



Earth Centred Futures

Professional Development Course

2 September - 7 October 2025

COURSE OUTLINE

Earth Centred Futures Course - 2025

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

AELA is offering a 6-week course for people seeking to build a deeper understanding about Earth-centred thinking and action, and to apply these approaches to their own projects and work.

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. Facilitated by Dr Michelle Maloney (AELA) and featuring experts from multi-disciplinary fields including Indigenous knowledge, western science, law, economics and policy, everyone is welcome, and scholarships are available.

What will you learn?

- ❖ 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;
- ❖ Learn about ecocentric concepts including: the Indigenous Relationist Ethos, Ecological Custodianship, Rights of Nature, Legal Personhood for Nature, Ecocide, Planetary Boundaries, Ecological Economics, Wellbeing Economics, systems change, scenario planning and futures thinking.
- ❖ Hone your ability to analyse, critique and challenge problematic anthropocentric (human centred) approaches to environmental, economic and political governance 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 disciplines and backgrounds – 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 strengthen their role in building Earth-centred 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?

- ❖ **12 hours of live online classes** (6 x 2 hour 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.
- ❖ **A collection of resources** for reading, watching and listening, and real-world examples.
- ❖ **Certificate of completion or digital badge**

Why Earth-centred thinking and governance?

This course is inspired by the theory of **Earth jurisprudence**¹, which proposes that the current ecological crisis - which has seen humanity cross 6 of the 9 Planetary Boundaries that guarantee a safe operating space for life on earth² - 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 these dominant systems of governance (including law, economics, ethics and education) have been created by flawed, human-centred thinking and a world-view that believes we are separate from the interconnected web of life. These attitudes have in turn, generated destructive, extractivist economic practices, which have accelerated since the European industrial revolution and spread via imperialism and globalisation. Today, industrialised societies need rapid systems change, in order to effectively respond to the challenges we face, 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 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 effective thinking about 'real' sustainability and regenerative practices, and can catalyse a range of practical and multidisciplinary approaches for creating systems change. Earth-centred thinking engages with a broad subject matter that includes (but is not limited to) western philosophy, law, economics, science and religion, and First Nations Peoples' epistemologies, cosmology and culture.

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

² See for example – Ian Angus, *The Earth System has passed six of Earth's nine Planetary Boundaries*, 18 September 2023, <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2023-09-18/the-earth-system-has-passed-six-of-nine-planetary-boundaries/>

Course Content

During our 6-week course you will:

- ❖ Learn about the theory and practice of **Earth jurisprudence**: an overarching framework for analysing current modalities of human governance.
- ❖ Learn how to explore your personal values and goals, and develop practice frameworks that link your values and professional goals to wider collective societal and governance systems change.
- ❖ Explore Earth-centred **philosophy and ethics**, including Australian Aboriginal philosophies such as the Relationist Ethos.
- ❖ Learn about the **science of interconnectedness**: what western science can tell us about our place within the tree 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 key principles and emerging concepts of **Earth-centred law** and governance: including Ecocide, Rights of Nature, Ecological Law and Governance, and Indigenous Peoples' First Laws.
- ❖ Learn about **Earth-centred approaches to economics**, including Steady State, Ecological Economics, Wellbeing and Doughnut Economics; and critically examine the discourse and practice around emerging 'nature-based solutions' and 'nature-based markets'.
- ❖ 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.

Mode of delivery

- ❖ All classes are delivered online (using Zoom video conferencing) to enable participation by people across Australia and around the world.
- ❖ Live classes will be held on **Tuesdays from 4pm to 6pm 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.
- ❖ Resources – including reading lists and video/audio materials – will be available approximately 4 weeks before the course commences, for people who would like to engage with the course materials and prepare for the class discussions.

Costs

Cost for 6-week course:

- ❖ \$580 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. To apply for a scholarship please email: aela@earthlaws.org.au, and tell us why you wish to participate in the course, and how it will assist you with your studies and/or work.

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:

- ❖ **Mary Graham**, Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Queensland and Kombu-merri person
- ❖ **Brendan Mackey**, Professor of Ecology and Director, Griffith University's Climate Beacon
- ❖ **John Seed**, Deep Ecology expert and co-author of "Thinking Like a Mountain", with Arnae Ness, Joanna Macy and Pat Fleming
- ❖ **Katherine Trebeck**, Co-Founder of Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEall) and member of Club of Rome
- ❖ **Sue Higginson**, NSW Member of Parliament
- ❖ **Claire Marshall**, Museum of the Future

How to register for the course

Registration is available on the AELA website: <https://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 how human-centred, growth focused governance has been a root cause of our current ecological crisis, and how it limits efforts to create sustainable futures 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 boundaries. 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 21st 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.

Date	Topic	Brief description
Week 1 2 Sept	An introduction to the theory and practice of Earth jurisprudence, and frameworks for exploring our own values and purpose	<p>In our first class, we learn about Earth jurisprudence: an overarching framework for analysing current modalities of human governance, which can help us to understand – and create responses to - the multiple ecological crises we face today.</p> <p>We'll also explore our own inner beliefs and values, and how they shape our relationships with the non-human world. We will discuss frameworks for connecting our personal and professional life to collective societal and systems change goals.</p>
Week 2 9 Sept	Systems change and futures thinking	<p>In Week 2, we'll explore theories and examples of systems change and positive social change. We will also engage with futures thinking and the power of exploring alternative scenarios.</p>
Week 3 16 Sept	The science of interconnectedness	<p>In Week 3, we'll examine the history and modalities of western science and discuss what science can tell us about the emergence and interconnectedness of life on Earth. We will explore modern scientific understandings of our place in the universe and what this means for industrialised societies and our governance systems.</p>
Week 4 23 Sept	Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and the Relationalist Ethos	<p>In Week 4, we learn about the Earth-centred philosophy, culture and governance systems of the First Nations Peoples of Australia. This will include an introduction to the Relationist Ethos and Indigenous First Laws. We will also discuss the concept of 'decolonisation' and what it can mean for human-nature connections.</p>

Week 5 30 Sept	Earth-centred law and economics	<p>In Week 5 we explore Earth centred laws, including Rights of Nature, Legal Personhood and other concepts advocating for nature to have legal rights.</p> <p>We will then examine the current globally dominant, human-centred, consumer capitalist economic system and explore alternative economic approaches including: Ecological Economics, Steady State Economics and Doughnut Economics. We'll also critically analyse the growing use of 'nature-based solutions' and 'nature based markets'.</p>
Week 6 7 Oct	Politics and policy development	<p>In our final class, we will discuss international and national environmental policy developments, and discuss people are working to change our policy frameworks for environmental protection. We'll finish our course by reflecting on the personal practice frameworks you were invited to create in Week 1.</p>

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