REVISITING 1 () N() R() N

NEW ZEALAND AT THE TURNING POINT



Image above: New Zealand Planning Council members and staff – First meeting on April 5 1977. Photograph from Archives New Zealand. Back row from left: Ted Thompson, Peter Wilding, R.W. Steele, Mervyn Probine, Don Brash, Rangi Mete-Kingi, Robin Irvine, Brian Picot, Ken Piddington (Director), Noel Lough. Front row from left: Claire Drake, George Gair, Sir Frank Holmes (Chair), Kerrin Vautier, Anne Delamare.

About the Commission for the Future and the New Zealand Planning Council

Zealand's planning processes:

'An important aim of the Task Force recommendations is to The two organisations had influential, albeit short, provide for widespread involvement in the planning process. Up lifespans, and published numerous reports on key issues for until now, participation by certain groups in the direction of the New Zealand's future. See excerpts on page 2 and the full nation's affairs has been much less significant than is desirable, list on page 4. They were given an ambitious mandate to and, indeed, than is necessary to obtain a sufficiently wide range explore how to embed long-term strategy and planning in of opinion when planning about the future.

In this regard appointments to planning bodies and related agencies should reflect the very great potential of women in the management of New Zealand life, as well as the contribution which will come from the tangata whenua and members of minority ethnic groups. The Task Force also believes the trade union movement should be persuaded to play a much more active role in planning at all levels than has been the case in the past' (Task Force on Economic and disbanded in 1991 under the Jim Bolger-led Fourth National Social Planning, 1976, p. xvi).

On the recommendations of this report, the Commission for the Future and the New Zealand Planning Council while neither a planning body nor having a government advisory role, was 'concerned with long-term possibilities, a discussion and debate on possible futures for New Zealand'

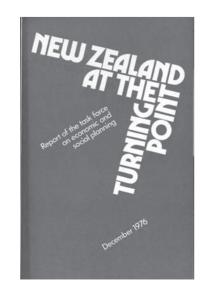
In 1976 the Task Force on Economic and Social (Hunn, 1981, p. 2). The New Zealand Planning Council was Planning published the report New Zealand at the Turning 'a focal point for consultation about trends, strategic issues and Point. It highlighted New Zealand's urgent need for policy options in New Zealand's medium term development', direction in significantly changing times, and the need to and intended to advise 'Government on the co-ordination of reconsider how to encourage 'widespread involvement' in New planning and on choices of priorities in development' (Hunn, 1981, p. 2).

> New Zealand's public policy. The diagram below demonstrates how the New Zealand Planning Council and Commission for the Future were envisaged to fit into New Zealand's 'information flows' (Task Force on Economic and Social Planning, 1976, p. 350).

> Government. See excerpts of key legislation on page 4. The legacy of both organisations was a blueprint of how foresight can be embedded into public policy.

were formally established under the New Zealand In their publications the Commission for the Future and Planning Act 1977. The Commission for the Future, New Zealand Planning Council touched on issues that would prove to be defining for New Zealand, such as nuclear arms, te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the increasing role of communications. thirty year time frame, and with setting an agenda for public Notably, the Commission for the Future was the first organisation to address climate change in a 1981 report to the New Zealand Government.

Preferences Approvals Issues Policy Statements Guidelines COM FUTURE GOVT. DEPARTMENTS & CTTEES NTEREST GROUPS THE PEOPLE



left: Diagram from the Task at the Turning Point: Report of the task force on economic and social planning', showing the information flows and organisations related New Zealand's public policy.

THE PLANNING COUNCIL

Putting a new product on the market

FRANK HOLMES

NZ Economist, April 1977 Issue

Now that the new Planning Council is preparing to get into its stride, I feel something like a businessman whose company has put him in charge of a subsidiary to market a new product. them: There is certainly the same challenge and excitement, as well as the corporate spirit of a good sales team.

I find however that a lot of people are cynical about our chances and we can expect some consumer resistance.

