



# Values for a sustainable future

Ian Lowe



# The fundamental premise

- Future is not somewhere we are going, but something we are creating
- Many possible futures
- We should be trying to shape a sustainable future , i.e. one that can be *sustained* for the foreseeable future

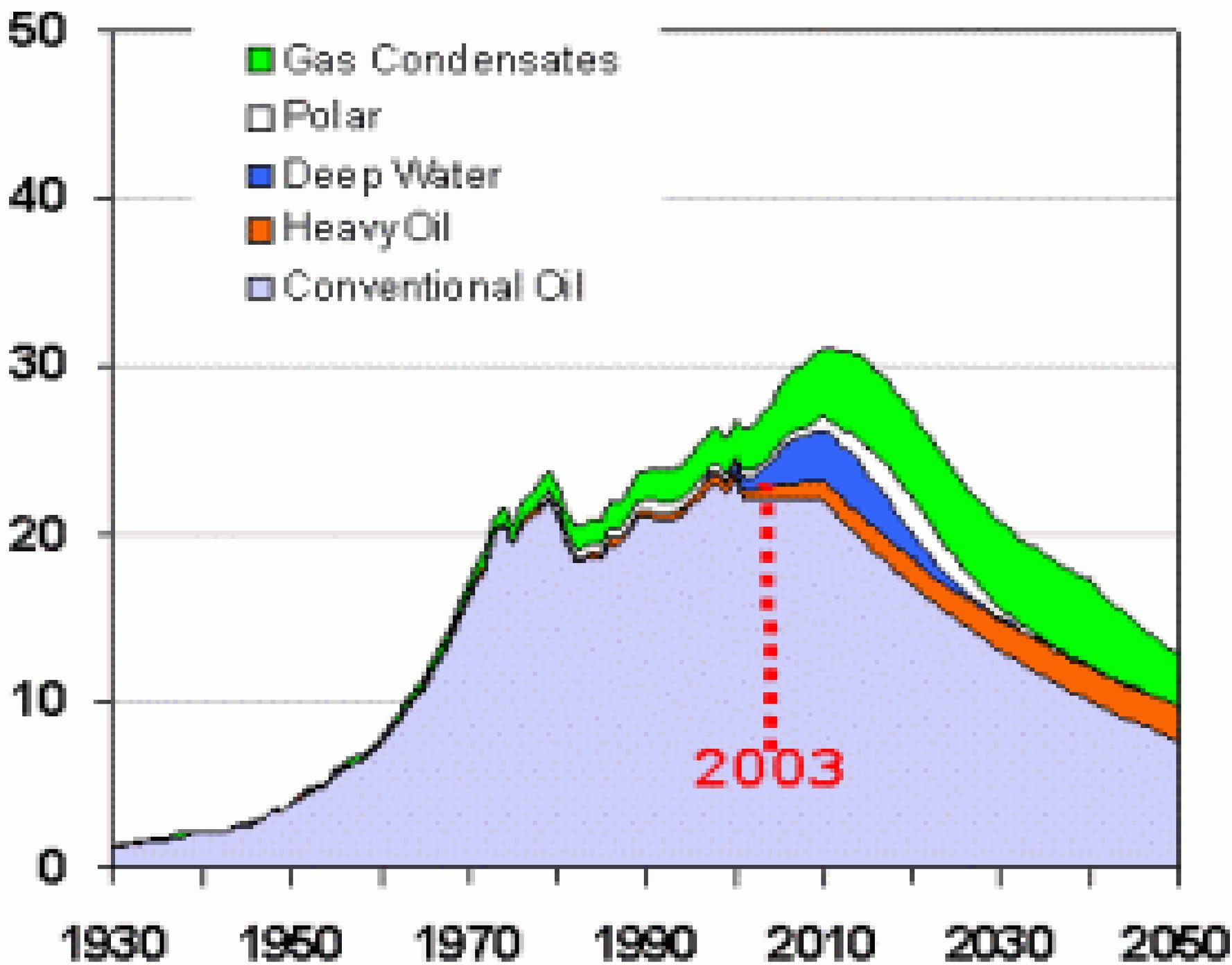
**“It may seem impossible to imagine that a technologically advanced society could choose, in effect, to destroy itself, but that is what we are now in the process of doing.”**

