

## WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE FUTURE?

**A** global survey of nearly 2000 experts reveals that the world is getting better and better and worse and worse, faster and faster, just as early futurist Tom Atlee anticipated.

The *2005 State of the Future* Report, released in Australia this month, highlights what it sees as the top 15 challenges for global society and discusses what might be done to address them. The report is produced by the Millennium Project, an initiative of the American Council for The United Nations University.

"This 'Report Card on the Future' distills the collective intelligence of nearly 2,000 leading experts from around the world who work for governments, corporations, NGOs, universities and international organizations," said Dr Paul Wildman, chair of the Australian node of the Millennium Project, which is auspiced by the Futures Foundation.

"But it still hasn't resolved the ultimate global challenge. While it is clear humanity has the resources to address the key global challenges, it is not yet clear that it has the wisdom, goodwill and intelligence to focus on them."

Highlights and lowlights from the *2005 State of the Future* Report:

- 60% of our life support systems are gone or in

danger of collapse and the situation is deteriorating

- global population has grown to 6.5 bn and the annual economy is approaching \$60 trn
  - this year's military expenditures will reach \$1 trn, and annual income for organized crime is more than \$2 trn
  - the average income of people in the top 5% is now 200 times that of people in the bottom 5%, compared with the 6:1 ratio in 1980
  - access to safe drinking water and better sanitation has improved, but 1.1 bn people still do not have access to the former and 2.6 bn lack adequate sanitation
  - nearly 15% of the world is connected to the internet (around 1 bn people) and the digital gap is closing
  - most people continue to live in democracies or partly free conditions, yet in 2004 only 17% of the world's people lived in countries with a free press
- world energy demand is forecast to increase by 60% from 2002 to 2030 and will need about \$568 billion more invested every year, but
- traffic jams in the US alone during 2003



**"Creating global partnerships between the rich and poor to make the world work for all, which seemed like an idealistic slogan before September 11, may prove to be the most pragmatic direction"**

- wasted 2.3 billion gallons of petrol
  - the world is beginning to realise that improving the political and economic status of women is one of the most cost-effective ways to address these global challenges, but women still get paid 18% less than men, and male violence to women causes more casualties than wars do.
- World population has grown by four billion since 1950 and may grow another 2.6 billion by 2050

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before it begins to fall. According to the UN's lower forecast (which has generally proved to be more accurate) world population could fall to 5.5 billion by 2100 - a billion fewer people than are alive today.

What is the takeout from the 3,600-page report? "Creating global partnerships between the rich and poor to make the world work for all, which seemed like an idealistic slogan before September 11, may prove to be the most pragmatic direction as the possibilities increase that individuals may one day have access to weapons of mass destruction," says the report's Executive Summary.

## "One key issue...has been the growing difficulty of decision-making in an accelerating, increasingly complex world"

Although billions of dollars are being spent on wars, "The world has not dedicated the resources needed to stop water tables from falling, to narrow the rich-poor gap, or to provide safe and abundant energy."

One key issue that has been featured in the report for a number of years has been the growing difficulty of decision-making in an accelerating, increasingly complex world.

"National decision-makers have not been trained in the theory and practice of decision making, and few know how advanced decision support software could help them," the report says.

"Formalized ethics and decision training for decision makers could result in a significant improvement in the quality of global decisions.

"In addition to policymakers needing training in how to make decisions, processes to set priorities (local, national and international) need further development."

Copies of the full *State of the Future Report* are available from the Futures Foundation for \$70.

**Contact**  
[margot.brodie@futuresfoundation.org.au](mailto:margot.brodie@futuresfoundation.org.au).

About 30 leading Australians contributed their thinking to a global survey on future ethical issues, conducted for the first time this year as part of the Millennium Project and administered in Australia by the Futures Foundation. The program was coordinated by Margot Brodie.

Results of the survey, published in the *2005 State of the Future Report*, identified significant issues that may emerge in the next five years, others that may emerge between 2010 and 2025, and a third group likely to emerge between 2025 and 2050.

