

# The Stockholm Seminars: Frontiers in Sustainability Science and Policy

This lecture is a part of a seminar series that cover a broad range of perspectives on sustainability issues, particularly focusing on the need for a sound scientific basis for sustainable development policy.

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## A Resilience Approach to an Uncertain Future

**Dr. Brian Walker**  
CSIRO Research Fellow, Australia

**Wednesday, September 17, 2008, 14.00–15.00**  
Beijer Hall, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences,  
Lilla Frescativägen 4, Stockholm

Approaching an uncertain future from a resilience perspective demands that special attention is paid to threshold effects. Are there likely critical transitions in social-ecological systems that could lead to significant, possibly irreversible, declines in human wellbeing? This leads to a focus on feedbacks and feedback loops as points of intervention for either avoiding or engineering regime shifts. In the face of looming global shocks there is increasing urgency both for building resilience and for initiating transformation. The question is which, and where? It is a crucial question for societies at scales from local, to regional to continental.

**Dr Walker** is a Research Fellow with CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems and is the former Program Director and Chair of the Board of the Resilience Alliance, an international research group working on sustainability of social-ecological systems. A key focus of his work is the significance of resilience (the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and to undergo change while still retaining essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks) in the sustainability of ecosystems and social-ecological systems. Dr Walker co-authored the 2006 book *Resilience thinking: Sustaining ecosystems and people in a changing world*. He is also a visiting researcher at the Stockholm Resilience Centre.



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