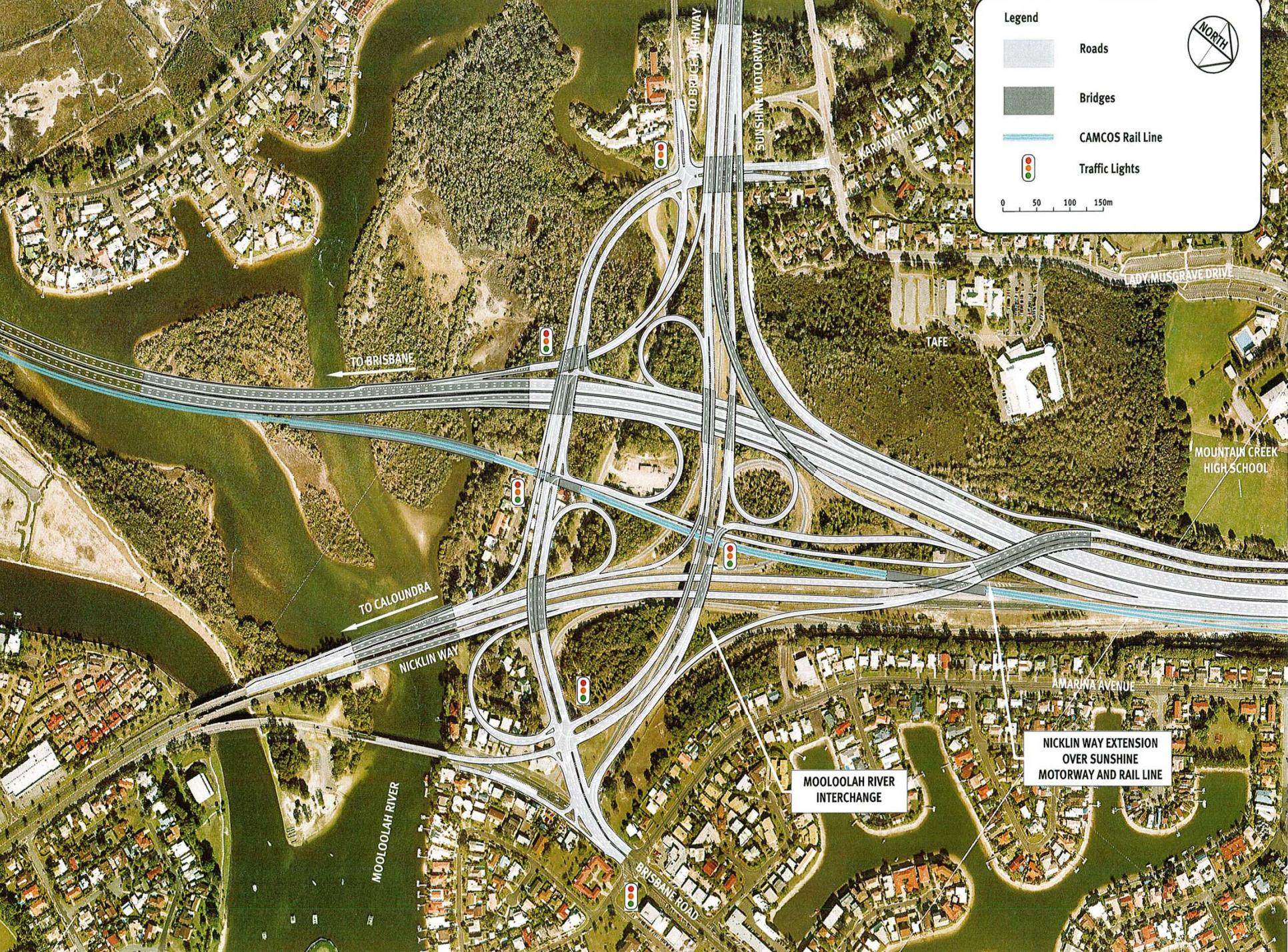
E. Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*

"Our present course  
is unsustainable -  
postponing action is no  
longer an option"

- GEO 2000 [UNEP 1999]







Legend

- Roads
- Bridges
- CAMCOS Rail Line
- Traffic Lights

0 50 100 150m



TO BRISBANE

TO CALOUNDRA

TO BRUCE HIGHWAY

SUNSHINE MOTORWAY

KARAWINTHA DRIVE

TAFE

LADY MUSGRAVE DRIVE

MOUNTAIN CREEK HIGH SCHOOL

NICKLIN WAY

MOOLOOLAH RIVER

BRISBANE ROAD

MOOLOOLAH RIVER INTERCHANGE

AMARANTHA AVENUE

NICKLIN WAY EXTENSION OVER SUNSHINE MOTORWAY AND RAIL LINE

WHY DIDN'T SOMEONE WARN US?!

