

## Take Back the Economy: The Commons Radical Reading Group meets the Authors

*Jenny Cameron, Nick Grinpunkel, Stephen Healy, Miriam Williams*

In this panel discussion, members of The Commons Radical Reading Group meet two of the authors of *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming our Communities* (2013, University of Minnesota Press). The Commons Radical Reading Group has been reading *Take Back the Economy* since May 2016 with the aim of using it to support and develop a collective knowledge, politics and vision for a solidarity economy in Newcastle.

In conversation with two of the authors, members of the reading group reflect on the practical lessons that are emerging from their experiences, from the steps taken to promote the reading group to their thoughts on the role of (radical) reading groups in today's media-driven world, and the role of reading groups in economic activism. The conversation will also touch on the themes that have arisen in reading group's discussions, and the ways the book is helping members reimagine existing economic initiatives and generate ideas for new initiatives.

In conversation with the members of the reading group, the two authors reflect on the practical lessons that emerged from their experiences of writing the book, including developing a set of tools and exercises for economic activists (see <http://www.takebackeconomy.net/>), and devising a language that reframes "the economy."

### **Conference Themes:**

Work, exchange, money

### **Bio:**

Jenny Cameron is an Associate Professor in Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Newcastle. Along with researching and writing in the area of diverse and community economies, she is involved in economic activism as a Board Member of Beanstalk Organic Food Cooperative. She is also involved in her local community garden, Silsoe Street Community Garden.

Nick Grinpukel is a community activist, commons volunteer and has recently co-founded a community bike workshop in Newcastle to provide bike maintenance skill sharing and social engagement. Nick is currently studying permaculture at CQ University in order to develop sustainable environmental, social and economic systems.

Stephen Healy is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. New to Australia he had a long held interest in the role that cooperatives and other economic practices might play in creating more just and sustainable communities. Stephen is an associate editor of Rethinking Marxism and an avid cross-fitter.

Miriam Williams is co-founder of The Commons, a community cafe, ethical goods store, social justice hub and arts space in Newcastle. Miriam lectures in Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Newcastle with research interests and activist engagements with radical urban commons, spaces of care and everyday justice.