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## YOUTH AT THE CENTRE

*A new national program, aimed at giving young people reason to stay in rural Australia, is helping students to identify local community needs and opportunities as the first step towards developing enterprises that meet these needs. The Youth at the Centre program also provides tools and program support for young men and women who have left school, to help them engage more fully in the life of their local community.*

*The program is an initiative of the Bank of IDEAS in Western Australia, which accepts that, as life in rural Australia changes, many traditional employment opportunities have disappeared. However it sees new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities with improved communications, lifestyle preference changes and increased rural tourism.*

*In contrast the education system generally continues to prepare young people to work for others and to encourage them to leave rural Australia in search of employment.*

*Youth at the Centre seeks to highlight issues associated with rural youth retention. It wants to expand the relationships between schools and their communities through collaboration and to encourage practical community development tools. It aims to create and support projects across Australia that enable young people to audit and respond to the social and economic needs of their communities, looks for new youth employment pathways and fosters leadership and more enterprising attitudes, behaviours and skills among young women and men. And it seeks to promote and support entrepreneurship as an option for young people in rural communities.*

*Information: [www.bankofideas.com.au](http://www.bankofideas.com.au).*

## Listening to the living future

By 2025, there'll be a new generation of people managing Australia's affairs. Where are they now? In high school or in the difficult transition stage between formal education and wider society. What is the current generation doing to help them prepare for the toughest tasks of leadership and citizenship Australia has ever faced? Or even talk with them about it? Not nearly enough.

Tidal waves of change are on their way. Demographic change, social change, technological change, and deep changes in the way we think and the way we are. While the current generation inches from denial to groping engagement with these issues, the next generation knows it will be in the hot seat and is either deeply worried or distracting itself from the need for engagement.

Yet when young people are given the tools of futures methodologies, they respond positively and prove themselves able to cope at levels unanticipated by their elders, as a few pioneering programs are beginning to show.

## Jigsaw links young people to the future

A group of high school students on the Central Coast of New South Wales has created an inspiring vision for the future of their community and is now challenging community leaders to help make it happen. On the way, they piloted a futuring process that combines appreciative inquiry and scenario development with the respected Oregon model for community visioning.

About one third of the 300,000 population of the Central Coast is less than 25 years of age. Population is increasing twice as fast as NSW generally; growth in the youth population has been around 18 times higher than for NSW; and the unemployment rate is continually two to three per cent above the State average.

The Jigsaw committee was established to link the work of government, Council and non-government organisations in addressing the issues that arise from these and other difficult demographics. As part of a strategy aimed at improving the wellbeing of young people on the Central Coast, Jigsaw invited a group of students to participate in this process with the Futures Foundation.

Working with senior futurists from the Foundation and the US futurist who developed the Oregon model, the students began by using a process of "appreciative inquiry" that sets out to identify the positive features of a healthy community and to build on them. They interviewed community leaders, media and sporting identities, government professionals, social workers and others, reported their findings and began the task of identifying trends, and the issues that are crucial in building a successful future. As they did so, they learned how futures work can help to create the kinds of futures we want.

Next step was to develop a range of alternative future scenarios, both positive and negative. From these they developed their preferred vision for the Central Coast in 2020, and prepared a presentation to explain the vision and highlight some simple ways of taking action to turn it into reality.

On the way, the students made an astonishing journey, from worldviews deeply embedded in teenage concerns and needs, to active engagement with the wider issues that will need to be managed by their generation in 2020.

While many young people have a negative view of the future and their ability to

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## How the other half lives

Most of the world's population lives independently of the formal economy, says Russian sociologist Teodor Shanin, and this is the key to removing poverty and inequality. An article in the *New Scientist* explains why he believes Western economists are failing the poor. Researchers in Africa 25 years ago noticed that there was no economic explanation for how the majority of the population survived. They began to look at how people lived, rather than at economic models. They discovered the same way of life in Latin America, South Asia, even in Italy. The west has much to learn from these alternative ways of life, says Shanin, whose own research was mostly in Russia. "The modern formal economy needs only about a quarter of the global workforce," he says. "The other three-quarters are engaged in survival through the informal economy. "The core of the informal economy is not peasant farming, but family and neighbourhood relationships of mutual support. So while the informal economy is seen, if it is seen at all, as the political economy of the margins, when you put it all together you can see it is not marginal at all."