How, they ask, does the product differ from what has been marketed before? Isn't the Planning Council merely making a great song and dance about a simple packaging operation? Hasn't someone just done a paint job on the old NDC

These are good questions and I don't intend to duck them. For one thing we aim to involve a lot of people in the planning effort. And the Government has committed itself to support the new structure.

Having advanced the argument that open information flows are crucial to good planning, I want in this artcle to give an honest description of the product

A pilot test

In a sense, we have already done our pilot marketing test. When I was asked to lead the Task Force on Economic and Social Planning last year, it offered a ready opportunity to get out and talk to the consumers, the people whose input is needed for any widelybased planning for New Zealand's future development And if you go back to the report which we put out you will see that it can be read as an evaluation of the likely market res-

I believe it also contains a full description of the product itself — about a quarter of the 400-odd pages are devoted to the actual mechanisms for planning and the procedures which we thought would best match consumer

Sir Frank Holmes is chairman of the New Zealand Planning Council. *National Development Council (NDC)

There was a good deal of consumer dissatisfaction with some aspects of the older products. The opening chapter tells the reader what we heard about

The main complaints were the lack of a satisfactory mechanism for co-ordination—"planning in compartments" and inadequate links between the planning and the crucial decisions made by the Government--"planning in a vacuum". Not enough time was put in to a dispassionate analysis of key issues and policy options about which choices had to be made. The discrepancies which emerged between targets set and outcomes achieved did not seem to lead to changes in either targets or policies. Some of the planning bodies became more occupied with lobbying and negotiations with ministers on short-run problems than with serious medium-run

I do not wish to leave the impression that there was nothing good about the NDC. Many of the planning bodies used to advantage the relative ease of consultation in a country of this size. vants, and academics into much closer contact to deal with issues of common concern. In some cases, they really came to grips with problems in a way that was just not possible through normal political processes. In particular, it was a home-grown structure and not an imported model.

So the Task Force saw the prospect of building on the good things which had been achieved from previous attempts at planning, and of creating a new and better-co-ordinated mechanism designed to meet the demands of the seventies and beyond

We did not want to be gloomcasters, but as we looked at the problems which planners would have to grapple with we accumulated plenty of evidence about the need for a fresh start.

Whether it was the balance of payments, industrial relations, social welfare, attitudes towards women, ethnic groups, and others, we gained the clear impression that New Zealand was relying on outdated institutions and rigid procedures. We were entering the Grand Prix in a Model T Ford. Unless there was some innovation, a mechanical breakthrough, we would be left standing at the start.

The NZ Planning Council which the Government has approved is different in several ways from the old NDC. For example, it has an independent chairman working full-time at the job. It will have its own secretariat which will be able to concentrate on planning issues, without being diverted to deal with short-time crises—an ever-present danger for a departmental secretariat. The initial authority is for six professional officers, which makes it evident that the council will be relying heavily on others in central government, local, and regional authorities and the private sector for the inputs needed

The members of the council do not represent pressure groups, although their backgrounds of expertise and experience are representative of a wide spectrum of the best of New Zealand life and should help them promote the effective two-way consultation with many groups and individuals about New Zealand's future which the Government wishes the council to promote.

The Government has indicated its own desire for a strong link between the council and the Cabinet by making the Minister of National Development a member of the council.

What will the planners do?

The starting point must be to plot guess as to where they are leading. This is easier in some areas than in others and we all know that forecasts are bound to be wrong anyway. Perhaps the main contribution of disciplined planning is to highlight those areas where lifelong assumptions have to be

- A serious deterioration in the terms of trade inevitably forces reappraisal of our existing industrial structure and of the efficiency with which we use resources in all our activities.
- Fertility and migration trends have radically altered the view we need to take of future population growth in New Zealand.
- Energy, or rather the assumed availability of cheap power, is another factor which has changed dramati-
- Even the basic assumption behind social policies, namely that there is a single New Zealand lifestyle to which all citizens aspire, is now open to serious question.