The first group included issues that were

- political (*What is the ethical way to intervene in the affairs of a country that is significantly endangering its or other people?*);
- religious (*Should religions give up the claim of certainty and/or superiority to reduce religion-related conflicts?*);
- scientific (*Do we have the right to clone ourselves? to create genetically altered 'designer babies'?*); and
- gender issues (*Should national sovereignty and cultural differences be allowed to prevent international intervention designed to stop widespread violence perpetrated by men against women?*).

Latent and emerging issues identified for the next period included inter-generational issues (*To what degree should the rights and interests of future generations prevail in decisions of this generation?*); scientific questions about altering our genetic germ line and brain-machine interfaces; and social questions about the possible advent of global ethical norms and their impact on differences among groups or the evolution of values. These are not simple choices between black and white. Consider this, for example: *"Should a person be subjected to psychological, social or cultural mechanisms for having the propensity to commit a crime (including, for example, the use of weapons of mass destruc-*

*tion) even if he or she has not yet committed such an act?"*

Curiously, perhaps, given their currency in today's media, issues of legal suicide and euthanasia were listed as emerging in the 2025-2050 timeslot, along with questions about the ethics of creating, for example, *"future elites, augmented with artificial intelligence and genetic engineering"*.

The international panel was also asked to identify changes in values and ethical principles between now and 2050. Members rated the following ideas as decreasing over time:

- life is a divine unalterable gift
  - economic progress is the most reliable path to human happiness
  - the family in all its forms is the foundation of social values
  - human rights should always prevail over the rights of other living and non-living things
- Values they saw as increasing over time were:
- harmony with nature is more important than economic progress
  - protection of the environment and biodiversity should be considered in any policy
  - the rights of women and children are unfringeable and fundamental for a healthy society
  - world interests should prevail over nation-state interests
  - human space migration is part of human evolution
  - any artificial form of life intelligent enough to request rights should be given these rights and be treated with the same respect as humans.

Two general themes that emerged from comments by the international panel were the challenge of matching people's deeds with their stated beliefs and finding synergy between individual and collective orientations.

## Learning resources at [futuresfoundation.org.au](http://futuresfoundation.org.au)

A new service for members of the Futures Foundation is now being developed at [www.futuresfoundation.org.au](http://www.futuresfoundation.org.au).

Designed for those who want to know more about futures and futuring, this additional resource includes stories that explain futures concepts, tools and techniques as well as specific methodologies. Still a work-in-progress, it will continue to grow as senior futurists and younger volunteers work together to build our "education centre" as a useful learning aid.

The education centre is the work of Sydney volunteer Mark Braidwood, a management and technology consultant, who has been "mining" past issues of *Future News* and other file material to recover key stories we have published over the past ten years and post them to the website. He has been working closely with Sydney project director, Tim Longhurst.

Stories include features from such leading futurists as Dr Richard Slaughter, Dr Sohail Inayatullah, Dr Richard Hames, Colin Benjamin and more. We plan to add more material, and include additional case studies from the work of the Futures Foundation and other futurists where this is not confidential to clients (unfortunately, that is a consideration that prevents publication of a great deal of futures work.)

While it doesn't pretend to be a formal course in futuring, the onsite education feature will enrich the understandings of people in corporate, government and third sector organisations who are not full-time or formally trained futurists. The Futures Foundation was established, after all, to be "a centre for learning about the future". We have consistently supported the work of formal learning institutions like the Australian Foresight Institute, but we also offer a strong understanding of the special needs of people with corporate and management objectives.

You will need to log on to the website to access this "members only" service. For user name and password, contact [tim.longhurst@futuresfoundation.org.au](mailto:tim.longhurst@futuresfoundation.org.au).

## Hurricane Katrina:

# How much pain does it take to learn?

**W**hy do humans find it so hard to learn that foresight works better than hindsight? The mystery is deepened by the fact that those of us who do decide to explore the future are wholly captivated by the process and its potential for positive outcomes.

But in spite of all our efforts to share the fun, it seems that others, especially political leaders, can't get the message without needless pain.

For example, lost in the storm of commentary that followed Hurricane Katrina is the painful truth that some very basic foresight, let alone full-scale futuring, would have prevented or limited the tragedy that is New Orleans. But instead of constructive critique, media are now reporting the political circus and its sideshows.

Accusations of a botched response by the US administration are met by counter-accusations of finger-pointing, gloating and schadenfreude.

Not learning. Arguing.

Katrina was not even what issue management experts call an "unknown unknown". It was a known unknown. In a city below sea level, on a storm-plagued coast, it was not a matter of if, but when. Yet action was not taken to reinforce the levee system. Effective plans were not made to respond to an emergency. And as Richard Neville points out ([www.richardneville.com](http://www.richardneville.com)), when help did arrive, there were more troops with guns than relief workers with food and water.

There is no joy in this "told you so" -- unless it helps to share the simple truth that this kind of outcome can be prevented or minimised.

Folk wisdom says people resist change until the pain gets too much to bear. Just how much does it take? How many hurricanes? How many Chernobyls? How many dead children, mothers, fathers?

Nothing is more tragic than the *needless* loss of lives - one or a hundred or a thousand. If we transfer the lesson to the wider sphere, we could be talking millions or even billions of lives.

Take Chernobyl. A new report from the United Nations says the after-effects of the huge cloud of radiation that leaked from the site will eventually kill 4000 people. It has contaminated 200,000 square kilometers of land, and triggered an epidemic of mental health problems in the area.

Today, dozens of nuclear power plants around the world are reaching their use-by dates. Do we know how to de-commission them safely? What to do with their waste? Yet we continue to ignore opportunities to invest in solar and other safe, renewable energy in the hope that nuclear energy will solve all our problems. Will that create more needless catastrophes?

If you find that subject too hard, we could talk about the weather. It is now ten years since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said: "*The balance of evidence suggests that there is a discernible human influence on global climate.*" Yet according to environmental scientist Dave Reay at Edinburgh University, even if everyone had signed the Kyoto protocol it would only have led to a 5.2 per cent cut in emissions by 2012. We need a reduction of 60 per cent by 2050 if we are to stabilise our climate and head off catastrophic effects.

"Daunting, isn't it?" says Reay, in an article in this week's *New Scientist*. "At this rate, if we leave things to the politicians we might well have to wait for a catastrophe before we see any action. Meanwhile things could get very bad for a very large number of people, people like you and me, our children and our friends." He proposes ten steps to saving the planet that we can all take - from "dressing for the weather" (sweaters, not heaters) to travelling habits (walk more, fly less) to food choices (avoid flatulent and jet-setting food) and even green funerals.

It's a good start, but it will take more than that. So let's keep trying to share the recognition that foresight works. A stitch in time could save nine million. Or more.

Jan Lee Martin

# AUSTRALIA FAIR? What are our values? And who sez?

**T**he death of Donald Horne last week triggered some well-timed media comment about the deeply held values of Australians. Horne, a former editor of *The Bulletin*, was author of *The Lucky Country* (1964), voted "one of the three most influential Australian books of the 20th century". Influential it was, but it was also widely misunderstood and misquoted by those who hadn't actually read it, or who missed the irony of its title. In fact, he attacked the quality of the country's leadership, writing that "Australia is a lucky country run mainly by second-rate people who share its luck". (For a more recent attack on leadership, by futurist Richard Hames, see story on p6). The generous media coverage of Donald Horne's life and death was timely because it followed closely various pronouncements by the Prime Minister and others on the nature of Australia's values. This has inspired Richard Neville to respond, in characteristically fiery style, and even the moderate Sohail Inayatullah was moved to a touch of asperity....

## Sohail Inayatullah

### AUSSIE VALUES: WHAT MATTERS MOST?



**R**ecently a number of Australian political leaders - largely from the ruling Coalition, but also from Labor - have called for the deportation of Australian nationals who do not subscribe to Australian values. This is in response to Muslims migrating to Australia and not assimilating: rather they have held on to their traditional values. Many Australians tend to agree with the ruling Party. But what are some of these basic values? And who should be deported?

First, telling the truth is central for Australians. "Thou shalt not tell a lie," says the Bible (and indeed, almost every religious and philosophical tradition). Now is there a political leader or prime minister - current and past - who has not upheld this (hint: the Tampa child overboard crisis)? If so, then they should certainly be deported.

Along with truth telling, is upholding your mates - the deep pact of friendship that made survival in this tough "barren" country possible. Are there any political leaders that have sold out their mates for political gain (hint: blaming the Tampa child overboard crisis on the Defence forces, instead of taking the heat)?

*Nauru is slowly getting crowded.*

Australia prides itself as well on the values embedded in sports and exercise. Being Australian means being tanned, body surfing on weekends, regular strolls and hitting the gym - the entire healthy lifestyle but through knowledge from the health sciences.



## Richard Neville

### THE WAR ON TERROR IS OVER AND WE LOST



**T**he war on terror is over and we lost. The switch on the nation's psyche has shifted from alert to alarmed to alarming. Islamic schools will be 'forced to teach Australian values', which has the ring of an oxymoron. Can tolerance be enforced? Cabinet ministers are urging Muslims who don't share 'Australian values' to deport themselves. So what are the values which go to the heart of being a true blue Aussie in a terrorised world?

- 1. Mateship?** Not any more. Sentimental Blokes have vanished in the swamp that was once the Jolly Swagman's billabong. The term mate is derided. These days we are all clients, swagmers and competitors.
- 2. Owning Up?** Believe it or not, at my bleak Sydney boarding school in the fifties it was the 'done thing' for a boy to admit a breach of regulations in order to protect his 'house' from a bad reputation and his colleagues from a caning. Don't try this in public life.
- 3. Free speech?** For an Imam to speculate that blame for the terrible 9/11 attacks on America may not fall solely on the head of Osama bin Laden is to invite media savaging and a knock on the door from ASIO, our secret police. ASIO can interrogate him in secret for seven days. A recipient of such a visit who mentions it to anyone, including his employer or partner, can be jailed - as can a journalist who reports it. That our new ambassador to Washington is the former head of ASIO, as opposed to a seasoned diplomat, is a clue to what our Government most values - secrecy and fear.
- 4. Free media?** Up to a point. Mass media are free in the sense they can treat outsiders with disdain, as was proved yet again when it was revealed how Channel 7 edited the taped comments of a young Muslim to mean his people "would never integrate". The Australian media's role is shopping promotions, beat-ups and light entertainment: sport, gossip, stock shifts, celebrity trials, soft porn and big ticket "must see" events. Don't mention the destruction of Fallujah, let's "create the perfect felafel". I was once drawn to media as philosophy on the run, a search for



Should overweight Australians - who are clogging up their arteries and the health system - be deported? It would save billions of health dollars at a time when the entire state health system is in deep crisis. It is time for everyone to punch above their weight not just the athletes.

Australians also pride themselves on adopting the latest technologies. No Luddites here. Perhaps we can monitor those Aussies not following these values. Thus information on discretions can go straight to ASIO - those lying, turning in their mates, not eating and exercising right, can be dobbed in and sent packing.

While dobbing in neighbors and mates countervails traditional Aussie values, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA and later Bali, the Federal government quite "rightly" started a dob-in-your-neighbor program.

Should we then totally decentralize and devolve power to local communities - as in Switzerland - so as to encourage neighbors to watch closely if there are any in the community who are not following the straight path?

Certainly women who wear headscarves - the Muslim and the Parisian type - but also all those with nose and tongue piercing should be sent on their way.

*Nauru is being overwhelmed.*

Aussie values have also been about tolerance, accepting other ways of being in this world, but toning it down. A bit of reserved behaviour is crucial. Those who are overly expressive - who wave their hands when they talk, as migrants from the Mediterranean region tend to do - should perhaps not be deported but certainly they need to be sent to Emotional Education centres. The TAFE system could play a crucial part in weeding out overly sensitive migrants, especially men. If they don't develop the iron nerve of, say, Steve Waugh, then out they go.

Now what to do with the mullahs, who hate-monger and still believe that Bin Laden is a Bollywood figure? Deport them for sure, but to where? Their home countries were clever enough to get rid of them.

Nauru is too crowded with politicians. The Islamic world does not want them.

