

**Matamata Piako District Council Long Term Plan Submission**  
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**Alight Ltd**

Tēnā koutou.

In your consultation document you have outlined the need for making sure your activities are affordable and essential due the uncertain times we are experiencing. Highlighting that you seek to focus on what work really needs to progress to ensure Matamata-Piako remains a well-serviced community that puts people at the heart of everything they do.

We are here to advocate for Doughnut Economics<sup>1</sup> as a decision-making tool to support these aspirations and your long-term planning and operational activities. Doughnut Economics is being used in 80 cities/districts around the world and is fast becoming a highly trusted model to support decision making. It helps ensure thriving and prosperous communities which is your intent - putting people at the heart of everything you do. We make the point that putting people at the heart of everything you do means you are ensuring the conditions for people to be healthy and well and the world they live in is healthy and being regenerated - not just people are prosperous and wealthy. We also strongly advocate for the consideration of generations that are yet to be born, in your planning decisions today. Taking a Doughnut Economics approach may better help MPDC align your budgetary decisions around what you MUST do, SHOULD do and COULD do.

Doughnut Economics provides a framework for thinking about the activities you do and fundamental services you provide as a council, so that you provide the conditions that enable all your citizens to thrive while our collective activities do not impact on the Earth's ecological boundaries. That is, we don't unintentionally erode the ability of the world that we are a part of to support us. It uses regenerative and distributive 21<sup>st</sup> century economic thinking to restore and repair our environments and communities and give future generations a chance of thriving on a liveable planet. It argues for investment in the things that matter for a flourishing society and natural world. These ways of thinking are expanded on and explained later in our submission.

In terms of the MPDC LTP, using the Doughnut Economics framework and 21st century economic ways of thinking may lead, for example, to switching around some of the activities that you are proposing to reduce and increase.

For example, you have proposed to reduce the walking and cycling improvements and the Town Centre infrastructure upgrade. While you are proposing to increase the Matamata stadium spending. We would suggest that these should be reversed. The reason for this is that taking a longer term and inter-generational perspective, you need to focus on the services that will enable activities and ways of living that enable people to thrive in a world where carbon emissions must be much lower than they are currently. Much lower. It must be said that the world where emissions must be lower is not an aspirational future state - it is

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<sup>1</sup> Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut economics: Seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

the world we are currently living in and will continue to be the world our children and grandchildren live in.

That means that we **MUST DO upgrades to walking and cycling infrastructure** as well as **upgrades to the town centre infrastructure** where people can interact and thrive in a way that does not rely on individual private vehicles. We would support you **moving these activities to the *Keep the same or Increase* categories.**

We also support the development of the Matamata stadium at Matamata College being in the *Increase* category, so long as this is linked with the development of walking and cycling infrastructure that supports it and also links it with the town centre to support and encourage that interconnectivity of people, activities and businesses.

We support the existing reduction in road renewals being in the *Reduce* category. Private vehicles and roads have been and will remain an important part of our transport network for many decades to come. At the same time, we encourage council to recognise that this will be a mode of transport that is increasingly out of balance with a future world and way of living. So this should be recognised with a diminishing investment approach, while other infrastructure (e.g. walking, cycling and infrastructure that enables public transport) is increased over the coming decades.

The World Economic Forum argues that every decision is now inherently a climate decision, whether we recognise it or not. So the above comments are made with this in mind.

In terms of the background to Doughnut Economics, scientists have discovered that we are overshooting 6 of the 9 boundaries that represent the safe space for humanity to continue to develop and thrive for generations to come on Earth (see Figure 1). While planetary boundaries sound like far off or international things - the impact we have on them is literally the summation of all of our individual impact. So that are very much relevant at this foundational local level of our society.

