Presentation at AGM of STEP Inc., Sydney, 7 November 2026

A Strategy to Protect Planet and People

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Our Life Support System

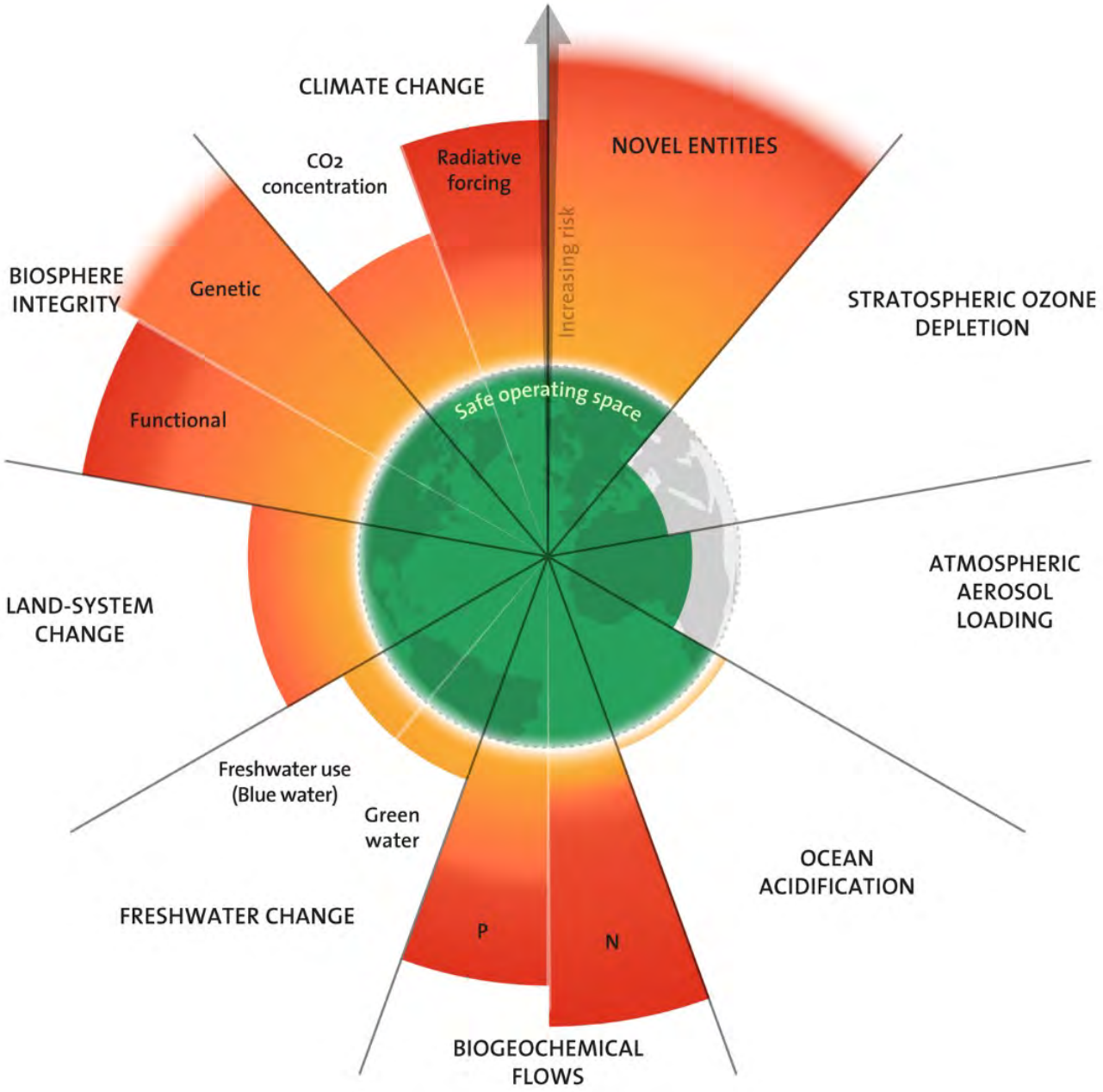


NASA
Image

😔 Existential Threats to Civilisation: Environmental

Climate change is linked to several other existential environmental threats

7 out of 9 planetary boundaries exceeded in 2025



Source: Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University

Frank Summary of Environmental Situation

Winning a few battles 😀

- Numbers of solar PV systems, batteries and EVs growing;
- Great Koala National Park (but funded by offsets)
- Indigenous rangers, citizen science, and local protection & restoration projects by community groups

But losing the 'war' 😔

- Coal and gas mining & exports continue while global climate impacts worsen
- Logging of native forests continues in NSW & Tasmania
- Land clearing and biodiversity loss continue

A quote attributed (incorrectly) to Einstein

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results".

Growing Threats to Environment, Social Justice, Peace, Human Rights & Democracy

- Climate change; loss of biodiversity, including forests, soils & freshwater; pollution of air, water, soil
- Increasing gap between rich & poor; housing unaffordable; declining basic public services; wages falling behind price increases
- High probability of nuclear war
- Democracy & human rights, including right to protest nonviolently, are being undermined

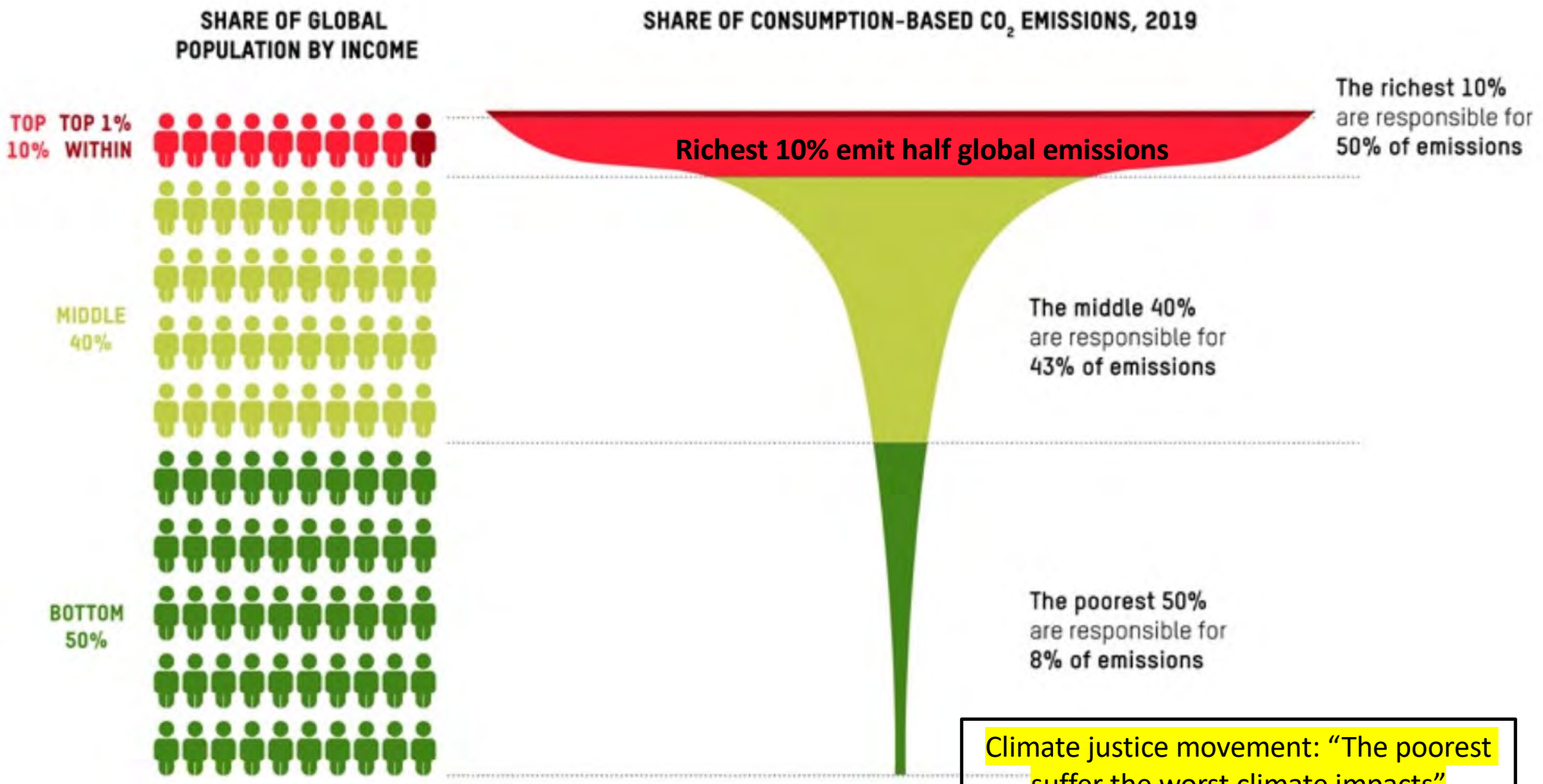


'The Scream' by Edvard Munch

We are facing a Polycrisis!