But with everyone at Nauru, there will be space in Canberra. At least, there, the mullahs' blatant lies, their strange interpretation of Islam, will be transparent for all to see.

And that is the last and most important Aussie value - a total distrust of polities! That Aussie value should never be lost.

Sohail Inayatullah

[www.metafuture.org](http://www.metafuture.org)

truth, which sounds hopelessly quaint. Today the search is for gold. Even in the best papers, stuffy commentators still claim there is "no anti Iraqi war movement", while the last of Australia's free thinkers are confined to the letters pages.

**5. Innocent till proved guilty?** As far as immigration authorities are concerned, this value is not only "non core", it is non existent. For a department tasked with screening the suitability of those aspiring to settle here, its record of oppression has shown that its own staff are far less desirable citizens than the people on whom they pass judgement.

**6. Human Rights?** Each year the UN Human Rights Commissioner castigates Australia's record in this area, as does Amnesty International, to the indifference of our leaders.

**7. Truth?** Let's not waste words.

**8. Love of the land?** Our land, sure, mainly in the sense of its real estate, the parks and beaches, but not the land of Earth as a whole. We spurned Kyoto and joined Uncle Sam's Big Polluters Club, with no targets, no worries and no sense of obligation to those whose future our fossil fuel fumes have helped befool.

**9. Multiculturalism?** Despite much self congratulation about our openness to other cultures, some of which was once justified, a festering undercurrent of racism often spills into the mainstream. From the days of Pauline Hanson to the recent tabloid panic over nutty booklets in mosques, a surprising number of short fused citizens still display nostalgia for the White Australia Policy.

If none of the above are candidates for the new values curriculum, what's left?

**Nationalism.** From this year all primary and secondary schools need to possess a "functioning flagpole" as a condition of receiving Government funding. Children will swear allegiance. Aussie Aussie Aussie. Fortress Oz.

**Militarism.** Brass bands, big ships, more weapons, car parks at Gallipoli for big shots, John Howard in body armour, Kim Beazley on the poop deck, more pre-emptive strikes, non stop surveillance, occupation of foreign lands. All to preserve our independence, except that the functionality of our Defence system depends on total integration with US forces and subservience to the Pentagon's game plan.

**God Bless America.** Our new core value. Coffee has usurped tea, torture has usurped Geneva, military tribunals have usurped justice. How long before Australia bombs its first Iraqi wedding party, then claims the musicians were suicide bombers?

When John Howard received the Woodrow Wilson award, many were perplexed, despite the standing ovation. This award is for those who have "shown a special commitment to seeking out informed opinions and thoughtful views," which is exactly what George Bush and John Howard avoid. By dismissing the broad church intelligentsia as elites, both leaders depend for advice on the biased, the greedy and the ill informed, which is why Afghanistan is back in the opium trade, Iraq is a bloodbath and terrorism is out of control.

**What's missing from today's Australian values is the widespread participation in public life. When this is absent, as Plato pointed out, we end up with the kind of leaders who are much worse than ourselves. Even worse than me.**

Richard Neville

[www.richardneville.com](http://www.richardneville.com)

# Leadership an extreme sport: Richard Hames at Future Summit

The following article by Jan Lee Martin was published in the Australian Financial Review's BOSS magazine on 8 August 2005.

***Today's heroes are failing the test of leadership. It's time for them to make way for a new generation with different values and a fresh take on the big issues.***

When corporate-speak moved from "management" to "leadership" in the 1980s, some of us had the naive idea that it meant desirable behaviour would be modelled, wisdom would be shared and commitment to corporate goals inspired. We knew that inspiration was a more effective motivator than control, or even money. We hoped for an echo of the heroic qualities that have distinguished great leaders throughout history.

Well, we got our "heroes". They were the chainsaws who maximised corporate earnings, won the applause of a hungry market, killed their companies' long-term futures for short-term rewards. Then they moved on, reputations intact, before their flaming success turned to ashes.

Beyond the corporate sphere we're seeing the same phenomenon. Short-termism in politics gives us leaders focused on retaining power. One-upmanship has replaced statesmanship. Lunatics in charge of the asylum?