PEAK OIL

CAUTION

WARNING NO MORE FUEL

POINT OF NO RETURN

CONTINUE AT YOUR OWN RISK!

GO BACK

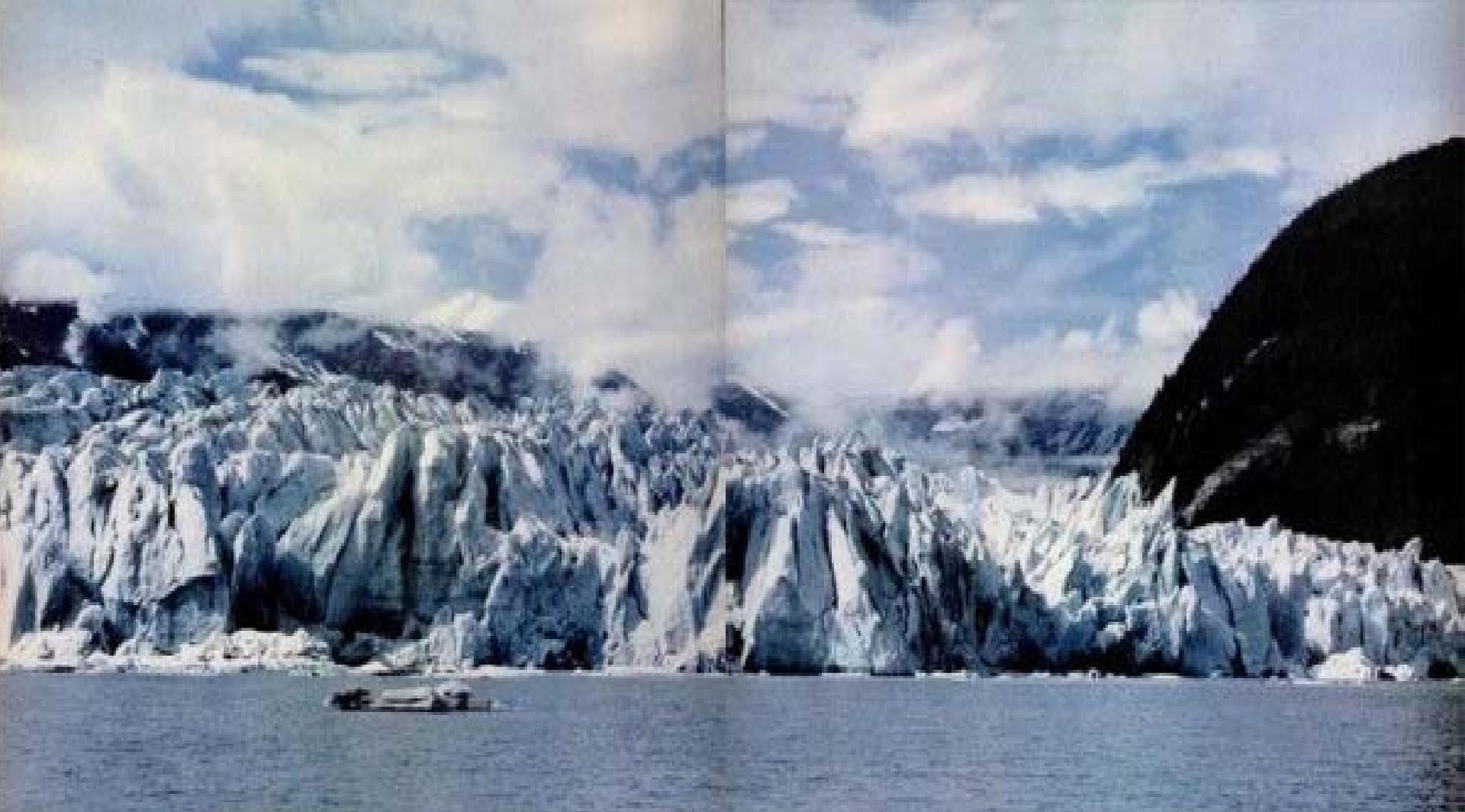


ST