Climate Change and Social Justice are Linked

Share of Consumption-Based Global CO_2 Emissions by Income



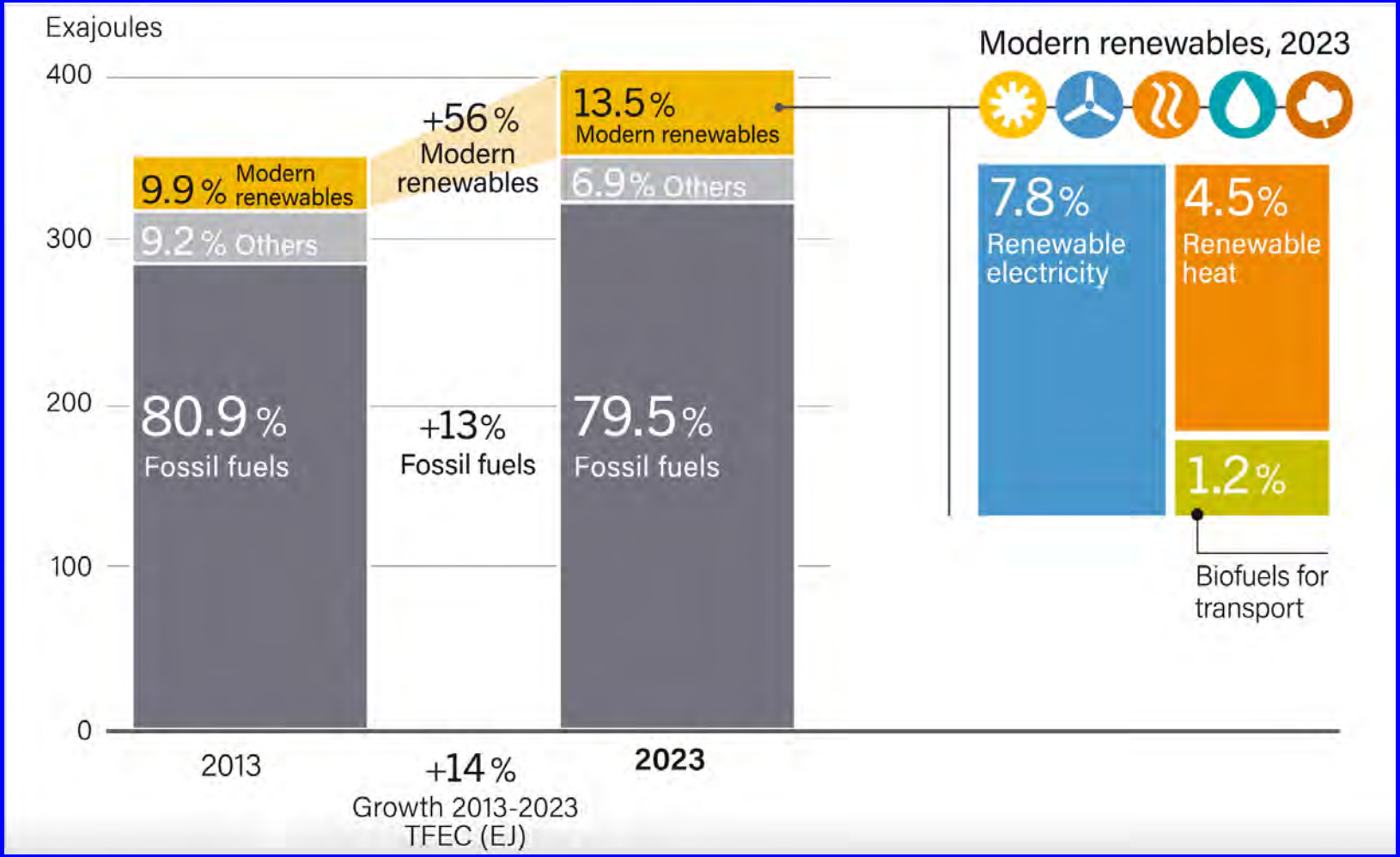
Source: Oxfam (2023)