About Revisiting Tomorrow

Just as in 1976, New Zealand has now reached a new turning point. As the world faces increasing uncertainty, particularly when navigating issues such as climate change, it is vital that New Zealand moves towards embedding foresight and long-term thinking into robust public policy. The panel discussion on 30 October 2019 (see speakers on the right) and this newspaper were designed with these aims in mind.

This publication is a retrospective look into the Commission for the Future and the New Zealand Planning Council and how they attempted to embed foresight into New Zealand public policy. It is made up of a combination of McGuinness Institute work and news articles from the 1970s–1990s. The McGuinness Institute hopes that, by looking back at the work of previous future-thinking organisations, we can provide some insight and context for emerging initiatives such as the Infrastructure Commission and the proposed Climate Wednesday, 30 October 2019, 5.30 - 7.30 pm, National Change Commission.

This panel discussion commemorates the work of the Commission for the Future and New Zealand Planning had material donated to its James Duncan Reference Council. Sessions are being videoed and will be available on the Institute's YouTube channel later this year.

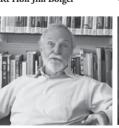
Indeed material donated to its james Duncan Reference Library from the New Zealand Planning Council and Commission for the Future over the years.

A full list of references for this newspaper is The James Duncan Reference Library is open to the public available from the publications section of the McGuinness by appointment. Institute website.











Amy Fletcher

Library Wellington

The McGuinness Institute is very grateful to have and Commission for the Future over the years.

DEFINING MOMENTS

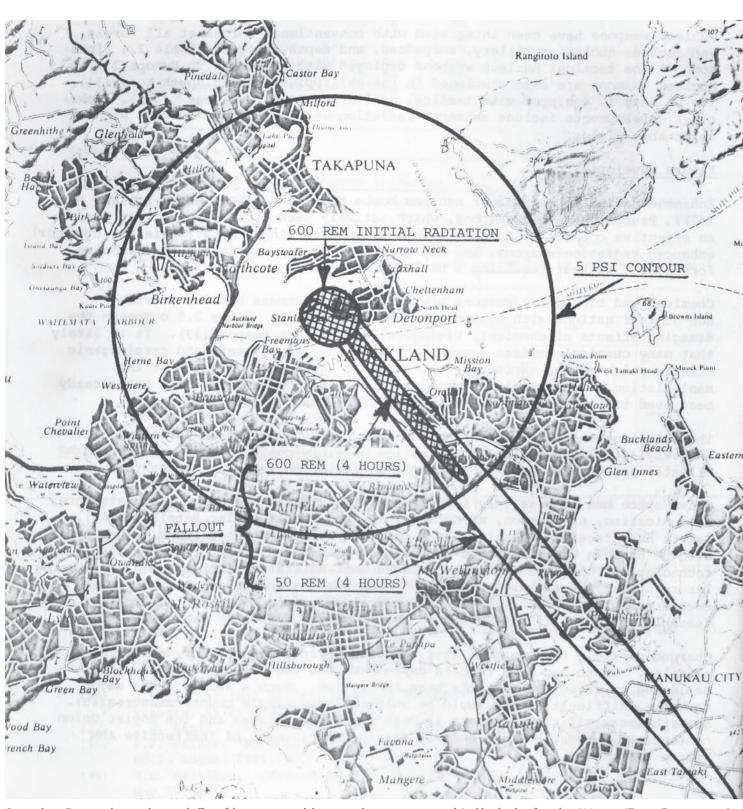


Image above: Diagram showing the posited effects of detonating a one kilotonne nuclear weapon in central Auckland, taken from the 1982 report Future Contingencies: 4.