Extra Cream ICE CREAM

CAUTION



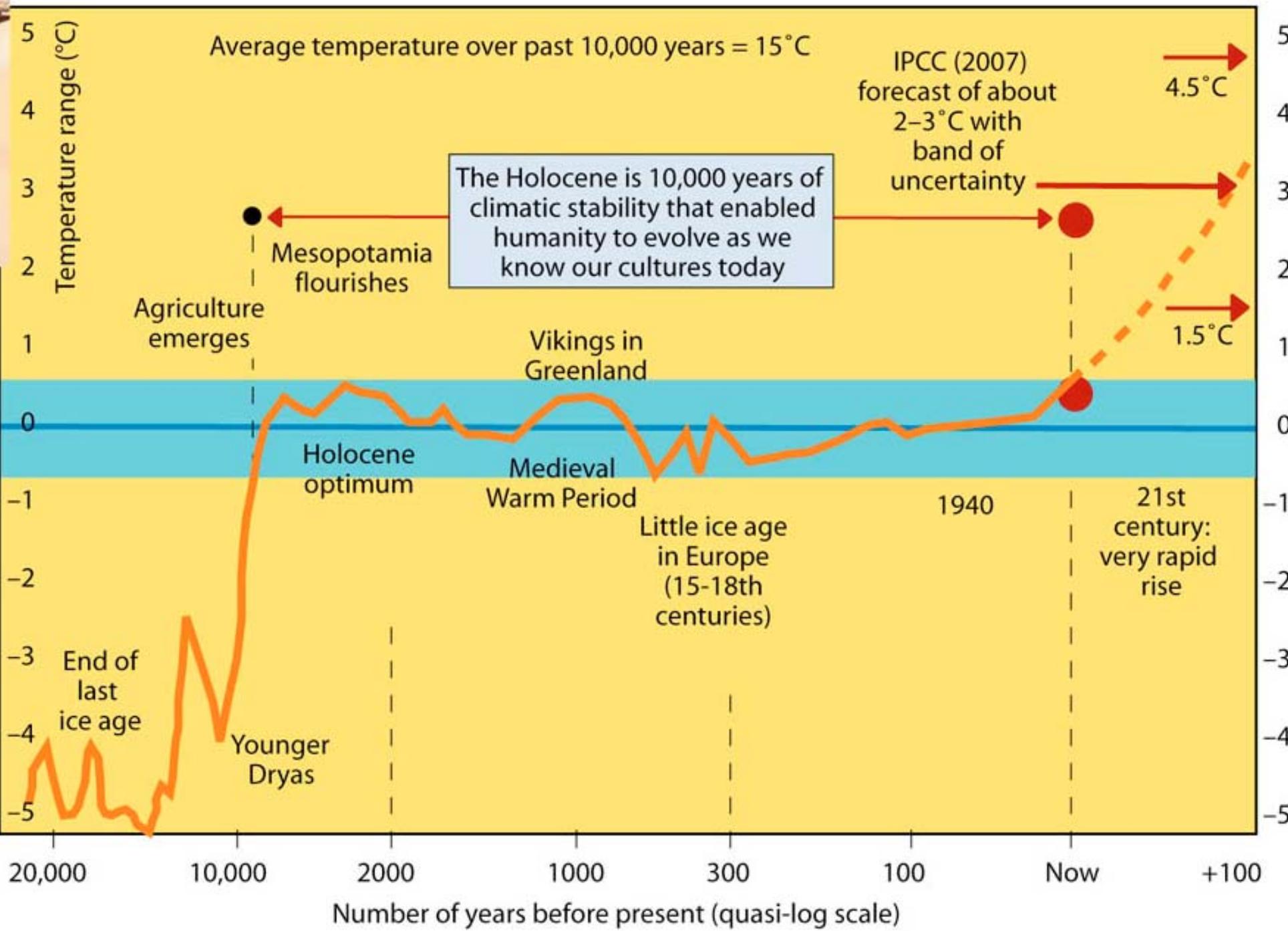
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# Global Temperature Change

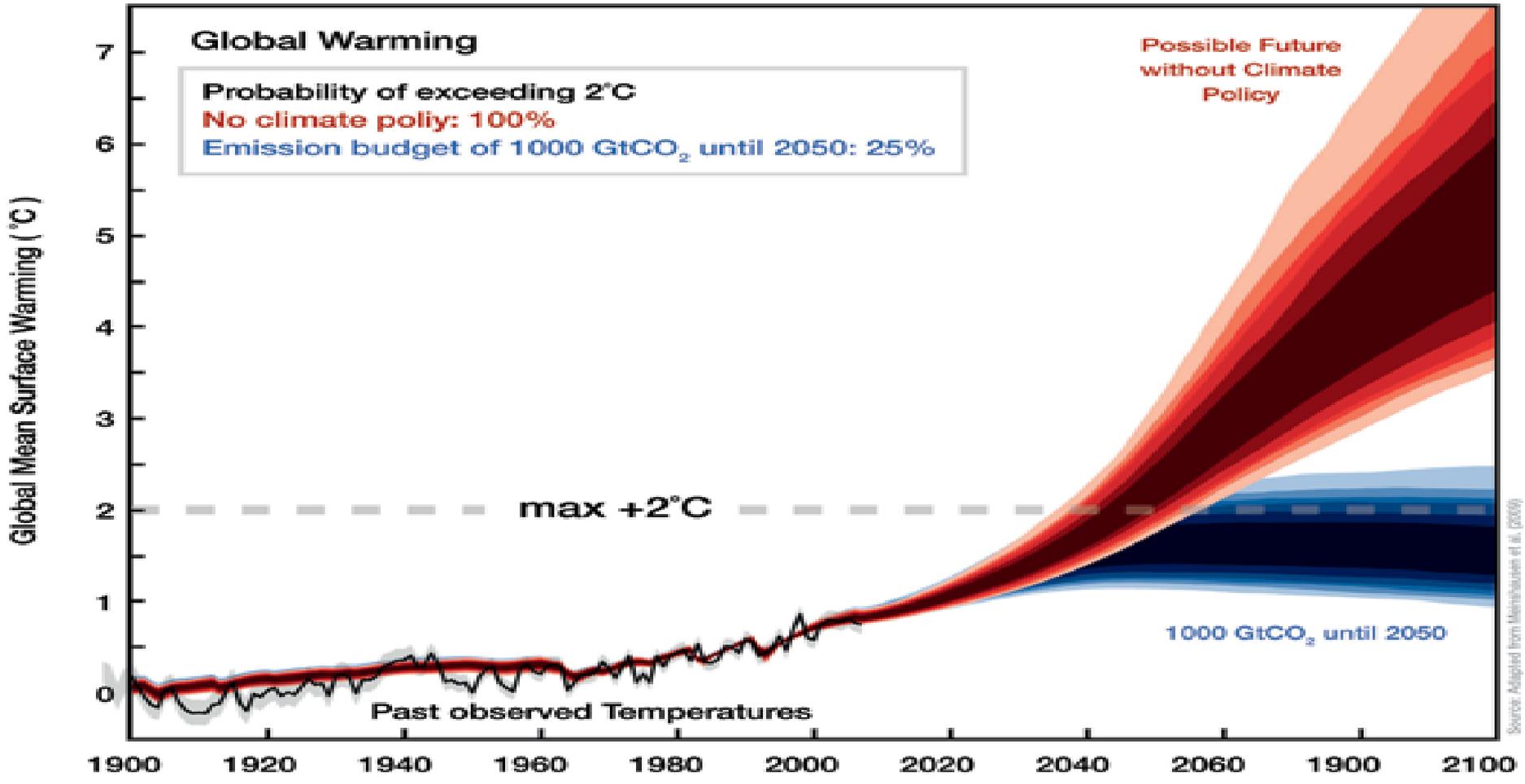
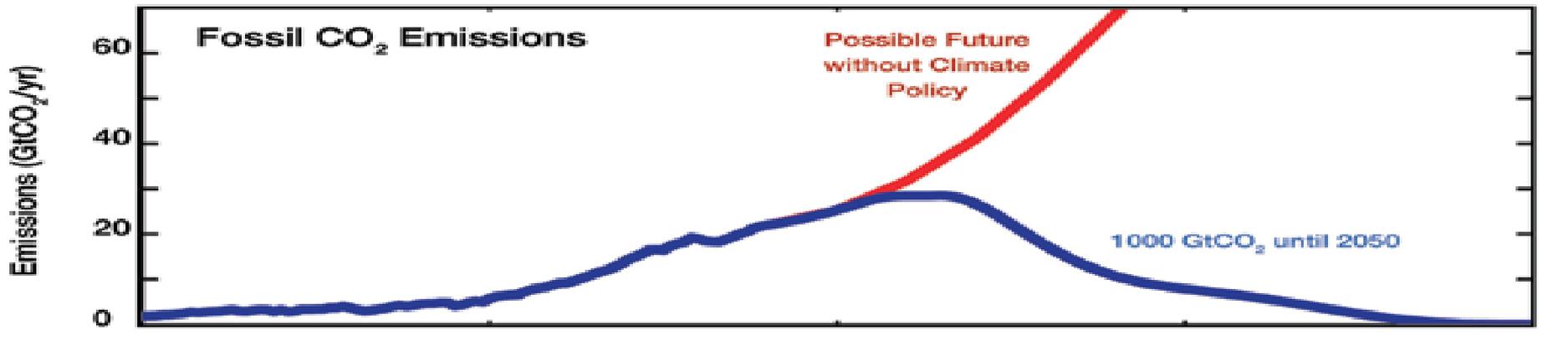
1980s: warmest decade ever