So where do we turn for leadership in the growing crisis of our times? Is it time -- the first time in human history -- for children to show their parents how to live?

Richard Hames argued, at the recent Futures Summit in Melbourne, that leadership has become an extreme sport, practised by members of an exclusive club... high flyers, whose personal charisma, influence, fortitude and conviction that they are in the right are prerequisites of membership.

"Like any other extreme sport, this kind of leadership is addictive, appealing to the ego to such an extent that those who practise it frequently do so to excess," he said. "Nor are they ever likely willingly to give it up... It is exciting to watch! We glorify it. And we yearn for more. If this isn't leadership, what is?"

Hames proposed a different model of participative decision-making, where "collaborative thinking, purposeful dialogue and mindful action give rise to a form of stewardship in which individual egos are set aside in favour of collective wisdom."

This won a surprisingly enthusiastic response from the \$3000-a-head audience of senior government and corporate executives. Perhaps that was because it followed Hames's compelling summary of key issues facing the world today. He noted that the inherited attitudes of leaders in western democracies have not merely neglected these critical issues, they have counted their growth as our growth. *(Right on! Isn't the security industry a great success! Armaments are doing well, too.)*

"The extreme sports men and women inhabiting the corridors of power cannot resolve those issues," he said. "If they could have, they'd have done it by now."

"Where have all the leaders gone?" is a cry increasingly heard in the media, in our corporations and on the streets.

"But what if we have been looking in the wrong place? What if we're seeking the wrong qualities in the wrong people? What if the leadership we need to change the

human condition is something quite different from that we are used to?"

Maybe that's the key. Maybe that's why our new leaders could be our kids. Or their kids.

Why would young people succeed where traditional leadership has clearly failed?

One: they see the world as it is, not as it was. They don't watch or read the news, because they know it doesn't show the reality that matters. Audiences for mainstream media are falling fast among the young.

Two: they understand that the issues facing our species are enormous, and the longer they are neglected, the more their generation will have to clean up or suffer the consequences. They live in a world whose obscene distribution of wealth is more and more reminiscent of the days before the French Revolution.

Three: they are better educated about their own inner lives and psychological needs and those of their peers. They build support networks of friends because theirs is the only generation that understands the world they live in. Will they recognise the pathologies of present day leadership and avoid them?

Four: their values are different from those of their parents. Research shows that emerging generations value social justice, environmental sustainability and related key issues. They are disenchanted with greed, "me-first-ism", "owning more stuff", status display and glaring social inequalities.

There are probably ten more reasons, but this is not the place for a comprehensive review. Instead, why don't we ask them? At the same Futures Summit, it fell to younger participants to point out that the conference's focus on economic prosperity might have been a tad narrow.

"Economic wealth, devoid of values, is meaningless - especially if we destroy the natural environment", said IAG's Jason Li (33). His clarity, while important, is not unique. There's a growing cadre of brilliant young people passionately committed to new values. Their IQs are higher than those of their parents, psychologists say. And they're learning a huge vocabulary of new skills - not just logical and digital but psychological, social and emotional. They're working, playing, studying, communicating, discussing post-Westminster democracy at network meetings, and reinventing the world in a more systemic, collaborative way.

Does this mean the young are developing a monopoly on leadership? Of course not. Behind these exciting young leaders are parents, teachers, mentors, friends and supporters who have been "leading from behind".

They're not treating leadership as an extreme sport and trying to dazzle media audiences. Instead, they're modelling behaviour, sharing wisdom, and inspiring commitment to worthwhile goals.

That's what I call leadership.

# BUSH MECHANICS: futuring the Australian way

"This functional structural mismatch in education (action-less conception and concept-less action) has emerged over the past 200 years..."

With the spotlight on Australian values, now is the perfect time to report the development of a new approach to futuring that is based on the uniquely Australian concept of the "bush mechanic". Dr Paul Wildman of Brisbane has been working on this idea since the 1990s, with specific research on action oriented learning in futures beginning in 2002.

The "bush mechanic", or artificer approach to futuring is one that he sees as having immediate practical outcomes for practitioners and their environment, at the same time as it develops a body of expertise that will stand us in good stead in any future emergency.

