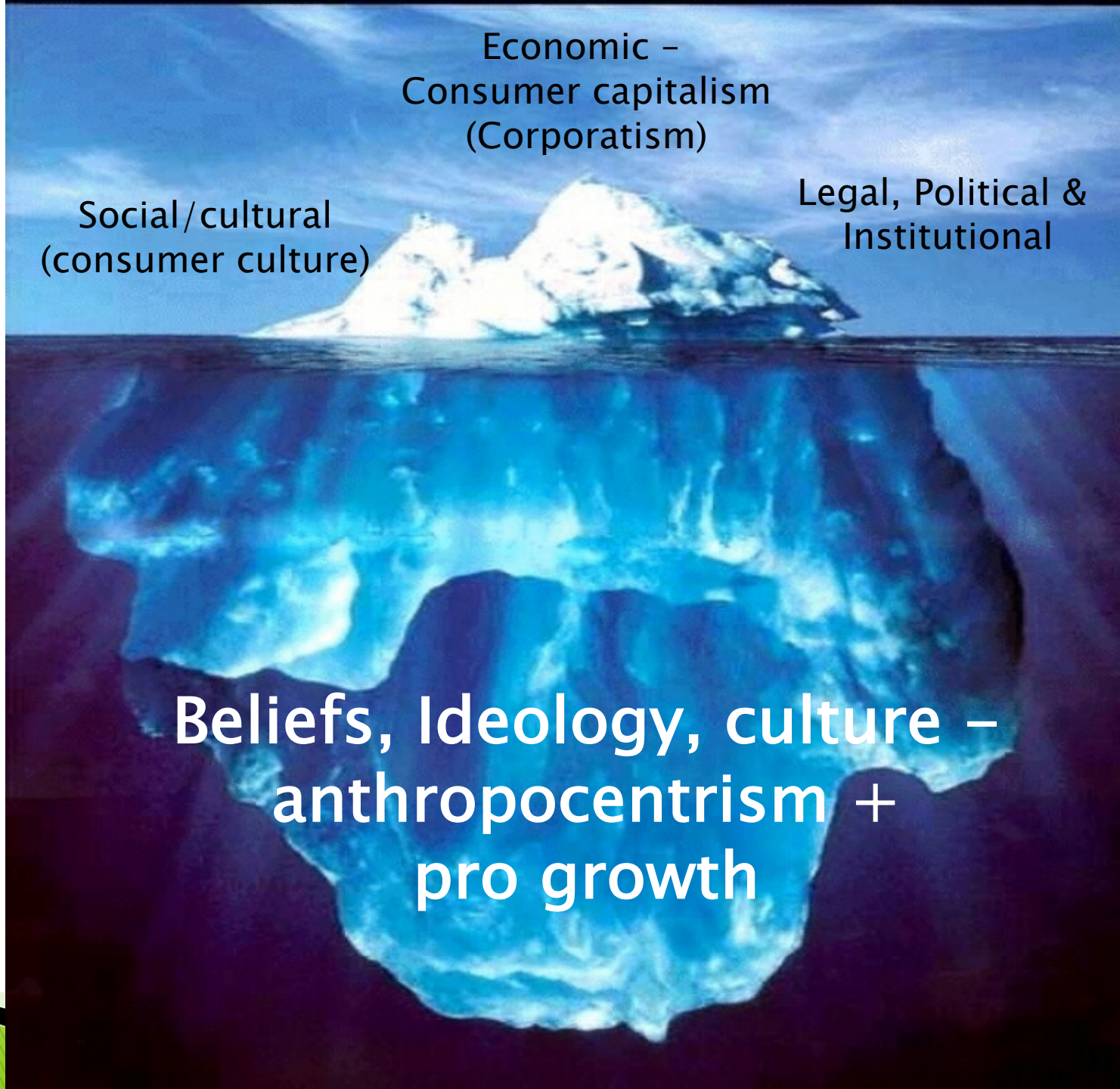
Earth Laws
explore
and challenge
“the ideas that
lie beneath”

Social/cultural
(consumer culture)

Economic –
Consumer capitalism
(Corporatism)

Legal, Political &
Institutional

Beliefs, Ideology, culture –
anthropocentrism +
pro growth




- ▶ **"Fundamentally changing our governance systems will require more than reforming existing laws or making new ones.** We need to take a long hard look, not only at our legal systems, but, more importantly, at the legal philosophies that underlie them. Only by creating a vision of an `Earth centred system' will we be able to begin a **comprehensive transformation of our governance system."**

Cormac Cullinan, Wild Law (2002)

So what is the role of the sacred?

sacred adjective



sa·cred | \ 'sā-kred  \

Definition of *sacred*

- 1 **a** : dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity
*// a tree *sacred* to the gods*
b : devoted exclusively to one service or use (as of a person or purpose)
*// a fund *sacred* to charity*
- 2 **a** : worthy of religious veneration : HOLY
b : entitled to reverence and respect
- 3 : of or relating to religion : not secular or profane
*// *sacred* music*
- 4 *archaic* : ACCURSED
- 5 **a** : UNASSAILABLE, INVIOABLE
b : highly valued and important
*// a *sacred* responsibility*









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Sharing knowledge to build a better future for all of us

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Thank you!

convenor@earthlaws.org.au

www.earthlaws.org.au



Mark Berkery