Climate justice movement: "The poorest suffer the worst climate impacts"

Growth in Global Total Final Energy Consumption

Electricity + Transport + Heating, 2013 to 2023

Source: Ren21 using IEA data



Growth in energy consumption ⇨ renewable energy chasing retreating target

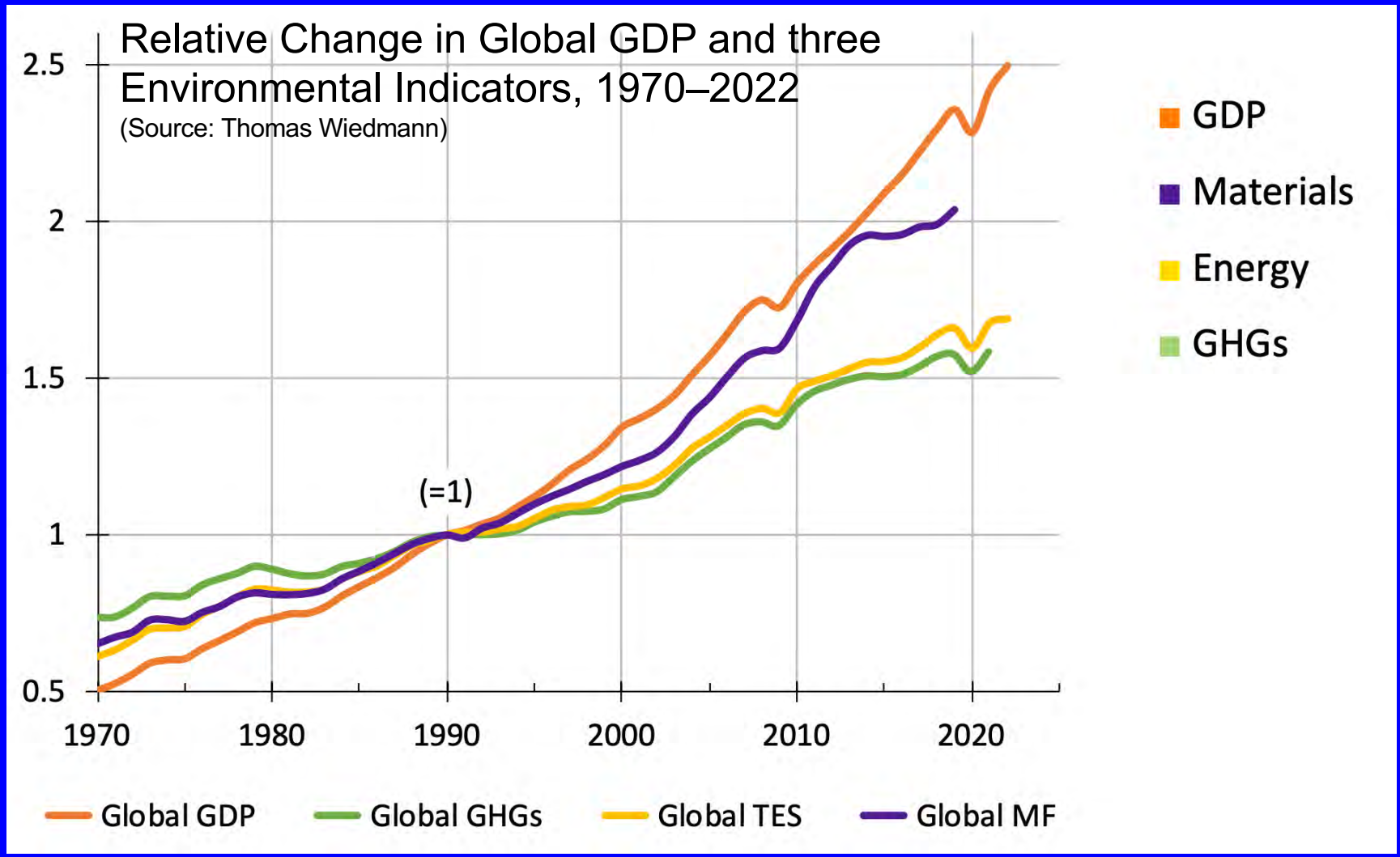
Renewable Energy Chasing Increasing Energy Consumption



Photo credit: Free photo by Andreas N on Pixabay.

Will renewables will catch up before we cross climate tipping points?