## Jigsaw 2020

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influence it, futures work shows them how we can influence the future by understanding more about the choices we are making in the present. As Dr Richard Slaughter puts it, students like those who took part in the Jigsaw 2020 project "*...are the very people who will be living in the midst of the upheavals to come... when provided with the tools of understanding and action .... their whole attitude toward the future and its pattern of opportunities and threats undergoes a profound change. Pessimism falls away and is replaced by informed optimism.*

*"They can see that, in any scenario, there are ways ahead, social innovations to create and real hopes for improvement in the human prospect."*

The Jigsaw 2020 process itself provided an apt demonstration of the community collaboration that featured in the students' future vision. The Jigsaw committee is a coordinating unit created by the Central Coast

Regional Management Coordination Group. That group in turn is made up of senior managers from government agencies that have a service responsibility in the Central Coast region. Its steering committee includes representatives of Wyong Shire Council, Gosford City Council, Central Coast Health, the Department of Community Services, Premier's Department, NSW Police Service, the Department of Education and Training and some non-government groups.

Futures Foundation members who contributed their time to the process included Dr Peter Saul and Dr Friedemann Wieland, who gave the students their introduction to futures and coached them for the interview process; Richard Neville, who guided them in creating alternative scenarios; Julian Crawford, who worked with the students to develop the preferred vision; Peter Lazar and Jan Lee Martin who provided coordination and continuity throughout.

The project was also fortunate to have US futurist/planner Steven Ames co-facilitating the final session.

## Central Coast: the Next Generation

### ....creating a community where we think, plan, dream and play.

Coincidentally, many features of the 2020 vision, created by the Jigsaw team of school students in a few one-day workshops, also appear on a list of principles for sustainable communities prepared much more methodically by the University of Washington's Northwest Policy Centre.

The students chose to structure their vision to reflect the work they had done in exploring the environment, society and the economy. They were also keen to integrate a systemic futuring approach to ensure that the community continued to explore its alternative futures.

This translated into a vision entitled "*Creating our future: welcoming, sustaining, enterprising*". The students wanted a society that welcomed change and diversity; an environment that was conserved and nurtured; and an economy that reflected enterprising attitudes rather than simple job-seeking. Some of the many parallels are shown at right.

### Jigsaw 2020

#### **A welcoming society:**

Our community welcomes new ideas, is willing to change. We see tolerance among all groups of people with less ignorance between cultures. More cultural events are held in communities. We have a multi-cultural centre for arts, and are breaking down social barriers.

#### **A sustaining environment:**

We are learning new ways of conserving the environment and exploring how to use our natural resources to benefit our community, e.g. through carbon credit trading.

Government and Councils support use of renewable energy sources and are investing in sustainable development technologies. Waste management practices have improved.

#### **An enterprising economy:**

Diversity in small businesses has been encouraged, e.g. hydroponics, IT, home based businesses, small business for services. We have developed co-operatives. It is easier for people to generate their own work rather than waiting for "a job". Schools now focus on practical skills, basic knowledge, problem solving.

### Northwest Policy Centre Society

Citizens from all segments of the community are welcomed and encouraged to participate in organizations and activities that help to strengthen the community. There are historic celebrations, festivals, fairs and community projects that build a sense of commitment to the community and its landscape.

#### **Environment**

Natural resource management practices maintain and promote native biological diversity...natural systems are ecologically healthy....Homes and businesses practice energy conservation to reduce the economic costs and environmental impacts of energy production....residences and businesses are taking steps to reduce, reuse and recycle solid wastes.

#### **Economy**

Local businesses are innovative... add value locally. Living wage jobs are available for members of the community within a reasonable distance... Education and training is available locally that provides residents with skills they need to gain, keep or create living wage jobs.

# Learning other ways of knowing

A practical approach to the task of turning Queensland into the SmartState was one tangible outcome of an innovative Futures Foundation workshop held in Brisbane under the leadership of Professor Sohail Inayatullah. This report from Colin Russo....

Futurists, strategists and planners from the Queensland government who took part in the workshop knew that their Premier's Department has been promoting the notion of Queensland as the SmartState. They decided to use this concept as a means of generating Smart-futures that challenged them directly in their own business and community workplaces. The result was a list of clear recommendations including a program of practitioners' forums to discuss the evolution of futures.

Presentations by executives from the Department of State Development, Maroochy Shire Council, Redcliffe Bribie Division of General Practice, Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading and the Department of Primary Industries showed how futures methodologies had been applied in unique ways to achieve contrasting objectives.

At the end of these presentations a key question was asked: "what would you tell the Premier of Queensland about the future of your organisation in the SmartState?" Responses included issues of wealth creation, clarification of the SmartState vision, support for pioneers in each field in Queensland, making systems approaches and outcomes prevalent, and serious attention for community engagement in 'smart' futures.

