

## HOW TO FIX A BROKEN PLANET

Do you want to help save human civilisation? If so, this book is for you.

*How to Fix a Broken Planet* describes the 10 catastrophic risks that menace human civilisation and our planet, and what we can all do to overcome or mitigate them. It explains what must be done globally to avert each mega-threat and what each of us can do in our own lives to help preserve a habitable world. It offers the first truly integrated world plan of action for a more sustainable human society – and fresh hope. A must-read for anyone seeking sound practical advice on what citizens, governments, companies, and community groups can do to safeguard our future.

Julian Cribb AM is an Australian author and science communicator. His career includes appointments as Scientific Editor for *The Australian* newspaper, Director of National Awareness for the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), editor of several newspapers, member of numerous scientific boards and advisory panels, and president of national professional bodies for agricultural journalism and science communication. His published work includes over 9,000 articles, 3,000 science media releases, and 10 books. He has received 32 awards for journalism. His previous books include *Earth Detox* (2021), *Food or War* (2019), *Surviving the 21st Century* (2017), and *The Coming Famine* (2010). As a science writer and a grandparent, Julian Cribb is deeply concerned about the existential emergency facing humanity, and his latest books map hopeful pathways out of our predicament.

‘... probably the most important book I have read. I predict it will be a world changer. It needs to be translated into every language on Earth and made urgently available to politicians and community opinion leaders everywhere. The author is a distinguished science communicator with many books and publications on the matters covered here. The book brings together in a short and highly readable volume, his conclusions about the survivability of the human species. It offers the reader a sensible and practical path to rescue our human species from early extinction and offers detailed actions for individuals, community groups and governments.’

*Bob Douglas AO, Australian National University*

‘Humanity for the first time in its history is causing a global crash of civilization and even the possibility of its own extinction. Julian Cribb’s pathbreaking new book... looks squarely at the existential threats to our life-support systems and suggests how individuals and governments should take remedial action. I only hope people will read him and act.’

*Paul Ehrlich, author of The Annihilation of Nature.*

‘... a masterpiece that will have a lasting impact on the culture as people seek ways to be effective planetary citizens. This book delivers a worthy prescription for humanity to embrace common purpose. Together, in gender equal partnership, that’s our best chance to save ourselves from ourselves’

*Geoff Holland, author of The Hydrogen Age.*

‘... a must read for the future of the human species, and all the other species with which we share this one and only Earth.’

*- Dana Hunnes, author of Recipe for Survival: What You Can Do to Live a Healthier and More Environmentally Friendly Life*

‘Julian Cribb continues to warn all on this planet of what we are doing to it and the risks. As usual, his work is meticulously documented and tells us what can still be carried out – if the will is there at all levels.’

*John Kerin AO, former Australian Minister for Primary Industries and Energy*

‘A blueprint for humanity surviving and thriving in the 21st century. This book provides the escape ramps for avoiding the dangerous problems facing our species.’

*Lyle Lewis, Former Endangered Species Biologist, U.S. Department of Interior*

‘This is a well-written book offering sensible, idealistic prescriptions for humanity, at this moment of truly desperate polycrisis. If we really are *Homo Sapiens*, we’ll listen to Cribb... And yet Cribb does not give up on humanity; far from it. Whether you are interested in rethinking our species or in practical steps to reduce the level of our dire predicament, this book can help.’

*Rupert Read, author of Why Climate Breakdown Matters*

‘... takes you on a chilling journey through the existential threats facing humanity. Essential reading for the 21st Century.’

*Will Steffen, Australian National University*

# How to Fix a Broken Planet

Advice for Surviving the 21st Century

JULIAN CRIBB

*Council for the Human Future*

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## PREFACE

*How to Fix a Broken Planet* is the sixth in a series of science-based books on the growing human existential emergency – and what we can do about it. The intent behind the whole series is to give people the facts they need to take timely, positive action for the sake of human survival at a time fraught with peril for all.

This book has a particular focus on what we humans can and must do if we are to avoid the catastrophic consequences of our own actions, both at a global and at a personal level.

Many people, especially the young, say they feel a sense of hopelessness when they contemplate the sheer scale of the task of fixing global problems as massive as climate change, global poisoning, pandemics, or nuclear war.

The antidote to hopelessness is action. This book is all about action. It is a distillation of the best advice from innumerable scientific and other trustworthy sources on what to do. However, all action must start with an understanding of the nature of the problem it is intending to solve, the wider context of that threat, and its connections to other threats.

To ignore the dangers, to delay action, to argue among ourselves about the right way forward can only magnify the catastrophe we already face. On the other hand, to act wisely, promptly, together, and with foresight can abate and maybe even prevent disaster – and thus save millions,



even billions, of lives, including our own and those of our families and descendants.

It is a noble cause, perhaps the noblest in the long history of our species.

Our world has changed. There is no going back to the ‘safe’ old world of the mid-twentieth century. Hankering for yesteryear and being sentimental about our past lives will not save us. Only action can.

But that action must first be carefully, wisely, and deeply considered. There is no point in adopting measures to fix one disaster if, by so doing, we spawn disasters even greater, or more certain. Each action must first be examined in terms of every other major threat before it is adopted. It must make none of them worse.

The advice gathered in this book attempts to do this. It certainly does not claim to have *all* the answers. New and better ideas and technologies are coming forth constantly. You are encouraged to devise and share your own. However, the book does bring together many practical suggestions from wise minds worldwide for repairing our broken planet, restoring its vital systems, and securing our own future on it. More importantly, it integrates them to address the overarching threat.

Above all, it explains what each of us can practically do in our own lives to help to achieve this. Thus it offers everyone a sense of hope, purpose, engagement, and opportunity.

The problems we face are global in nature. They cannot be fixed by nations or corporations working alone or in small alliances. They cannot be fixed by small groups of well-intentioned people acting, while others sit and watch or try, from selfish motives, to undermine them. These challenges have to be tackled by humanity as a whole, acting together for the first time in our history. They call for the greatest act of single-minded, collaborative action and caring that humans have ever undertaken.

Fixing our ‘broken’ planet is not going to be easy. But it is achievable if we all act together, with determination and goodwill.

It will be the greatest thing our species has ever done.

Julian Cribb, Canberra

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