Saving humanity involves a lot more than zero carbon by 2050

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Fossil fuel’s paradise

- Global warming – catastrophic magnitude & imminent timescale
Fossil fuel’s paradise

• **Global warming** – catastrophic magnitude & imminent timescale

• **Unsustainable environmental exploitation**
  – Resource depletion: consumption > capacity
  – Wastes poisoning our ecosystems
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Rockström et al. 2009 and Steffen et al. 2015
Fossil fuel’s paradise

• **Global warming** – catastrophic magnitude & imminent timescale

• **Unsustainable environmental exploitation**
  – Resource depletion: consumption > capacity
  – Wastes poisoning our ecosystems

• **Inequity**
  – Intra- and inter- national
  – Abuses of human rights
Mess of our own making: a failure to

- Recognise co-evolution and …
- … our part in complex adaptive ecosystems
- The earth’s finite natural resources
- Each individual’s dignity, human rights and aspirations
- See the economy as a tool of society
- Plan for the long term
A failure of collective decision making

- To learn from past mistakes (lost civilisations)
- To process and respond to what we know (evidence)
- To include all voices
- To govern for minorities as well as majorities
- To use fair processes to produce fair outcomes
A failure of collective decision making

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A failure of morality
What won’t work …

• Zero carbon as the only goal …
• … or any other single issue as the only goal
• Purely scientific, engineering, technological responses to environmental problems
• Ignoring equity
• Keeping the democracy/ies we’ve got
Contributors to saving humanity

1. New models for collective decision making
   - What sort of society do we want to live in?
   - ... and leave for future generations?

2. Complex adaptive systems understandings and interventions

3. Environmental sustainability
Lancet-Rockefeller Commission 2015


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Planetary Health

• Civilisations
  – Learning from past
  – Safeguarding for future
• Health
  – Not just human or even animal
  – All living organisms
  – Protecting ecosystems essential for human survival
Planetary Health

• “see the public [health], the global [health], and the planetary as three dimensions of our experience, incorporating the idea of health into all aspects of our living and constructed world” [Horton 2016]
Contributors to saving humanity

1. New models for collective decision making
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2. Complex adaptive systems understandings and interventions

3. Environmental sustainability

4. UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’
Work to a common agenda

- Better health
- Eliminate poverty
- Equity
- Energy security
- Human rights
- Environmental sustainability
- Climate change
- Sustainable economic development
- Manage fundamentalism
- Global safe food security
- Good world governance
- Democratic nations
- Stop the arms trade
- World peace
- Sustainable population
- Fair trade
- Healthy cities
- HiAD: health in all decisions
- Ethical behaviour
Equity

Health

Collective Decision-making

Built Environment

Environmental Sustainability
Can we do all this if our economic tool is capitalism?
What can the RACP do?

• Relatively passive
  – Inform and make aware: risks, actions, co-benefits
  – Green behaviours & buildings – College and Fellows

• Promote sustainable health services
  – Pressure and assist health departments & employers
  – Change models of care
  – Promote national Sustainable Development Unit
What can the RACP do?

- Become more politically active
  - Promote divestment from fossil fuels (Super funds, research foundations, other Colleges)
  - Lobby for more govt. action for environmental sustainability (and the health co-benefits)
  - Participate in development of a National Strategy on Climate and Health (CAHA)
To solve the climate change problem we must simultaneously solve a lot of other environmental and social problems as well.

Do we have not just the will but also the necessary tools?