1990s: even warmer. Every year above 1980s average

2000s: warmer yet. Every year warmer than 1990s average.

# Science this year

- Warming blamed for 40% decline in ocean phytoplankton - *Nature*
- Methane venting from Siberia - *Science*
- Oceans rapidly acidifying - *Nature*
- Extinctions much faster than at any time in fossil record - *Phil Trans Roy Soc B*
- Soils releasing carbon - *Nature*
- 7 – 10 degrees worst case for 2060, b.a.u. forecast for 2100 - *UK Met. Office*



Source: Adapted from Meinshausen et al. (2009)

*To have a **better than even** chance of keeping global average temperature rise below 2°C, the world would need to be emitting **less than half** the 2000 amount of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2050.*

*So **global** emissions need to peak within the next 10 years and then decline rapidly.*

# IEA World Energy Outlook 2008

**“nothing short  
of an energy  
revolution”**



# CLIMATE SUMMIT

WHAT IF IT'S A BIG HOAX AND WE CREATE A BETTER WORLD FOR NOTHING?

- ENERGY INDEPENDENCE
- PRESERVE RAINFORESTS
- SUSTAINABILITY
- GREEN JOBS
- LIVABLE CITIES
- RENEWABLES
- CLEAN WATER, AIR
- HEALTHY CHILDREN
- etc. etc.



JOEL PITT

12/19 USA TODAY

# **Social cohesion**

- **50 yrs ago, Australia and NZ were among most equal societies ever**
- **Today, much less equal**
- **Income disparity exacerbated by run-down of public education, health care, transport ...**
- **Best indicator of life chances ?**
- **Social impacts rarely assessed**

# Economic future

- Trade structure of Third World country, exporting commodities
- How does this survive peak oil ?
- **Where are the future jobs?**
- “zombie economics”: the dead ideas still walking among us
  
- Education, research: investments in our future

**“A macro - economy  
predicated on continual  
expansion of debt - driven  
materialistic consumption is  
unsustainable ecologically,  
problematic socially and  
unstable economically”**

UK Sustainability Commission

**“The great error of our nature is not to know where to stop, not to be satisfied with any reasonable acquirement... but to lose all we have gained by an insatiable pursuit after more” - Edmund Burke**

# Natural Assets

- **Productive land**
- **Vegetation**
- **Waterways**
- **Coastal zone**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Atmosphere**

# So Sustainability:

- **Affects us all - it is everyone's task**
- **Must influence our choices, actions**
- **Should inform **what we do** as well as **how** we do it**
- **Requires innovation**
- **Involves considering population, consumption, resources, energy, water, biodiversity, social impacts, long - term economic issues**

# Sustainable Future

- Stable population, consumption
- Sustainable urban development, renewal
- A “green” economy
- Vibrant, efficient agricultural sector
- Adapted to changing climate
- Natural areas protected
- Focus on quality of life, community
- Arts, culture, sport, recreation...

# IPCC chair Rajendra Pachauri

**“We need a new ethic by which every human being realises the importance of the challenge and starts to take action through changes in lifestyle and attitude”**



# New suite of values

- Domination of nature becomes *ecological sensitivity*
- Consumerism replaced by *quality of life*
- Individualism -> *human solidarity*

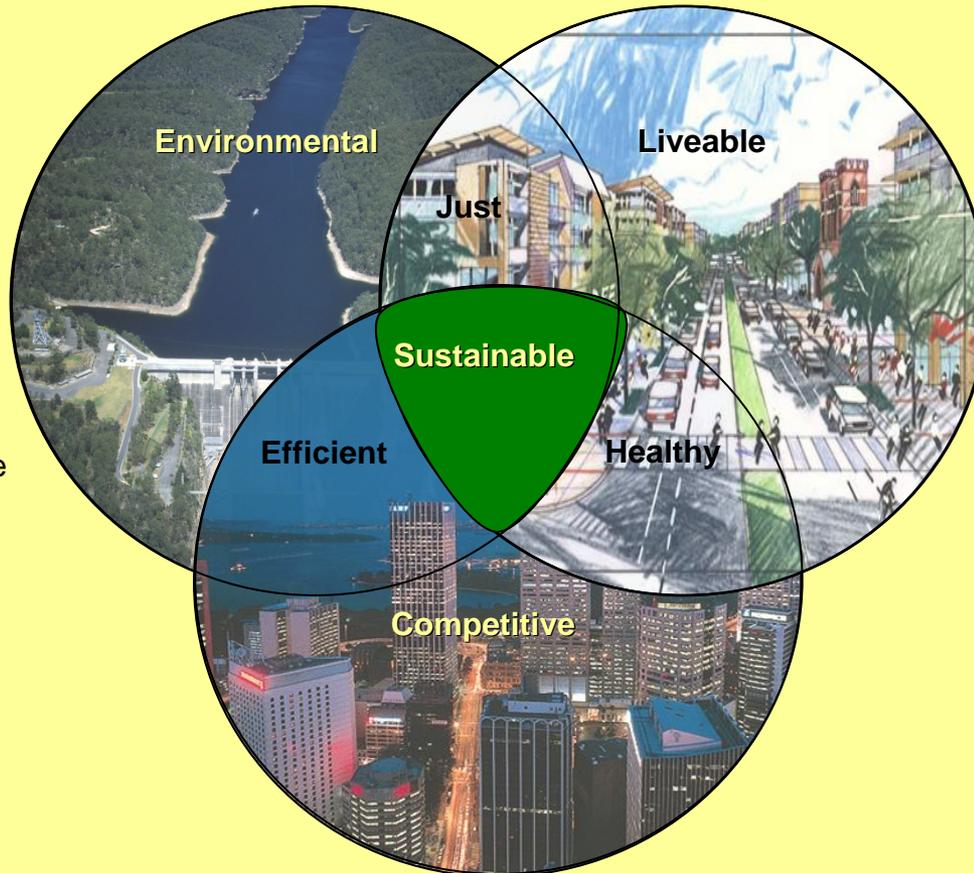
# Vision for a Sustainable City

## Sustainability

Sustainability is about living within our means. It is about managing our consumption of resources and balancing environmental, economic and social outcomes. It means improving our quality of life, but making that improvement without leaving a burden on the future generations.

### Looking after our Environment

Environmental Sustainability is about reducing our impact on the environment by protecting our air, water and land, our native flora and fauna. It means reducing the load on our natural resources, such as water and fuels for energy, and decreasing our production of waste.



### A Better Place to Live

Liveability is about making Sydney a better place to live. It means being able to walk to your corner shop, local school, park or bus stop, as well as providing us with a choice of housing that meets our needs.

### Supporting our Economy

Competitiveness is about supporting Sydney's role as a Global city, and ensuring our city's long term economic prosperity. It means providing quality infrastructure and services to service our jobs and the economy, and supporting urban centres

**SOCIETY**

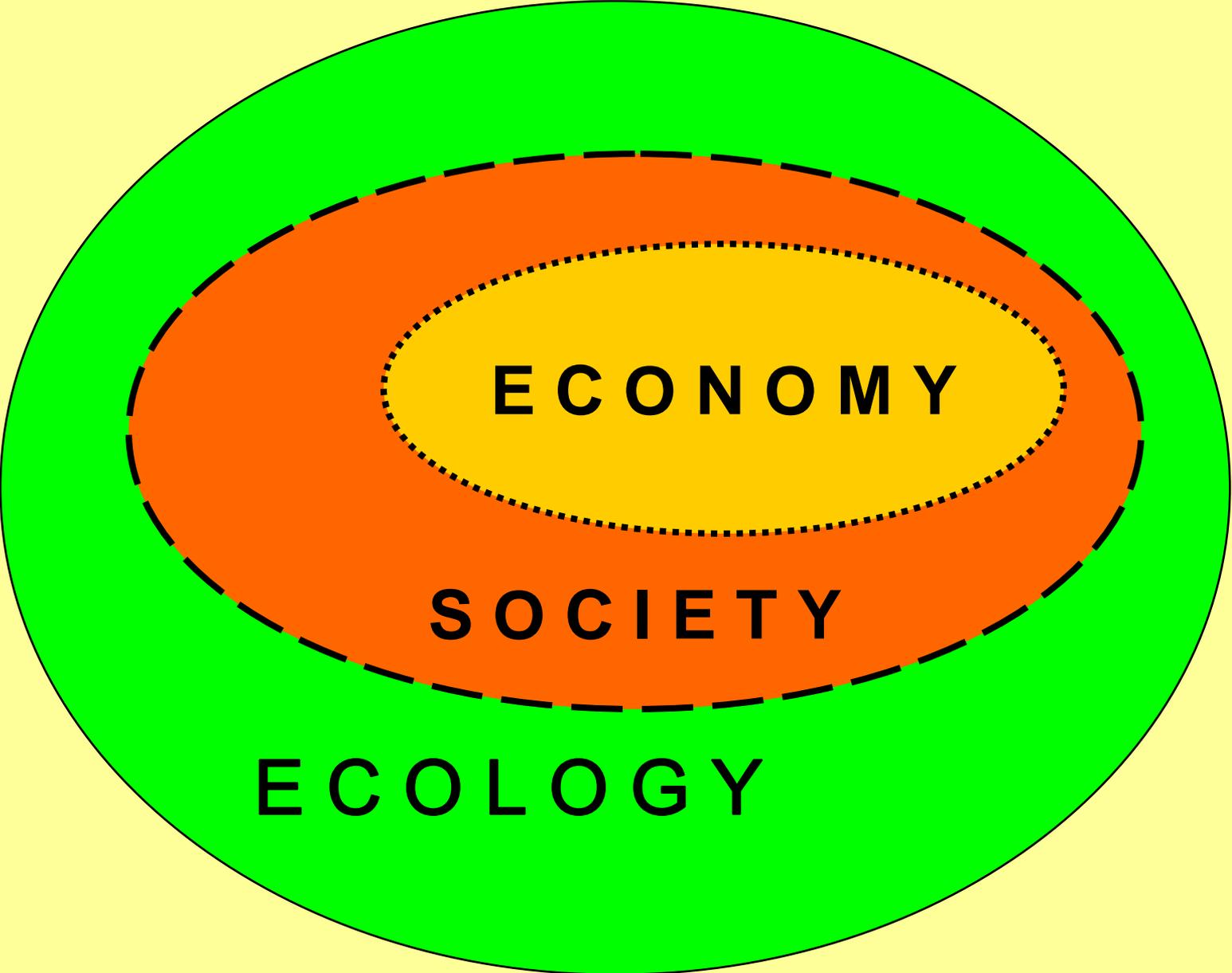
**ENVIRT**

**ECONOMY**

Markets give us things  
many of us want

Natural systems give us  
things we all *really* need





**ECONOMY**

**SOCIETY**

**ECOLOGY**

# Conclusion

- Sustainability involves resources, social, economic, environmental
- Current approach unsustainable
- Sustainable futures *require a new approach*
- This requires *new values*
- From “we do things better” to “we do better things”
- *Globo sapiens*