Growth in GDP is closely correlated with growth in energy & materials consumption



Growth in energy consumption drives growth in economic consumption & *vice versa*

3 Myths of the Dominant Economic Ideology

- Anti-environment myth: Endless economic growth on a finite planet is feasible and desirable
- Anti-social justice myth: Wealth trickles down from the rich to the poor





- Anti-democracy myth: The value of everything is determined by the market:

Summary of Links between Polycrisis Threats

- Rich people and rich countries cause the biggest environmental impacts
- Environmental impacts are worse for the poor (e.g. droughts; floods)
- A common driving force is the economic system, which is based on the exploitation of the planet and most of its people for private profit
- The global economy is undemocratic, ruled by rich people, large corporations & rich countries
- War has huge environmental, social justice and political impacts
- War and subversion are tools of inequality: colonialism & neocolonialism
- Better democracy → less social inequality and injustice and fewer wars
- The economic system drives all these threats

Links → Opportunity
Could we address all threats simultaneously?

State Capture is responsible for most threats to

environment, social justice, human & worker rights, and peace — the polycrisis

- State capture is corruption on a grand scale: capture of the nation-state
- Capture of government, opposition, public service, media, other institutions – by powerful vested interests
- Captors include fossil fuel, weapons. finance, property, gambling and pharmaceutical industries; neoclassical economics profession
- Captors also include foreign governments & institutions: e.g., US military-industrial complex; World Bank & International Monetary Fund



Image by Rod Taylor

Capture of the Australian Nation-State on Climate/Energy by Fossil Fuel Interests



- Retiring Ministers for Energy/Resources of both major political parties appointed to highly-paid jobs in fossil fuel industry
- Both the Chief of Staff and a senior political adviser to previous Prime Minister appointed from Minerals Council of Australia
- Huge donations to both major parties from fossil fuel industry
- Campaigns by News Corp against climate science and renewable energy
- Manipulation of science has failed, except for some people in USA

State Capture by Global Military-Industrial Complex



Another Existential Threat. Huge climate impacts



- Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) is funded by US & Australian governments and weapons industry
- Former Defence Minister appointed president of a major contractor to Defence
- Before Australian government joined AUKUS and announced it would buy nuclear submarines, 5 ‘retired’ US admirals were paid consultants to Defence
- Expansion of US bases under Force Posture Agreement – land, sea and air – including access for nuclear weapons-capable B-52s based in Australia

State Capture by Property Development Industry threatens Social Justice & Energy Efficiency

Property Council of Australia

- Board made up of Australia's largest residential and commercial developers
- Campaigns for negative gearing & discounted capital gains tax
- In 2015 PCA's advocacy budget was $6.4M + $1M for communications, and $7.2M for 'networking' (Phibbs & Gurran 2016)

Results

- Property prices & rents increase
- Home ownership declines
- State planning in effect by developers
- Environmental damaging, energy inefficient developments with little social housing

From PCA's webpage



Advocacy

Our powerful advocacy initiatives influence policy outcomes nationally and across jurisdictions. As respected thought leaders in the business community, governments, stakeholders and our members rely on us to lead conversations, undertake research, and solve problems to create a better future.