"In Australia there is a term for someone who links thinking and doing, and can act forward wisely and solve problems with what is available while developing innovations in the field that respond to broader needs," he explained in an article in the *Journal of Futures Studies* (August 2005).

"A bush mechanic is committed to self reliance and excellence at her task and is not to be confused with a 'backyard mechanic' who does shoddy work."

Dr Wildman is deeply concerned about the separation of learning and practice that has taken place in western education systems in recent years.

"We have found that, in conventional social innovations, up to 90% of our energy is absorbed in action as implementation and compliance rather than design or (re)conceptualising an idea.

"This compares with up to 90% of the energy expended in the conventional education process in action as conceptualisation. This functional structural mismatch in education (action-less conception and concept-less action) has emerged over the past 200 years and has been identified and explored by many educational innovators. But we have not yet applied the understanding adequately to futures/foresight."

The "bush mechanic" approach to futuring proposes re-braiding ideas and action in projects aimed at improving the future.

"In effect, this is a post-industrial form of what in medieval times was called 'artificing' -- a Middle Age precursor to today's technician", Dr Wildman told *Future News*.

"By placing futures, and futures learning, within the

context of practical work we can put thinking and doing back together again, rebraiding them in a practical approach to innovation. Ideally the learning that takes place in these practical approaches will be captured in a collection of 'exemplar projects', equivalent to the artificer's 'master piece'.

"It is my hope that the concept of bush mechanics will help to demonstrate how such an ancient approach to futuring can help create a better tomorrow today -- a future our children can live with."

With a strong background in action learning -- another powerful concept developed in Australia -- Paul Wildman has approached this initiative using "Grounded Theory". This differs from other research because it works from the bottom up. In other words, Grounded Theory does not test a hypothesis. It sets out to find what theory accounts for the research situation as it is observed in the field. Like action research, its aim is to understand the reality, to discover the theory implicit in the data.

Another key feature of the "bush mechanic" approach is that it is specifically located within a conscious awareness of the "global problematique" (see page 1), the nesting of individuals and societies within this global holarchy, and clear recognition of the need to address problems in today's world in order to create a better future.

**Paul Wildman is collecting exemplar projects. Practising members of the Futures Foundation who would like their projects included are invited to contact [paul@kalgrove.com](mailto:paul@kalgrove.com).**

## THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF BUSH MECHANICS

### 1. The Exemplar Project Principle

Learning from the doing of the bush mechanic is captured and preserved in 'exemplar projects'. The bush mechanic's textbook is learning enacted.

### 2. Social Holon Principle

The exemplar project is seen by the bush mechanic as an example of a social holon -- a self-organising nested system which is simultaneously part and whole, hierarchically situated yet autonomous, using fixed rules yet flexible strategies, such as the heart in the circulation system of our body.

### 3. Collective Responsibility Principle

The bush mechanic sees herself as a global citizen responding locally, concretely, participatively, antipathetically and proactively. Her work blends internal and external ethics, for example, redefining psychological markers such as income, status, time and task etc.

### 4. Learning Principle

Learning, yearning, earning and concerning together with all of the above -- including learning from and within the engagement of establishing the exemplar project.

## A NEW VIEW OF NEWTON

"It was Plato who introduced 'the division between those who know and do not act and those who act and do not know'", Paul Wildman explained in his article in the *Journal of Futures Studies*.

"After Plato in the West we have doggedly followed a staunchly mechanist view, identified with Newton, that 'The Universe was a mechanical one whose order was maintained by a distant God'. Newton in fact wrote more on alchemy than mathematics: he saw the universe tintured and ennobled by emotion and love. These works remain unpublished. The results of this split are readily seen today in terms of the specialisation of skills, separation of academia from actual social change projects, separation of producing from consuming e.g. we are moving rapidly away from being 'prosumers' - having our own gardens, making our own clothes and other bush mechanic type activities. Arendt (1963) claims this is the challenge for modernity: to re-braid thinking and doing."