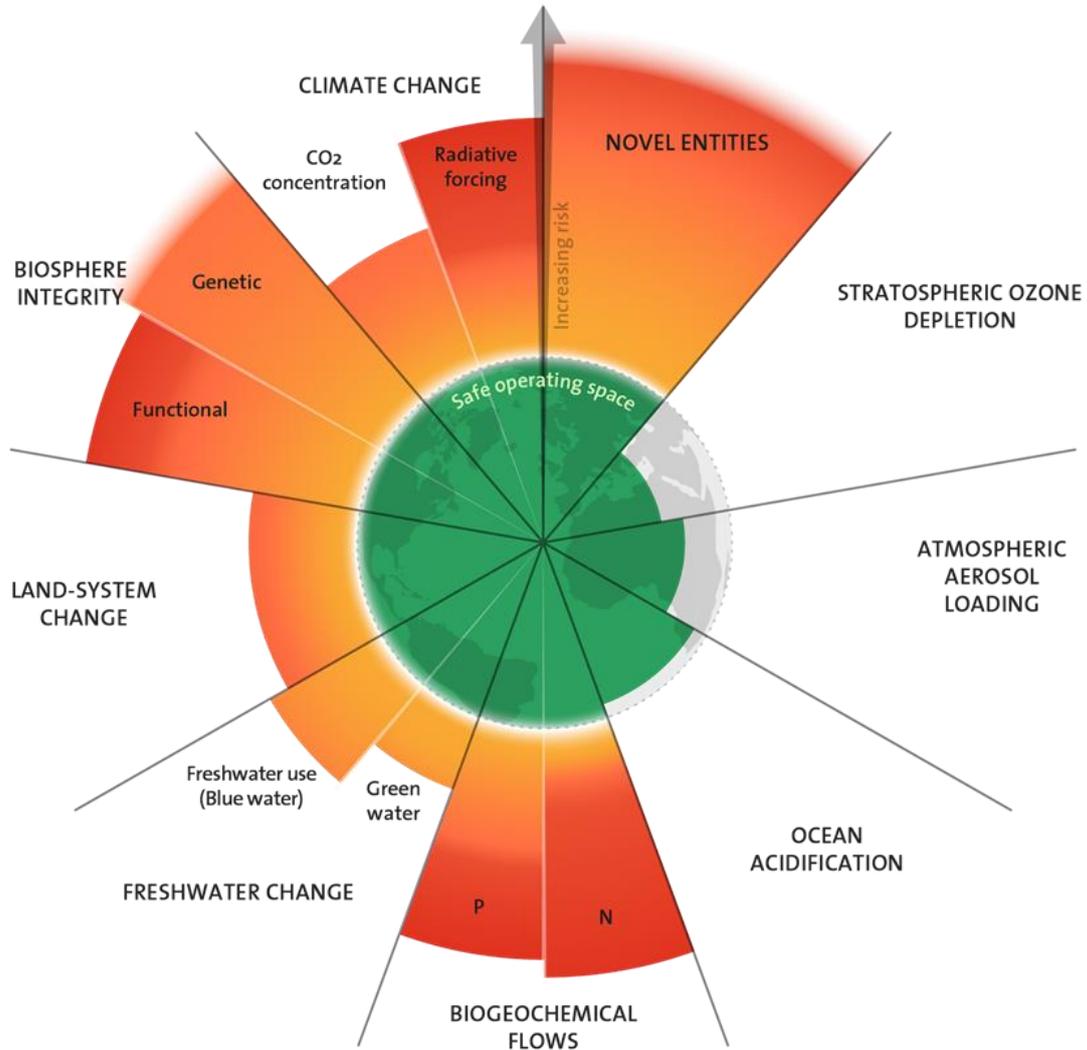


Figure 1 2023 Planetary Boundary Overshoot. Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, based on analysis in Richardson et al 2023

In 2020 the Ministry for Environment commissioned research to translate the planetary boundaries framework to New Zealand (see Figure 2). Like all developed nations New Zealand exceeds its fair share of the safe operating space, in terms of both what we consume and what we produce. We also need to recognise that many of our local activities have impacts offshore - both the overseas resource footprint of our consumption activities (i.e. the things we source from overseas) and the flow on impacts of our production activities (i.e. things we sell offshore which have an impact both here (resources) and there (waste)).

Long term planning should be thinking of how any activities planned for will fit within, contribute to, or be aligned with operating in this safe operating space.

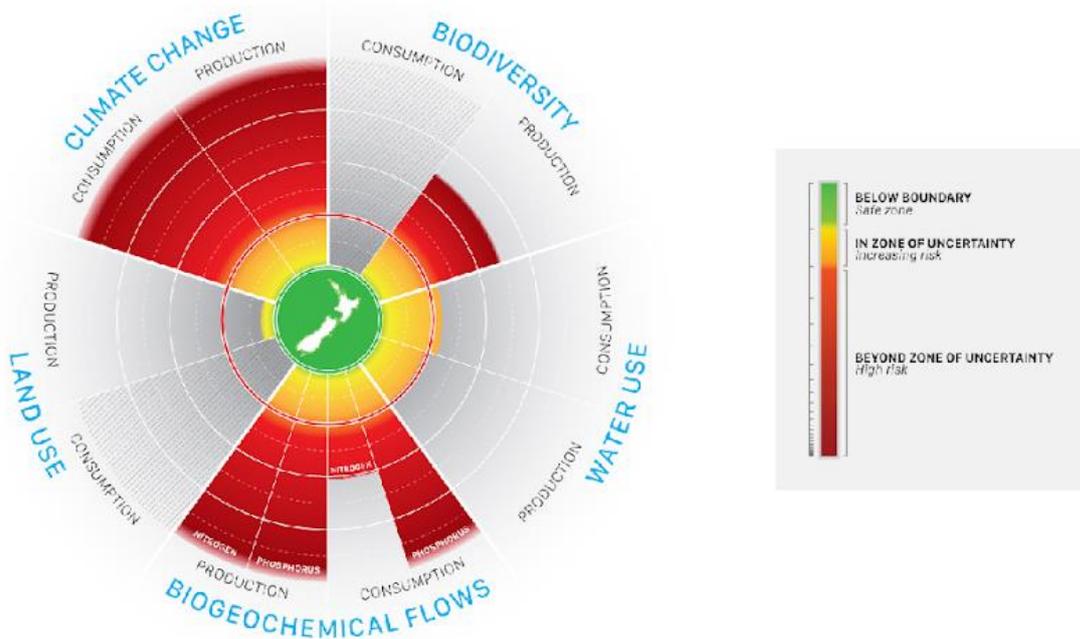


Figure 2 NZ's Assessment of 5 Planetary Boundaries. Ministry for Environment 2020

However, the report noted we can build a regenerative, circular economy that enhances New Zealand's resilience and reduces the transgression of planetary boundaries. The Doughnut Economics model we're presenting today enables this. It also incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals and aligns with NZ's Living Standards Framework. At its core, it suggests all activities should be developed and considered using the 'Seven ways to think like a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economist' (see Figure 3).

## Seven ways to think like a 21st century economist

Seven Ways to Think:	From 20th-Century Economics	To 21st-Century Economics
<b>1. Change the Goal</b>	<p>GDP</p>	<p>the Doughnut</p>
<b>2. See the Big Picture</b>	<p>self-contained market</p>	<p>embedded economy</p>
<b>3. Nurture Human Nature</b>	<p>rational economic man</p>	<p>social adaptable humans</p>
<b>4. Get Savvy with Systems</b>	<p>mechanical equilibrium</p>	<p>dynamic complexity</p>
<b>5. Design to Distribute</b>	<p>growth will even it up again</p>	<p>distributive by design</p>
<b>6. Create to Regenerate</b>	<p>growth will clean it up again</p>	<p>regenerative by design</p>
<b>7. Be Agnostic about Growth</b>	<p>growth addicted</p>	<p>growth agnostic</p>

Figure 3 7 ways to think like a 21st Century Economist

Doughnut Economics provides a compass and map towards a safe and just space for humanity to thrive (see Figure 4). Outside the circle is the overshoot of planetary boundaries, inside the circle represents the shortfall of human deprivation. The model has been reimagined by Tūhoe, who says the environment is the foundation and the social elements belong in the outer ring (see Figure 5). While these two doughnuts are slightly different interpretations, what they have in common is that they recognise human activity must operate in balance with the natural world of which we are a part.

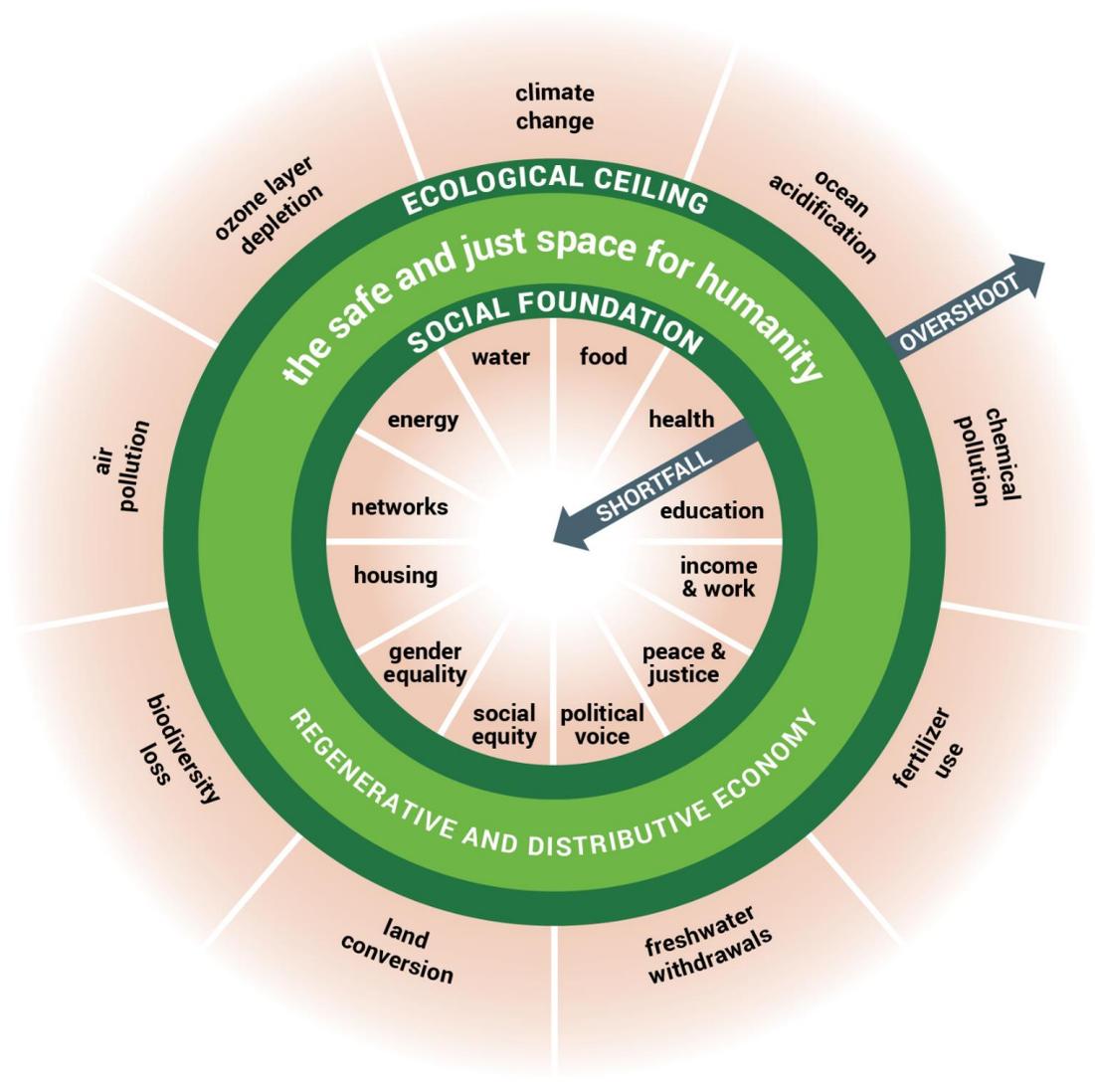


Figure 4 A compass for human prosperity

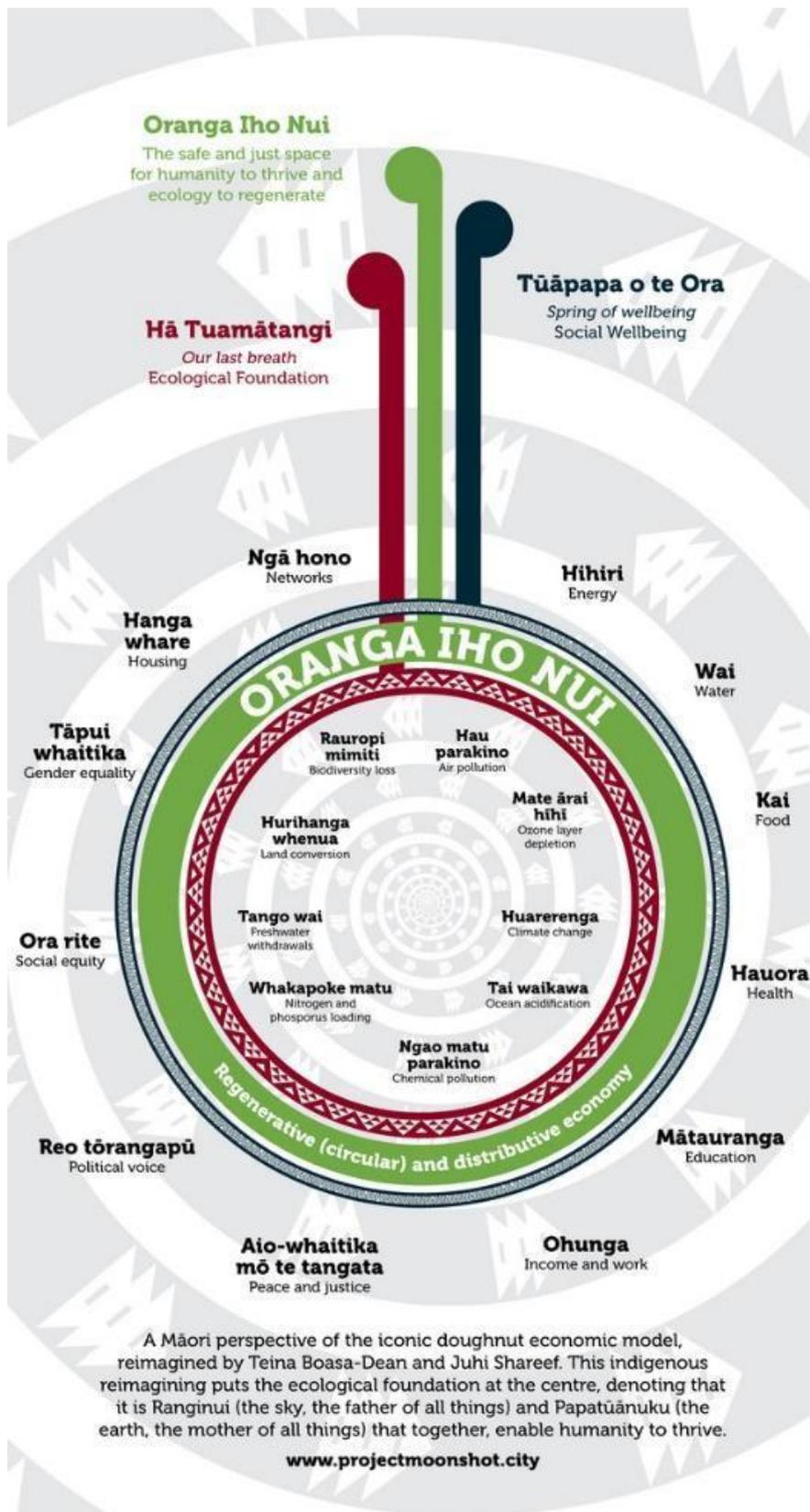


Figure 5 Tuuhoe Doughnut - Earth's Last Breath

We know the world is dangerously out of balance environmentally and socially. Our subconscious default - from several generations of thinking this way - is to grow the economy and our measure for this is GDP. This literally just measures the amount of