State Capture by Neoliberal Ideology

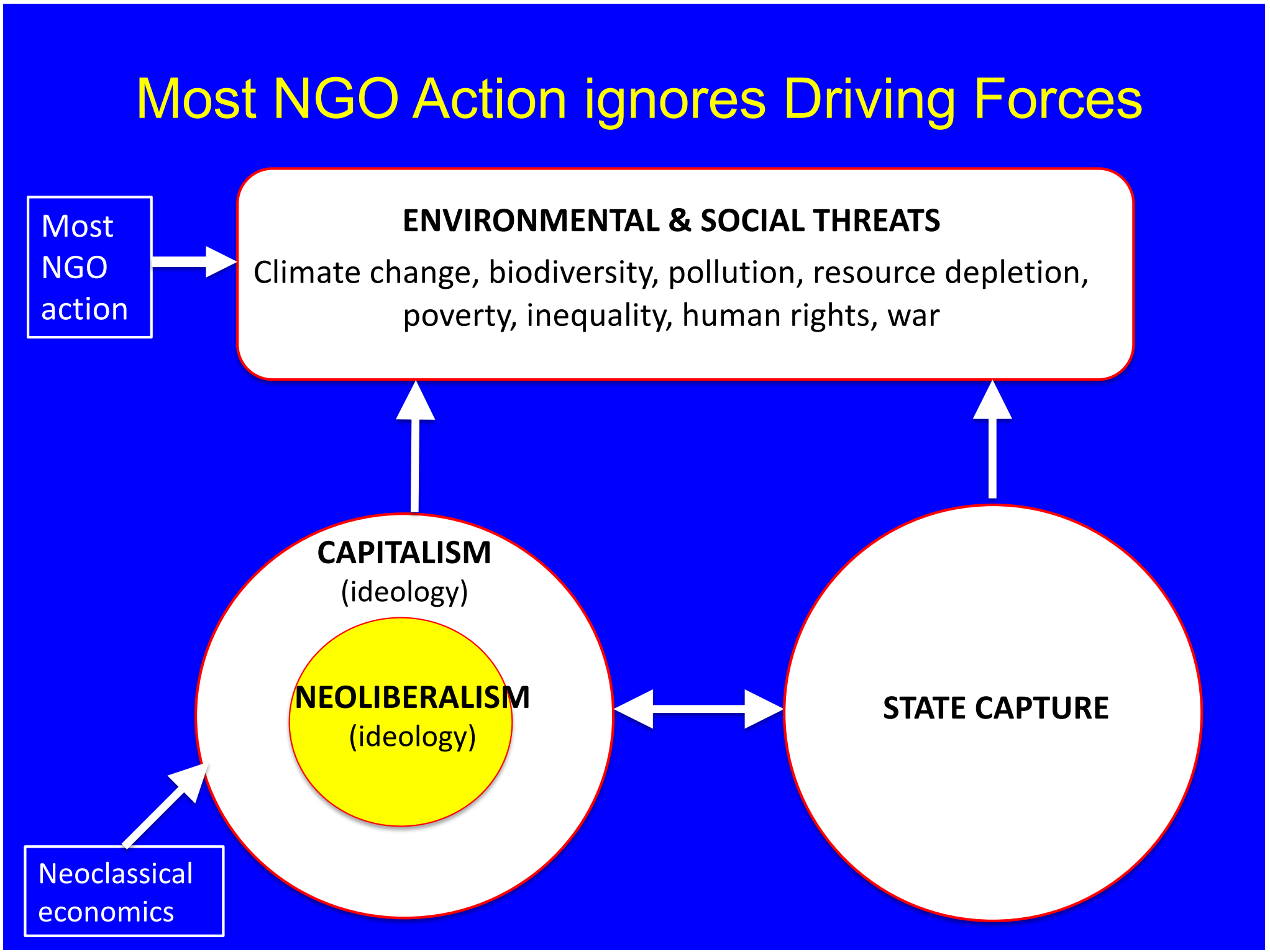
- Leaving major socio-political decisions to the market
- Claiming the value of anything is set by the market
- Demanding small government, except for protecting big business, property & 'defence'
- Claiming that wealth trickles down from the rich
- Demanding low taxation for the rich
- Pushing for endless growth on finite planet
- Pretending this ideology is backed up by neoclassical economics theory



