

## ANSZEE Conference 2007

Richard Sanders

[Richard.Sanders@nrw.qld.gov.au](mailto:Richard.Sanders@nrw.qld.gov.au)

### **Abstract**

There is growing evidence that humanity finds itself in a planetary emergency. The sustainability imperative appears to require that all humanity will be living equitably within planetary carrying capacity within decades. The sustainability challenge is to adapt social and economic institutions such that the human enterprise operates within a set of critical natural capital budget constraints that cumulatively lie within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. Failure to achieve this is unsustainable.

Sustainability is a complex systems problem that cannot be adequately addressed through the traditional fragmented disciplinary approach. This paper presents an integrated analytical approach to understanding the nature of the relationships between the various sustainability dimensions and examines what these relationships imply for the rapid achievement of sustainability. Guided by these insights, the relative efficacy of economic and physical approaches to the rapid achievement of sustainability is examined. The implications for future modes of socioeconomic organisation are then considered.