economic activity, not whether it has a positive or negative impact. However, the physical constraints of a finite planet mean that GDP cannot grow forever. GDP also does not tell us whether the activity it measures is evenly distributed. It certainly does not consider environmental impacts. For example, an oil spill will increase GDP because of the extra work (or use of goods and services) it creates. You may hear that some European countries are decoupling GDP from emissions, but they are nowhere close to decoupling at the rate needed to achieve the Paris Agreement of less than 1.5 degrees warming compared to pre-industrial times.

Instead, Doughnut Economics proposes that we be distributive and regenerative by design (Figure 6).

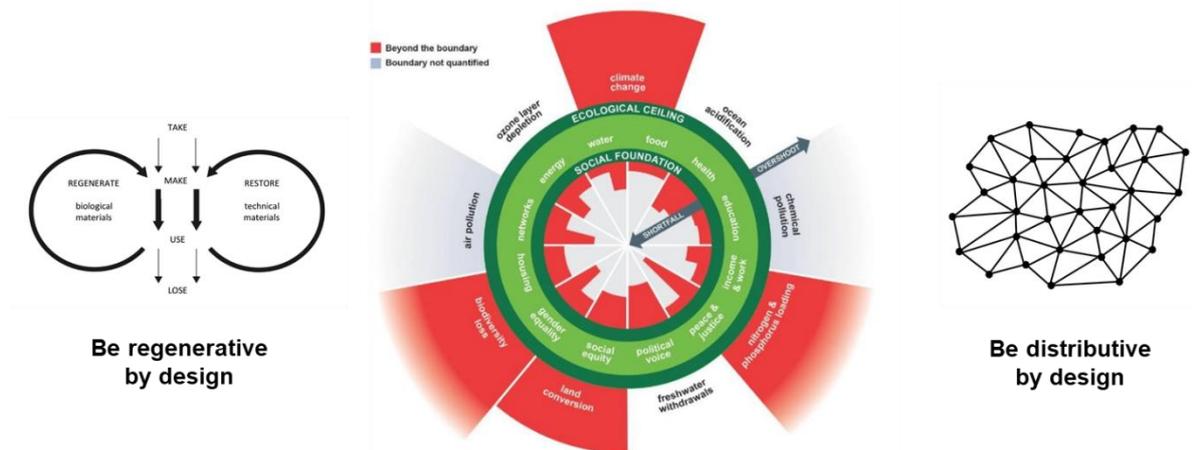
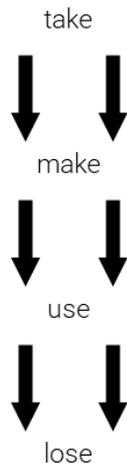


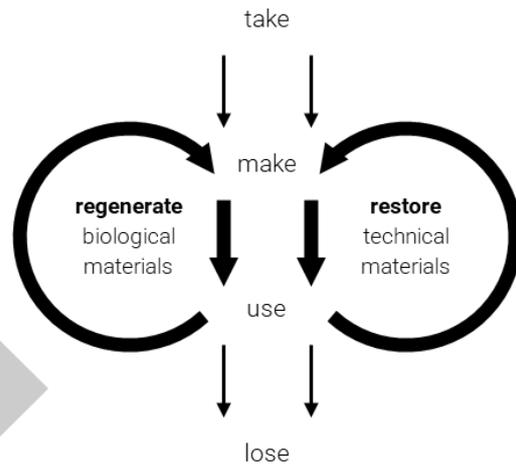
Figure 6 How can we get humanity into the doughnut?