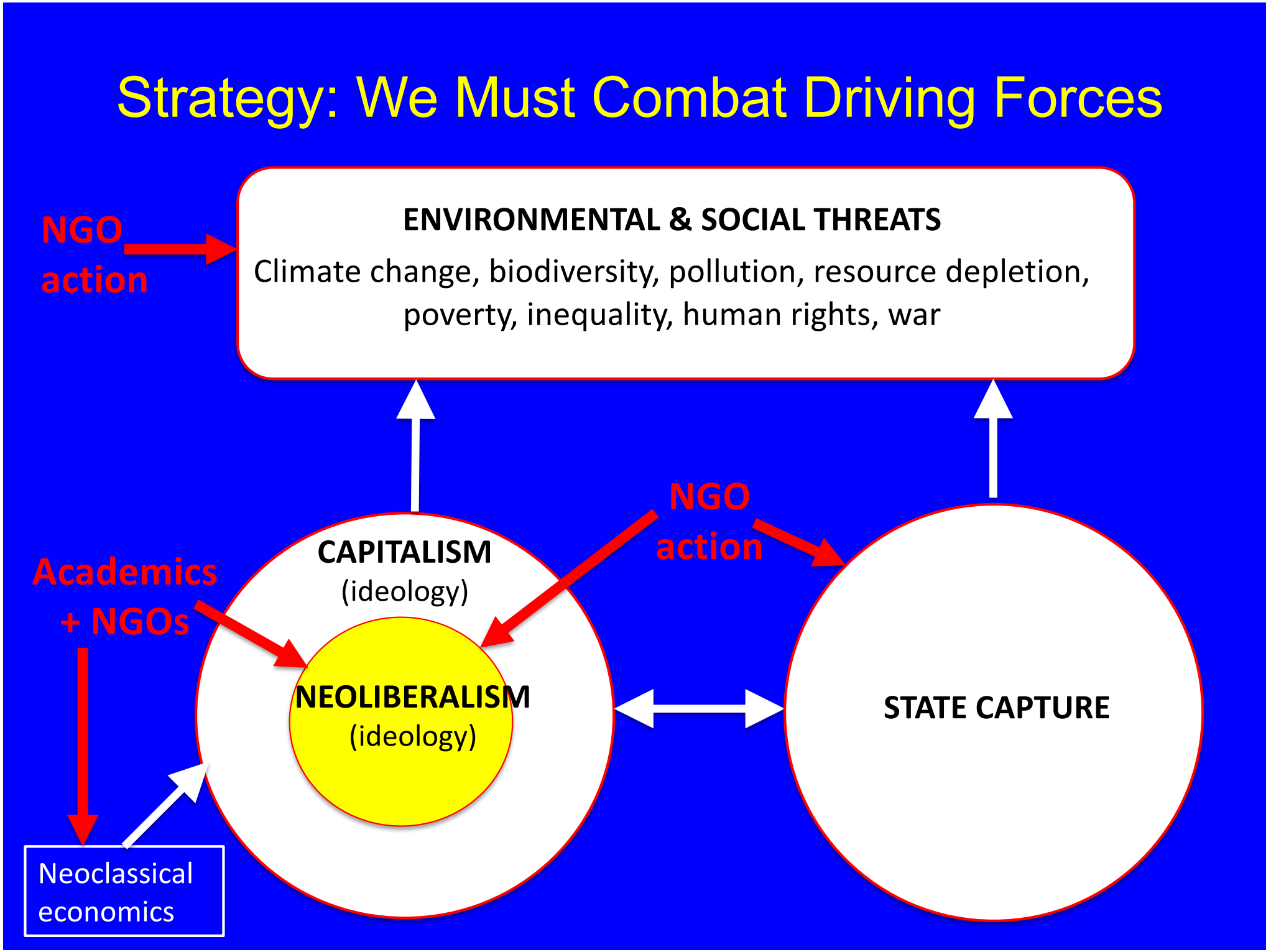


NB: Neoliberalism is an extreme form of capitalism

Most NGO Action ignores Driving Forces



Strategy: We Must Combat Driving Forces



Methods of State Capture are essentially the same for all Issues; all anti-democratic

- Political donations & election expenditure
- Revolving door jobs
- Concentrated media ownership & social media campaigns
- Think tanks (e.g. IPA; ASPI)
- Covert lobbying
- Opaque consulting
- Manipulating scientific research
- Capitalism, especially its extreme form, neoliberalism



How to weaken state capture & capitalism

Build a Stronger Social Change Movement!

- State capture's **methods** are vulnerable to community exposure and attack
- Form alliances of environmental, public health, social justice, human rights, trade union and peace NGOs to **challenge the driving forces of common to all these issues**



Diagram by
Rod Taylor



Economics for People and Planet

The First Steps to put Limits on Capitalism

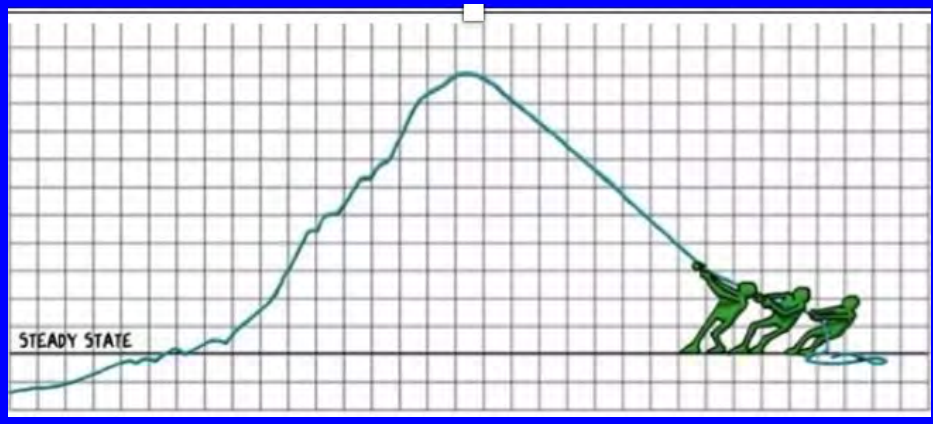
- Recognise that GDP is NOT a measure of national wellbeing
- Wellbeing measures: environmental, socioeconomic and political
- Socioeconomic wellbeing measures & policies include Universal Basic/Public Services: public health, education, transport, housing & parks; low-cost childcare & aged care
- **Political wellbeing** policies include controlling state capture by vested interests and so restoring democratic decision-making; increasing community input to political decision-making
- Introduce a Job Guarantee, with jobs provided by local government and registered community organisations, funded by federal government

