

## A participant's observations of viewing the ten group presentations

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This paper was prepared by Dr Robert Hickson for the participants of the StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future workshop held in March 2011.

One of the most compelling things about the strategy maps was the passion and energy that all participants brought to the task. Despite very tough timeframes, all managed to get through the mapping process with maintained inspiration and in good humour.

While different approaches were adopted, all the strategy maps recognised the need to have economic, social and environmental factors integrated. They were clear that prosperity involved more than just making money, it also needed to align with social and environmental values. There is no simple solution – change across many areas is required, and these changes need to be linked and coordinated. All recognised that smart choices need to be made to benefit all New Zealanders, and that the whole society – not just government – needs to be involved. Strength and determination will be required to achieve the goals the maps outline.

Common themes across the maps were:

- Making New Zealand a desirable and attractive place to live;
- A fair and just society;
- The need for longer electoral cycles to improve long-term planning;
- Improving the quality of education for all throughout life;
- The need for a strong commitment to research and development, and investment in infrastructure; and
- Being connected both within New Zealand and to the rest of the world.

A strongly expressed theme in all the maps was that New Zealand needs to be a desirable place to live and work, rather than simply being a nice place.

A prosperous and attractive future will require making the most of the creativity, intelligence and skills of the current population, as well as attracting other talented people here. All aspire to make New Zealand a country that is admired for what it does, and one to which people will come to learn from the way things are done here.

There was recognition that wellness and prosperity go hand in hand. In part this can be achieved through individuals, communities and institutions working together. Improving engagement between communities and government (both national and local), leadership and governance were identified as essential to ensure all are working toward a common goal.

There was unanimity about the need to have longer electoral cycles so that Parliament has the time to effect real change and take a longer-term view of the challenges and opportunities that New Zealand faces. Governance that enables rather than inhibits is a necessity, since change will come through incentivising individuals, firms and institutions rather than relying solely on government.

Education for the whole of life is also viewed as essential. School children will need a broader education; for example a curriculum which covers civic processes and entrepreneurship. This will create a generation that

can continue and extend the aspirations of the country. To thrive in a changing world all New Zealanders will need to continue to learn and develop.

New Zealand has some great natural resources, but many of the maps recognised that we can't rely on what we are currently good at if we want to be a more prosperous and healthy nation. Greater investment in research and development, and turning ideas into innovations are needed, so that we can both use the resources we have in more responsible and effective ways, and create new economic and social opportunities.

None of the maps regarded New Zealand as an island fortress, isolated from the rest of the world. New Zealand needs to be better connected to the rest of the world. This will help provide the ideas and innovations the country needs, attract talented people and enable us to influence other countries. There was also recognition that better connected and engaged communities within the country are required so that the country can progress as one.

The best strategy maps had a clear and simple vision, underpinned with pragmatic actions and quantifiable means for achieving the stated goals. They demonstrated clear linkages between causes and effects. The most compelling cases were made when these elements were combined with strong imagery and symbolism.

None of the strategy maps can be considered complete. They are a great and inspiring start that creates the basis for further discussion and refinement.

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Dr Robert Hickson is a senior adviser at the newly established Ministry of Science and Innovation. Previously, Robert led the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology's (MoRST) Futurewatch programme, which aimed to build government's alertness to new scientific knowledge and technologies and the implications – opportunities and risks – that they present to New Zealand. Prior to joining MoRST Robert was a scientific adviser at the Environmental Risk Management Authority. Robert received his PhD in Genetics from Massey University, and undertook post-doctoral research in evolutionary biology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, AgResearch, and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany.