



# Earth Centred Futures

## Professional Development Course

12 July - 30 August 2022

## COURSE OUTLINE

# Overview

A personal and professional development program exploring how we can create an Earth-centred future.

AELA is offering an 8-week course for people seeking to build a deeper understanding of ecocentrism and Earth-centred governance, so they can develop new thinking and practice in their life and work.

## Join us!

- ❖ Develop your ability to think, work and create from an Earth-centred perspective;
- ❖ Build your knowledge about the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life on Earth;
- ❖ Build your knowledge about ancient and emerging approaches to Earth-centred governance;
- ❖ Hone your ability to analyse, critique and challenge problematic anthropocentric (human-centred) and extractivist practices within human governance - including law, economics, education and ethics - that are contributing to the destruction of the living world.
- ❖ Connect and collaborate with a network of like-minded, multi-disciplinary professionals;
- ❖ Engage at a personal and professional level, with a positive vision for the future.

## Who is it for?

Everyone. We encourage participation from all interested people – from all backgrounds and knowledge disciplines - who are interested in Earth-centred thinking and governance. This course is suitable for anyone who would like to engage with a positive vision for the future of the Earth community and human governance.

A limited number of scholarships are available for students and volunteers from not-for-profit organisations who wish to participate but who require financial support to register.

## What is included?

- ❖ **Live online classes** with Australian and international practitioners in Earth-centred thinking and governance, designed to encourage focussed and active participation.
- ❖ **Access to recordings** of all online classes and materials for working at your own pace.
- ❖ **Live tutorials** offered to all participants up to 4 times during the 8 week course, to enable you to discuss the materials and presentations offered during classes and explore issues further. (Tutorial dates will be set in consultation with course participants).
- ❖ **A comprehensive collection of resources** (for reading, watching and listening) including real-world examples.
- ❖ **An optional assessment module** for those seeking a certificate of completion and/or digital badge. Assessment will involve two elements: (1) a multiple choice test and (2) a written essay (or as an alternative to the written essay, a verbal presentation) addressing key issues addressed in the course.

## Why Earth-centred thinking and governance?

This course is inspired by the theory of **Earth jurisprudence**<sup>1</sup>, which proposes that the current ecological crisis - which has seen humanity cross 4 of the 9 Planetary Boundaries that guarantee a safe operating space for life on earth - has been created by anthropocentric world views and governance systems that emerged in Western industrialised societies, and which spread around the world through colonisation and globalisation.

Earth jurisprudence suggests that today's dominant governance systems (including law, economics, ethics and education) have been created by a world view that believes we are separate from the interconnected web of life. This world view has enabled the development of human governance systems that support unsustainable extractivism and large scale environmental degradation. Today, industrialised societies need rapid systems change, in order to restore environmental health, build sustainable societies and support the interconnected community of life.

One of the most powerful ways to respond to the ecological crisis is to develop an Earth-centred, or ecocentric, world view and engage deeply with an understanding of the needs and wellbeing of the interconnected community of life. An Earth-centred world view can stimulate reflection about our place in the wider Earth community and can catalyse a range of practical and multidisciplinary approaches for creating systems change.

Earth-centred thinking engages with First Nations Peoples' epistemologies, as well as a broad range of western disciplines, including philosophy, law, economics, science, cosmology, science, religion and environmental philosophy. Innovative and creative work needs to occur in each of these areas if we are to build a truly sustainable and mutually enhancing future society.

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<sup>1</sup> See AELA's website - <https://www.earthlaws.org.au/aclc/earth-jurisprudence/>

## Course Content

During our 8 week course you will:

- Explore and develop your understanding of *your own beliefs and values*, create frameworks for your professional work (and if you wish, for your personal life) and identify specific projects of your own that you can analyse and/or develop during the course.
- Learn about the theory and practice of Earth jurisprudence: an overarching framework for analysing current modalities of human governance.
- Combine an Earth centred critique of existing systems with an introduction to designing ecocentric solutions.
- Learn how to critique western disciplines of knowledge and think across systems
- Explore Earth-centred philosophy and ethics, including Indigenous philosophies such as the Relationist Ethos.
- Learn about the science of interconnectedness: what western science can tell us about our place within the web of life and the wider universe; our interconnectedness with life on Earth and our responses to the current ecological and climate crises.
- Be introduced to the ancient principles and emerging concepts of Earth-centred law and governance: including Indigenous Peoples' First Laws, the growing Rights of Nature movement, Ecocide law and 'Ecological Law'.
- Critique neo-classical economics and learn about Earth-centred approaches to economics, including Steady State, Ecological Economics, Wellbeing and Doughnut Economics.
- Critique western structures of international and national politics and policy and find out how Earth-centred approaches need to challenge and transform western style political systems.
- Develop new approaches to your own projects, work, and career path.

## Mode of delivery

- All classes are delivered online (using Zoom video conferencing).
- Live classes will be held on Tuesdays from 5pm to 7pm AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time), to allow you to complete the course amid existing professional and personal commitments. Classes are informal and interactive, to enable participants to get to know each other, build connections and learn in different ways.
- Each class includes the course facilitator and up to two expert speakers. Short talks will be given live in class, followed by opportunities for questions and discussions.
- Resources – including reading lists and video/audio materials – will be available a month before the course commences, for people who would like to engage with the course materials and prepare for the class discussions.
- Tutorials (60 minute discussion sessions) will be offered online, with up to 4 tutorials offered to all participants during the 8 week course. Tutorials will provide a space for participants to discuss and seek clarification about key issues raised in the classes.

## Course cost for 8 weeks

- \$495 for corporate/government
- \$295 community/individual

Limited scholarships are available for students and volunteers of not-for-profit organisations

who need support to participate in the course. Payment plans are also available – please email us for the details.

## Assessment

**Assessment is optional.** For those seeking a certificate of completion and/or digital badge, AELA offers an assessment module at the end of the course. Assessment will involve two elements: (1) a multiple choice test and (2) a written essay (or as an alternative to the written essay, an oral presentation) addressing key issues addressed in the course.

## Course Facilitator and Guest Speakers

The program is created, facilitated and delivered by Dr Michelle Maloney, Co-Founder and National Convenor of the Australian Earth Laws Alliance. Dr Maloney is recognised globally as a leading practitioner in the field of Earth-centred law and governance. Read more about Michelle’s qualifications, work and publications [here, on AELA’s website](#).

Each module features leading Earth centred thinkers and practitioners from Australia and around the world. Our guest speakers include:

- Dr Mary Graham – Adjunct Associate Professor, Political Science, University of Queensland and Kombu-merri and Waka Waka First Nations person
- Professor Will Steffen – Earth System and Climate Scientist - *Climate Council* and co-creator of the Planetary Boundaries framework
- Professor Brendan Mackey – Forest ecologist - Director of the *Griffith Climate Action Beacon* (Griffith University)
- Professor Robert Costanza – Ecological economist - Institute for Global Prosperity, University College London
- Jojo Mehta – Co-founder, Stop Ecocide International
- Sue Higginson – public interest environmental lawyer and Greens member of the New South Wales Legislative Council
- Professor Yin Paradies – Professor of Race Relations, Deakin University
- Dr Peter Westoby – Director, Community Praxis Coop
- Mari Margil – Rights of Nature expert and Legal Attorney, *Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights* (United States)
- And other fantastic speakers

## How to register for the course

Registration is available on the AELA website from May 2022. You can express interest in being part of the course, and join our course mailing list, by visiting this webpage and signing up: [www.earthlaws.org.au/education](http://www.earthlaws.org.au/education)

# Course Outcomes

**AELA's Earth-centred Futures Course offers a unique opportunity for you to deepen your understanding of Earth-centred governance. It will strengthen your ability to create and implement new solutions and governance approaches to restore and sustain life on our beautiful planet.**

As a result of this course you will:

## **Develop your understanding of human-centred and Earth-centred worldviews**

Understand the difference between anthropocentric and earth-centric thinking and governance. Understand the role anthropocentric thinking and behaviour has played in the current ecological crisis. Build insights about the intrinsic rights of nature, how to regulate ourselves as part of that community and the opportunity earth-centric thinking provides for a sustainable future.

## **Build your understanding of Earth-centred governance and engage with a positive vision for the future**

Develop a deep understanding of the relevance of governance as a root cause of the current system and the limitations of sustainability within the current framework. Expand your understanding of governance beyond humanity to the whole earth community. Learn about the need to create governance structures that enable human societies to fit within our ecological. Engage with a positive vision for the future of our governance systems.

## **Be equipped to apply learning to real-world approaches**

Be exposed to existing and emerging Earth-centred approaches in Australia and internationally. Develop skills to critique the current system, analyse the potential of implementing earth centred governance in your area of interest and design new approaches to governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## **Collaborate with and create a network of Earth-centred individuals**

Learn from Earth-centred thought-leaders and change-makers from Australia and internationally. Collaborate with and build a network of like-minded individuals to support each other during and after the programme.

## **Feel empowered to play your part in shaping the future**

Gain insights, skills and confidence to play your part in creating an Earth-centred approach and engage, mobilise and influence others to join you. Understand how to lead with your whole self, for the whole earth.

# Content

The Earth-centred Futures Course includes 8 classes and a range of materials, including set readings, podcasts and recordings.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Brief description</b>
<b>12 July</b>	<b>The inner foundations of Earth centredness</b>	Explore your inner beliefs and values; explore ethics in practice; create frameworks for your professional work and identify specific projects of your own to examine during this course.
<b>19 July</b>	<b>Human governance, the theory of Earth jurisprudence and designing new futures</b>	Explore Earth jurisprudence: an overarching framework for analysing current modalities of human governance and interaction with the non-human world. Explore ecocentric design, to connect critique with creativity.
<b>26 July</b>	<b>Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and the Relationist Ethos</b>	Learn about the Earth-centred philosophy, culture and governance systems of the First Nations peoples of Australia
<b>2 Aug</b>	<b>The science of interconnectedness</b>	Explore what western science can tell us about the emergence and interconnectedness of life on Earth, our place in the universe and the systems approaches we can take to create Earth-centred governance
<b>9 Aug</b>	<b>Earth-centred economics</b>	Analyse the current globally dominant neoliberal, human-centred, consumer capitalist economic system and explore alternative economic approaches including: Ecological Economics, Steady State Economics, Doughnut Economics and Wellbeing Economics
<b>16 Aug</b>	<b>Earth-centred law</b>	Be introduced to Earth-centred law: including Rights of Nature, Legal Personhood for Nature, Ecocide and First Nations' peoples' First Laws
<b>23 Aug</b>	<b>Politics and policy development</b>	A critique of international and national economic and environmental policy developments, and how Earth-centred approaches are challenging human centred policy frameworks globally
<b>30 Aug</b>	<b>Developing new approaches to your own work, study, and career path</b>	Focused discussion about participant projects identified in Week 1, including group work and feedback and support for Earth-centred program and project designs.

# Further Information

For more information, or to register your interest in participating in the course, please email us anytime: [aela@earthlaws.org.au](mailto:aela@earthlaws.org.au)