Economics for People & Planet, ctd

- Transition to a (leaky) circular economy
- Transition to a steady-state economy with reduced consumption of energy, materials & land, and no population growth
- Priority is for rich and rapidly growing economies to lead the way

Everyone benefits, except the very rich





Policies to Reduce Consumption include:

- Transition to circular economy (necessary but not sufficient)
- Wealth & inheritance taxes; progressive income tax; capital gains tax
- Remove subsidies to destructive industries, tax, then phase them out





- Facilitate creation of ‘green’ industries & businesses





Successful Social Movements include:



Anti-war



Civil rights

Anti-colonial



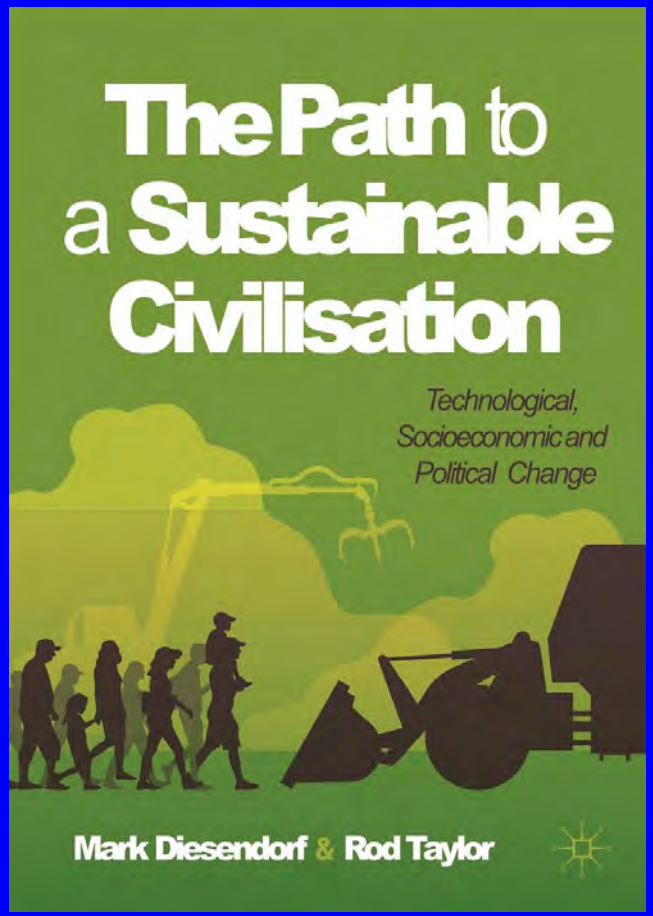


Gender equity

First Steps towards a Social Movement

- Australian Democracy Network: democracy is key theme
- Sydney Alliance: grassroots but slow processes
- Democracy in Europe Movement (DiEM25): political
- Critiques of neoclassical economics by sustainability scientists, heterodox economists and economic reform NGOs
- Critiques of neoliberalism by the Australia Institute & George Monbiot
- Community Independent Dr Monique Ryan's private member's bill on revolving door jobs & lobbying transparency
- Articles on state capture in *Quarterly Essay* and *Renew Magazine*
- Open letter to Australian Prime Minister seeking signatures, initially from NGOs

Further Information



Research papers, popular articles, podcasts & videos; busting myths on energy & economics: www.markdiesendorf.com

Success stories: Right Livelihood Award (alternative Nobel Prize)

Libraries can order book from Springer link in markdiesendorf.com/books