Between the opening message from indigenous elder, Dr Robert Anderson, and the final articulation of conference recommendations lay two days rich in content and process based on action

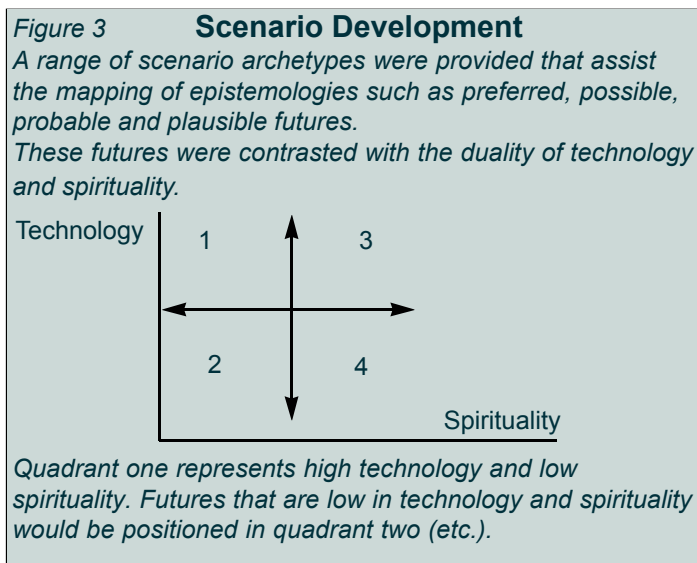
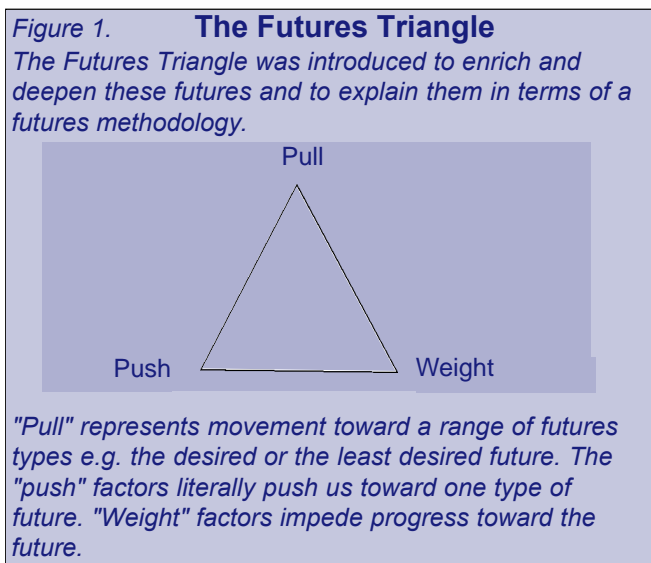
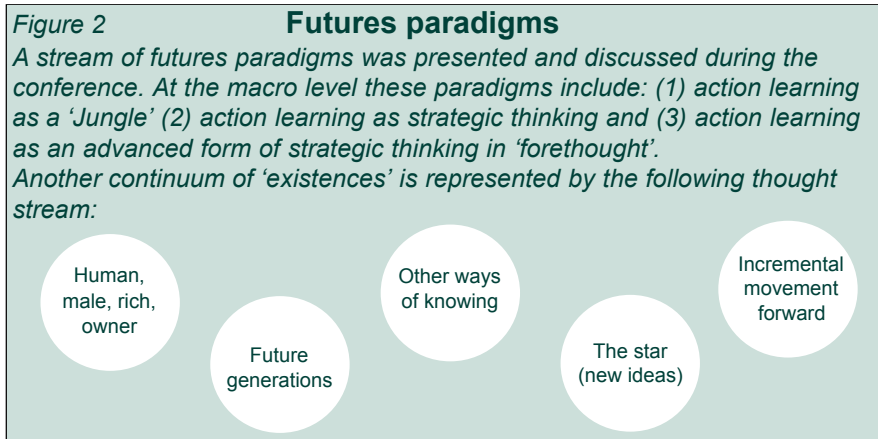
**"What would you tell the Premier?"**

learning. Co-presenters Jan Archer and Sharron Parkes introduced experiential learning activities that enlivened participation at the same time as they reinforced the cognitive learning about futures methodologies.

Highlights included creation of a range of future visions, enriching these visions using Inayatullah's futures triangle (Figure 1); introduction to a stream of futures paradigms (Figure 2); an exploration of depths in futures studies through Causal Layered Analysis; an

exploration of breadth through emerging issues analysis and development of a range of alternative scenarios (Figure 3)

Experiential learning techniques were used throughout. For example, co-presenter Deborah Robertson helped participants to convert themselves from observers into actors of futures issues, role-playing both government professionals and Queensland citizens, as they modelled selected futures through cabaret in a way that led to surprising insights. A higher level of analysis was then added to the cabaret experience to help participants understand each scenario from different perspectives. This activity enabled physical processes to be labelled, discussed and understood, and also demonstrated that a methodical approach to analysis is rigorous and provides more insights of different value.



# Scanning for signals in the noise.....

## Healthy community economic futures

Australian futurist Paul Wildman compares community economic treatments with parallels in health, and produces some surprising insights. He argues that multiple traditions are needed, that categories or theories from one arena can be used to shed light on another. He compares different approaches to health -- such as naturopathic, homeopathic, ayurvedic, chiropractic and allopathic -- and uses them as metaphors for new approaches to local community economics.

*Journal of Futures Studies* August 2002 963

## Perils of capitalism? Think water...

Corporations in the US, including Monsanto, are buying up water rights as fast as they can, writes Molly Ivins. In the absence of international action, water reserves are disappearing in the Middle East, China, Mexico California and much of Africa. Some 5 per cent of the water supply is already in corporate hands and the Bush administration, the IMF and the World Bank are pushing for more privatization, she says.

*Chicago Tribune* 3 October 2002 964

## Rampant phone tapping in Australia

Australian authorities use telephone taps at 20 times the rate of their counterparts in the US, figures that the Opposition says raise concerns about privacy and oversight of call tapping. Their comments were made as legislation to give ASIO even greater policing powers was already before Parliament.

*Sydney Morning Herald* 16 September 2002 965

## Putting cultural goals before technology

With R&D on outer space community design continuing and a second space tourist returning unharmed, a "megahistorically unprecedented transition has begun" writes Magoroh Maruyama, with the movement of humanity into space. Because we must invent new cultures, outer space architecture must incorporate wisdom from cultural anthropology and must be cognizant of a wide variety of design principles in many cultures, he says.

*Futures Research Quarterly* Spring 2002 966

## Tough new corporate rules in Oz....

Tougher disclosure requirements for sharemarket-listed companies and a crackdown on audit practices are the centrepieces of a major overhaul of corporate law and accounting practices. ASIC has been given sweeping new powers and a significant increase in penalties for breaches of corporate governance rules. The Federal Parliament's Public Accounts Committee has also called for a major overhaul of regulations, with some rules even stricter.

*Australian Financial Review* 19 September 2002 967

## ....but real reform not happening in US

Surprise! Real corporate reform isn't happening. "We just lost the whole ballgame without the news even making it to the front page," writes Molly Ivins. "The sick, sad tidings were tucked away discreetly on the business pages: 'SEC Chief Hedges on Accounting Regulator'. Now there's a very sexy headline."

*Boulder Daily Camera* 10 October 2002 968

## Futures studies in education

A review of futures in the education system from Fabienne Goux-Baudiment appears in the *Futures Bulletin*, August 2002. 969

## Developer takes green route to success

Developer Stephen Hains has gone green -- not for any philosophical reason but because sensitivity to the environment was the obvious way to go. His Waterways project in Melbourne began with extensive environmental work and he is now selling blocks of land for prices way ahead of anything previously sold in the area. "At its core is commercial commonsense."

*Australian Financial Review* 12 September 2002 970

## Photovoltaics for sustainable futures

The limits to fossil fuel consumption are set by the planet's ability to adapt to a changing atmospheric chemical composition, not the availability of resources, says Joshua M. Pearce. For a future society to be sustainable at our current standard of living, a shift away from carbon based energy must occur. This article reviews the current state of active solar (photovoltaic, PV) energy.

*Futures* September 2002 971

## Reading between the (party?) lines

The US Institute for Public Accuracy has published a detailed analysis of President Bush's October 7 speech on Iraq. It draws from the work of authors, editors, scholars and specialist observers in systematically analysing the President's carefully written lines and comparing them with data offered by independent commentators. For example: Bush - "Members of the Congress of both political parties, and members of the United Nations Security Council, agree that Saddam Hussein is a threat to peace and must disarm. We agree that the Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons, and diseases, and gases, and atomic weapons." Chris Toensing, editor of Middle East Report: "Only two members of the UN Security Council would appear to agree with the idea that Iraq threatens, or will threaten, 'America and the world' with Weapons of Mass Destruction, making the next sentence disingenuous at best." Bush: "Since we all agree on this goal, the issue is: How can we best achieve it?"

[www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org) 9 October 2002 972

## The pursuit of happiness

Tim Kasser of Knox College, Illinois has done some striking research on the correlation of values with happiness, reports economics writer Ross Gittins. His studies consistently find that people with materialistic values report lower psychological wellbeing than people with less materialistic values. "Even the successful pursuit of materialistic ideals typically turns out to be empty and unsatisfying," Kasser says. Ed Diener, another Illinois professor in the field, flags good friends and family, and intimate, loving relationships as key contributors while David Myers, author of "The Pursuit of Happiness" also advises giving priority to close relationships. Another guru, Robert Lane, argues that pursuit of material goals crowds out the development of companionship.

*Sydney Morning Herald* 18 September 2002 973

## Membership growth helps us grow our service

Can we send membership information to a friend or colleague?

Name.....

Company.....

Address.....

Tel.....Fax.....

Email.....