

Beating the drum for systemic action

We do: Advocate to all levels of decision makers. We ask government for real change to live within the Limits to Growth, and an appropriate level of emergency response. All levels of society need your involvement in transition planning, mode-shift etc. Shareholders have a role in changing firms investment behaviour. Governments choose how money is created, and currently support damaging industries. Private banks and super firms currently invest in fossil fuels, which directly causes climate change & takes resources, labor and energy away from low emissions and essential services.



Building communities to build resilience

We do: take action to build community. Despite the value of working globally and nationally and the satisfaction of personal action, its only by bringing our community along that we can achieve lasting, significant change. Individual change can have no meaning other than a model of change, while radical government change can be swept away without the underpinning of a culture of camaraderie, mutual aid, respect, humanism and collective strength.



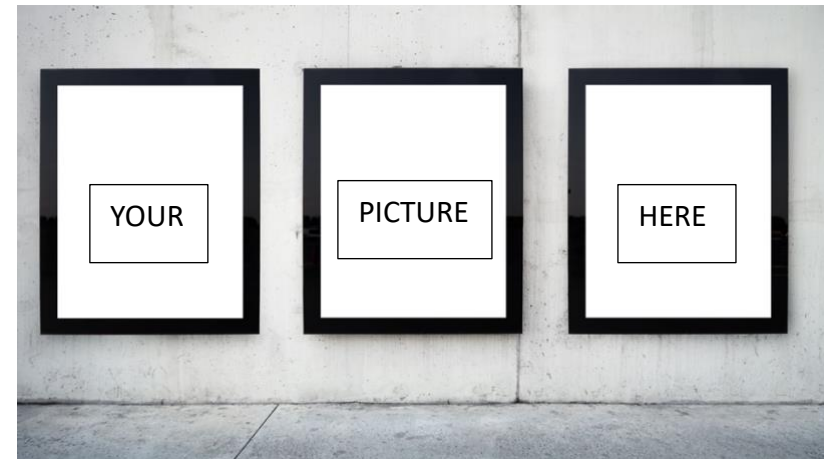
Taking individual action, modelling change

We do: Live a low carbon lifestyle – be the change. We attempt to embody the planetary emergency and make changes in our own lives to avoid overconsumption, so our ongoing contribution to the crisis is as low as possible.



Aussies average per capita emissions are ten times that in many countries and double that in Europe. Can we explain the systemic change we need to act on overshoot without showing a change in our own lives? Can we share more and avoid excess?

Everyone has a role in degrowth



How?

In the Degrowth Network we have found that **community building has been central to how we have explained degrowth in practise**. We also need to take systemic and individual action.

This zine is focussed on community building. This is largely done through commoning. It is difficult to inspire community action without personal action, and to be widely effective without systemic change also taking place. Perhaps, to thrive locally, we need to work on all three.

Collective activity demonstrates what the world could look like during a degrowth phase, and builds skills and networks we need. Commons are autonomous spaces, they are anti-hierarchical, are built on human relations, rely on strong bonds and work through their own internal regulations and democracy. Building the commons is building community.

Commons forms can be big: The Mondragon collective in Spain has 22,000 employees/members! Big common enterprises can have many forms:

Prosperous: credit unions

Capitalistic: farmers cooperatives

Asset rich: co-housing groups

Public owned: libraries

These are not small or insignificant enterprises, but vital, community assets, “third spaces” that are not profit driven, and show us the direction.



You probably can't start a credit union or an affordable supermarket chain. But you can support them or find gaps where a new initiative is needed and bring others together.

What's happening in your community? A cooperative requires just 5 members to register, and every worthwhile community organisation starts with an idea one person had and talked about with their friends and neighbours. Most communities are local, and benefit from fun, social, human bonding making them stronger, and great for mental health because they break down isolation.

Some ways we build community:

Volunteer your free time locally. Strengthen op shops so they are your neighbourhoods first port of call for repurposing clothing, housewares. This means not adding to our burden on the biosphere and using materials already available locally.

Reduce waste through sharing, to meet essential needs.

Brisbane tool library provide a way to collect or “common” items that many people use only sometimes/briefly. Co-housing initiatives like DNA Ballarat are currently working to co-source shelter.

Adapt to a damaged climate, relearn. Come together to preserve local, low carbon food growing techniques, so that we can provide services through disasters & have food sovereignty. You might take over community land like the Naarm Geurilla Garden, or organise neighbours to work together on nature strip food growing or bulk buys of agricultural food waste.

Build mutual aid and community bonds. An example of this is hosting an Offers and Needs market. Bring your skills, care, surplus items and odd jobs to a community event and match them with each other. This takes real action on overconsumption. Learn to facilitate this online from Post Carbon Institute.

Fight obsolescence habits in community. There are over 100 repair cafes in Australia, providing a model for getting more life out of items. The planned obsolescence fight is systemic, but we can get together to reuse, repurpose or divert waste rather than perpetuate greenwashed or unsupported recycling schemes.

Explore gifting, sharing not monetary exchange. Feeding others, for instance, has a role in social cohesion but also provides an opportunity to explain simple living. “Break bread” together.

Think about practicing the centring of joy. Organise a bike ride or dance or meditation. We need to overcome isolation, through local communities more than ever and all you need for a dance is a park and some fun people.

What role do you see for yourself in degrowth?