This means, rather than degenerating earth’s life supporting systems with our take, make, use and waste model, we need to regenerate and restore our living world (Figure 7). Examples include landscape restoration, the circular economy (such as the right to repair, repair cafes and circular manufacturing), nature-centred cities and nature-rich buildings.



**Degenerative**

Running down Earth's life-supporting system

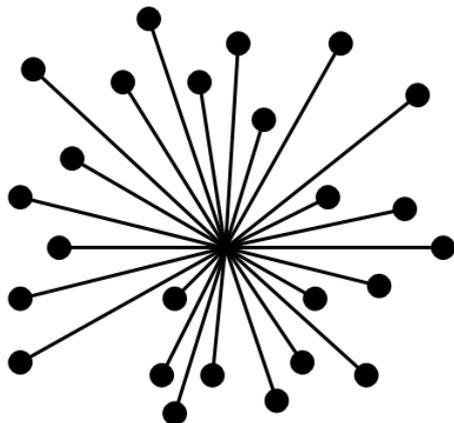


**Regenerative**

Working with and within the cycles of the living world

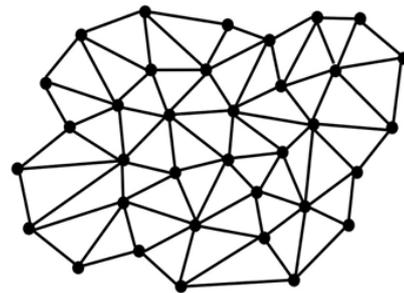
*Figure 7 Change from degenerative to regenerative design*

In addition, instead of dividing value and opportunity into the hands of a few, we could share value with the people who cocreated it (see Figure 8). Examples include affordable social housing, public transport, community micro-grids and purpose-led business.



**Divisive**

Capturing opportunity and value in the hands of a few



**Distributive**

Sharing opportunity and value with all who co-create it

*Figure 8 Change from divisive to distributive design*

The city of Amsterdam has used Doughnut Economics as a tool to guide their social and economic recovery from the covid pandemic. Since then, over 80 local and regional governments worldwide have started exploring the concepts and what would it mean for their

place to put them into practice. Closer to home, Regen Melbourne and Regen Sydney are each a collective of around 180 organisations using the doughnut as a concept to gather around to design their ambitions for a thriving future.

Different councils are engaging at different stages depending on where they are on their sustainability journey, from initial conversations or empowering local change makers to gathering data, planning, strategizing and demonstrating to using Doughnut Economics as a compass across all aspects of the organisation (see Figure 9).



Figure 9 How councils are getting started

We note that this LTP covers the period from 2024-2034. This includes the year 2030. 2030 is often recognised as the year by which we will need to have reduced our emissions by half, on our way to becoming carbon neutral in our activities by 2050. As MPDC plans for this future sustainability, my ask today is that you seek to embed Doughnut Economics and the seven ways of thinking like a 21st century economist to guide your Long Term Planning process:

1. Firstly, we ask you to research and understand the reasons for Doughnut Economics being so widely adopted as a different way of thinking about the economic paradigm and how we design and operate our communities, towns and cities.
2. Next, we ask that you initiate an 'unroll the Doughnut pilot project' (all facilitation and training material is available open source via the Doughnut Economics Action Lab)
3. Then, you may need to collect data to create a 'portrait of place'
4. Next, you would engage with the doughnut across multiple dimensions of your organisation, to ensure your local targets and decisions sit within the planetary boundaries and investments align with social foundations
5. Finally, you would initiate conversations to move Doughnut Economics thinking beyond the council and into communities.

None of these activities need be particularly resource intensive and could be easily added to the activity you are already planning for. In fact, they are small expenses that can help achieve huge gains in efficiency for what you are planning to renew, build or deliver to enable your communities to thrive in the coming years.