## Signals in the noise

### US peace activist arrested in Australia on "character" grounds

History teacher Scott Parkin, 35, has been arrested by the Australian Federal Police in Melbourne on "character grounds" at the request of the Immigration Department, who said he would be deported "as soon as practicable". The environmentalist and peace activist, in Australia to talk about non-violent methods of protest, held a valid six-month visitor's visa. The move has sparked outrage among activist and legal groups, who say Mr Parkin's arrest highlights the abuses to which the new, sweeping anti-terrorist legislation is open.

*The Age 11 09 05*

### Limits to Privatization: Report to the Club of Rome

Privatization increases the role of private enterprises restricting the roles of government. It has resulted in successes, mixed outcomes, and outright failures, according to this systematic global study of privatization across all sectors. Benefits include increased infrastructure investment, better quality of services, taxpayer savings, innovation and an improved regulatory regime. Ten harmful features include inadequate investment rules, monopolies, end of cross-subsidies, deficient contracts, corruption, cost increases and more. The report's primary message is "beware of extremes". A major theme is that "the success or failure of privatization is often strongly influenced by the kind and degree of regulation accompanying it."

*Future Survey July 2005*

### A measure, but not of wellbeing

The long battle to challenge dominance of GDP as a measure of progress has reached the mainstream press, with Ross Gittins of the *Sydney Morning Herald* publishing a column on the topic: "A measure, but not of wellbeing: Gross domestic product calculations put too much spin on society's progress".

*Sydney Morning Herald 07 09 05*

### It's not easy being green

The globe is warming, the forests are shrinking and species are dying out, yet the environment movement has become seriously marginalised. "Can Australia's first-ever greenie of the year rekindle our dwindling passion for saving the planet?" asks Ray Moynihan, introducing a feature on Professor Ian Lowe.

*Good Weekend 03 09 05*

### The big clean-up

They said Kyoto would never work. They said capping emissions was not the answer. Now the US and Australia are putting their money where their mouths are as part of a six-nation pact dedicated to using technology to halt

## Katrina: watch for social, cultural, economic, political fallout

Global media reports of Hurricane Katrina highlight the critical interdependence of the physical environment with all other aspects of life:

"Hurricane losses likely to top \$46b: the US could expect major economic disruption which will ripple worldwide..." *Agence France Presse*

"Flagging US economy suffers double whammy...growth will be hit hard, say experts" *Washington Post, Telegraph London, Reuters*

"Floods reaffirm ugly truth of racial divide...Katrina could end the careless pursuit of small government in the US" *The Guardian*

"Iraq War Blamed: Budget cuts delayed flood controls" *Reuters*

"Pollution horrors: the water was bad enough, but what's in it may be worse" *The Guardian*

"Heavily armed paramilitary mercenaries from the Blackwater private security firm, infamous for their work in Iraq, are openly patrolling the streets of New Orleans....This is a trend,' said one. 'You're going to see a lot more guys like us in these situations.'" *www.commondreams.org*

"A therapeutic shock to the global system... Katrina has shut down eight Louisiana refineries as well as 90% of oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico...the price of transport fuel is getting closer to what it should be. We have to get used to it." *Alan Kohler, Sydney Morning Herald*

climate change. But while some, including the United Nations, cautiously welcomed the initiative, others were sceptical. Environmental groups have gone further, denouncing it as a deliberate attempt to undermine Kyoto -- "a protectionist pact cooked up by coal burners keen to look busy while actually doing very little." *New Scientist 03 09 05*

### States bypass Bush on greenhouse gas emissions

America's north-eastern states are on the brink of a declaration of environmental independence with the introduction of mandatory controls of greenhouse gas emissions of the kind rejected by the Bush administration. This snub to the administration follows a similar decision by US cities (see *Future News* 04 05). *The Guardian 25 08 05*

### The big lie: what drug companies don't tell us

A new book from the former editor of the respected *New England Journal of Medicine* paints a frightening picture of the pharmaceutical industry manipulating the law and buying off regulators with "blatant disregard for the wellbeing of the people who use its products", reports Julie Robotham. She was reviewing Marcia Angell's book *The Truth about Drug Companies: How they Deceive Us and What To Do About It*.

*Sydney Morning Herald 3-4 09 05*