

CHANGING THE CLIMATE: ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS UNDERMINING PLANETARY HEALTH

Human disruptions to Earth's natural systems in the Anthropocene, including climate change and large-scale biodiversity losses, are directly damaging to all life, including our own.

Constellation Project: Inspiring social and environmental change through imagination and connected planetary consciousness (Image with permission: credit: Greg Rakozy)

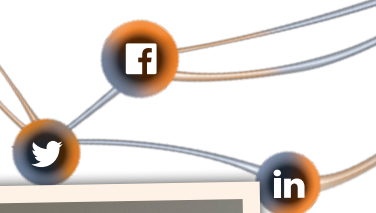
Rising rates of disease distress, and despair are inextricably linked with degradation and destruction of ecosystems at all scales, including unhealthy socio-political ecosystems. This requires urgent, deep structural changes in how we live—to the social, economic, and spiritual “climate” underpinning destructive human values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Planetary Health is a solutions-oriented, transdisciplinary field and social movement focused on analysing and addressing the impacts of human disruptions to Earth's natural systems on human health and all life on Earth.

Solutions depend on understanding the complex interdependence across systems, and the “relationship

crisis” between humans and the natural world. Addressing worldviews and value systems as root causes of social and ecological injustice is key to a planetary health agenda. It is critical to break the cycle of anxiety, despair, cynicism and polarisation associated with the crisis narratives of the climate agenda.

The Constellation Project addresses the mounting calls for a “spiritual and cultural transformation” to tackle these challenges, which requires more integrated approaches to research and policy, and educational frameworks that promote emotional intelligence, moral wisdom, and cultural competency. This is an initiative of the Planetary Health Alliance (PHA), a global consortium of over 400 universities, non-governmental organizations, and



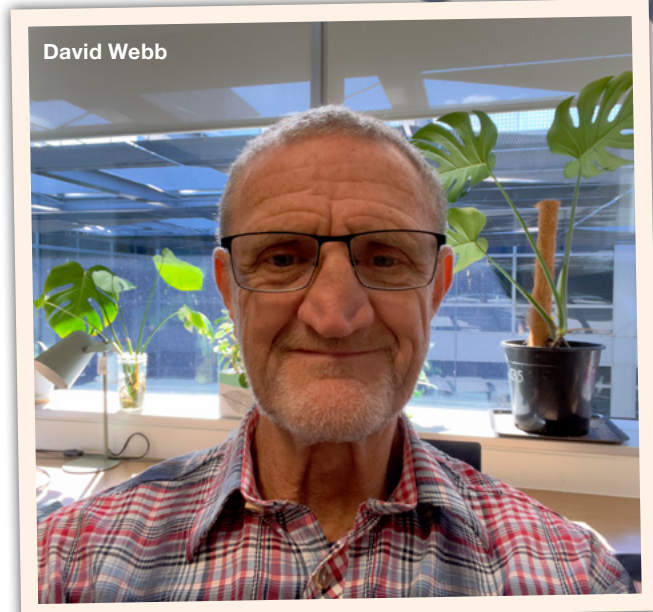
government entities committed to understanding and addressing environmental change and its health impacts.

The Project provides a visionary space to weave new stories and emergent ways of being for a new era of planetary consciousness. At this critical moment in history, we seek to ignite and reimagine more intentional spiritual relationships with ourselves, others, and the natural world—recognising that so many challenges in the Anthropocene ultimately stem from erosion of these emotional connections. We are networking communities of care for diverse voices from all disciplines, geographies, and traditions to contribute to a more ethical stance and an earth-based spirituality. Through a range of scholarly activities, research, artistic works, contemplative practices, and regular conversations, we seek to inspire worldviews that enable flourishing— not merely by reactively challenging old paradigms, but by proactively creating hopeful stories of new ways of inter-being with ourselves, each other and the planet.

There are several key interrelated themes underpinning the current and proposed activities of the Constellation Project. These are intended to influence both academic discourse and social movements by promoting holistic approaches and “reverence for life” to accelerate meaningful cultural change and sustainable actions.

Narrative co-creation for cultural change: Narratives shape human reality and have the power to shift the worldviews, values, attitudes, and behaviors for individual, collective and systems change. More optimistic and mutualistic narratives improve social cohesion, engagement, and collaborative action towards environmental and collective well-being.

Cultural capacities, awareness, and inner development: Individual empowerment through self-development is a key factor in collective capacity for equitable, ethical, sustainable social transformation. Promoting self-awareness and the skills, virtues, and character strengths to tackle challenges is key in motivating behaviors for the common good. Creating environments that support competence and capacity also



promotes purpose, happiness, hope, and engagement in social and environmental actions.

Enriching worldviews through diverse perspectives: We encourage convergence of scientific discovery and spiritual knowledge for expanded worldviews that are enriched by Indigenous and diverse faith perspectives. In an era of political polarization, we seek inclusiveness to synthesize and harmonize positive goals and common universal values for a shift in consciousness.

Connectedness, coherence, and community: Meaningful relationships with other people and nature promote a sense of belonging, compassion, care, and “unitive” awareness of the interdependence of all life. Emotional connections, inspired by awe and wonder, encourage actions for co-beneficial solutions that align with nature.

Creative emergence: New paradigms depend on imagination and creativity. The expressive arts enhance intercultural and intergenerational learning, deepening emotional connection and motivating change by integrating intellectual and heart-centered approaches.

These efforts provide new research and advocacy opportunities for social and environmental justice and human flourishing. By promoting these capacities in a culture of collaboration through our global networks, we aim to contribute to quantum social change—in ways that cannot be achieved by logic and advances in technology alone.



Authors: Susan Prescott MD, PhD, FRACP (Professor of Planetary Health, Medical School, University of Western Australia; Director of Planetary Health at the Nova Institute; Lead, Constellation Project, Planetary Health Alliance). **David Webb PhD.** Associate Professor (Regenerative Business and Planetary Health), Business School, University of Western Australia.