

## Sustainability Conference 2012

### **Eighth International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability.**

**Title:**            **Sustainability and Curriculum Design: Exploring Issues of Ecology in Law and Social Work Education**

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**Abstract:**       *James Cook University has positioned itself as the 'University for the Tropics', an identity that necessitates a deep concern with issues of sustainability. As part of university-wide efforts to refresh the existing curriculum to better reflect such concerns, the authors were appointed as 'Curriculum Scholars', tasked with building capacity for curriculum design amongst academics in a range of disciplines.*

*The disciplines of Law and Social Work, with their traditional focus on social rather than environmental concerns, present particular challenges when moving towards the development of sustainability-oriented educational practices. Previous attempts at introducing sustainability perspectives into discipline-based higher education have often resulted in piecemeal or 'add-on' curricular solutions. Yet the very nature of sustainability as a concept suggests that a more holistic and integrated approach is required. This paper discusses the use of ecology as a conceptual framework, or thematic lens, that can serve as a foundation for the re-imagining of discipline-based curriculum. Drawing on insights from curriculum development, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and education for sustainability, the authors develop a framework for an approach to Law and Social Work education that is grounded in ecological understandings and reflects a sustainability orientation while remaining true to the fundamental concerns of each discipline.*

**Keywords:**      Curriculum, Sustainability Education, Ecology, Law, Social Work