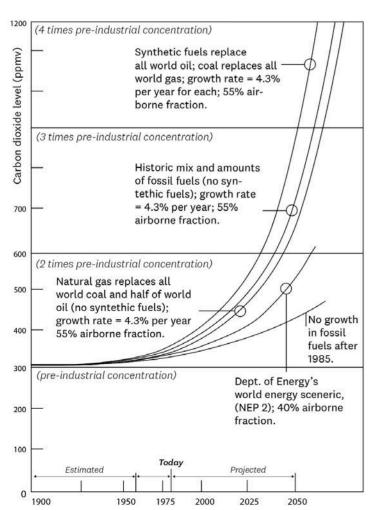
Future Contingencies: Natural Disaster (1982) A focus on climate change

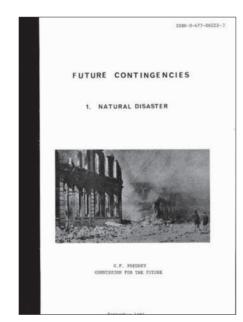
George Preddey published the report Natural Disaster in September 1981 for the Commission for the Future. It is part of the Commission's 'Future Contingencies' series (subsequent reports were Societal Disaster; World Economic Disaster; Nuclear Disaster; and Summary Report for wider dissemination).

Natural Disaster focuses on 'two kinds of natural disaster which (in the writer's perception) assume special importance for New Zealand, but which do not yet receive adequate recognition': 'climatic change' and 'tectonic disaster' (p. 7). He then examines their implications for agriculture and energy, the two sectors seen as the most likely to be affected (pp. 25–27).

As per the conventions of futures thinking, Preddey's report directs the reader's attention to 'possible future disasters' (p. 3) which, in the case of climate change, are summarised by The Global 2000 Report to the President. Published in 1980 by the Council on Environmental Quality and the US Department of State, The Global 2000 Report broadly outlines three possible scenarios for the climate by the year 2000: no change, a warmer climate, or a cooler climate. Preddey considers the latter two scenarios in Natural Disaster.

Drawing on The Global 2000 Report, Preddey discusses the relationship between energy strategies and the atmospheric carbon dioxide levels projected from 2025 to 2050. This is illustrated by the graph below.





In Natural Disaster Preddey draws several key conclusions grouped under various headings below.

The inadequacies of contemporaneous models of climate change and global warming:

'(5) There is not yet any definitive observational evidence that increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are having any effect on present climate. There is, however, considerable agreement among climate modellers as to the long-term consequences (a global warming), even although [sic] it is recognized that the models themselves are inadequate in important respects [...] This consensus should be accorded some consideration by policy makers in agriculture and energy' (p. 67).

The nature of observational evidence as to the effects of increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere hinders the ability of scientists to predict global warming:

'(6) The long time delay predicted for the atmospheric response to increasing carbon dioxide levels is capable of accounting for the present lack of observational evidence in support of a global warming' (p. 67).

Need for international cooperation:

'(10) In the (improbable?) event of international co-operation to avert a potentially disastrous global warming, countries like New Zealand, with biomass or solar options, may come under international pressure to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels' (p. 69).

Viewed through the prism of 2019's climate emergency, the McGuinness Institute considers Preddey's work in Natural Disaster to be significant as it demonstrates consideration of the impact of increased atmospheric carbon dioxide as far back as the 1980s; yet as time has passed, these considerations have remained unheeded.

Image left: Graph from G. F. Preddey's 1981 report 'Natural Disasters', demonstrating five different scenarios for the world based on various atmospheric carbon dioxide levels originally published in 'The Global Report 2000' (p. 18).

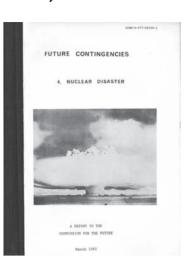
Future Contingencies: Nuclear Disaster (1981) McGuinness Institute, 30 October, 2019

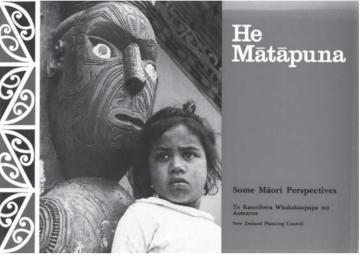
fourth report in the 'Future scenarios is to put the effects (p. 23). discussing the implications New Zealand perspective. that: that nuclear disaster would The attacks described are have for New Zealand. considered unlikely (but "where the catastrophic Nuclear Disaster provides not implausible) at the an in-depth exploration present time. Over the 30 into the possible causes and year time horizon adopted likely to be exploited, either effects of nuclear war, and the for this [Commission by design or by accident, contingencies New Zealand for the Future] report, by may need in the aftermath of changes in New Zealand's

that:

Nuclear Disaster is the 'The primary purpose of these Soviet land-based systems)' series, of nuclear weapons into a Nuclear Disaster also notes strategic significance, and Nuclear Disaster notes in its improvements in delivery 'Illustrative Attack Scenarios systems, may change this for New Zealand' section assessment (New Zealand is presently outside of range of

'the point has been reached possibilities that lie latent in nuclear weapons are very misinformation or miscalculation, by states or by subnational groups, by lapse from rational decision or by unauthorized decision"





He Mātāpuna: Some Māori Perspectives (1979) McGuinness Institute, 30 October, 2019

Collaboratively produced by Māori writers for the New goals' (p. 8). inequalities and hardships and policy-making (p. 8). place Māoritanga at the forefront of planning and achieve long-term success.

the foreword that the intellectual in the judgement that revolution of our young Pākehā institutions and

Pākehā procedures have Tilly Reedy's view of the for framework achievement of Māori 'I would like a future where developing an analytical

Perspectives discusses the 'the sole basis of planning Ngāti Porou tribe of New of Māori in a Pākehā Robert Mahuta shares his environment through the thoughts on the future, authors' recount of their noting that there is a clear lives and experiences. The difference between the book's purpose is to look Pākehā experience and at how the New Zealand Māori experience, each Planning Council can best having their own 'vested incorporate the Māori interests' and values (p. 20). viewpoint and narrow He also suggests that the margin of inequality, the two keys to success that that embodies, cannot in society are money be separated from me. and education, and that policy-making and ensure these are needed to create collaboration with Māori to change (p. 20). Mahuta believes the quickest way Frank Holmes notes in to create change 'is through advocacy' 'authors (were) unanimous and that an intellectual

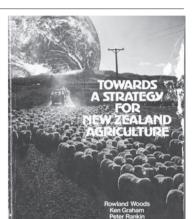
Māori is needed to achieve long-term systemic change. He concludes that:

'What we have to do is take the same kinds of risks that our tūpuna did when they climbed into their canoes and sailed into the unknown. This voyage into the future is unknown for us. There is strength in this venture if we have firm allies who are committed to the same course' (p. 21).

the also included:

people will accept me for framework as a basis for Zealand Planning Council, He goes on to say that what I am - a woman, a Zealand; accept me for my differences as much as my similarities; respect me and what is mine, my differences as much as my similarities; recognise that I am human with all the strengths and weaknesses of a human being; concede that my spiritual beliefs, my need for my taha Māori and all

What I ask for in my



Towards a Strategy for New Zealand Agriculture (1984)

future are those things that I am most willing to give – to accept and respect people for what they are not what I would like them to be'

McGuinness Institute, 30 October, 2019 not provided a satisfactory sort of future she wants is This report aims to assist agricultural interests by

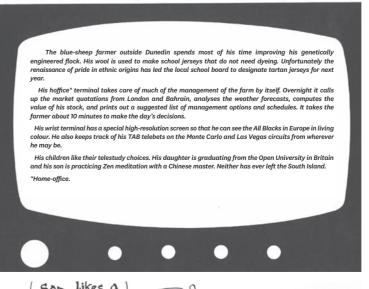
strategic decisions: He Mātāpuna: Some Māori Pākehā values cannot be Māori, a member of the 'Trends in world demand support an optimistic view of the future for agricultural exports but major changes have been occurring in the pattern and structure of world demand and trade. Difficulties encountered by New Zealand have arisen largely because the agricultural sector has not adjusted rapidly enough to those changes and the future of New agricultural Zealand's

industries depends critically on their ability to demonstrate more flexibility in responding to the changing demands of world markets' (p. 175)'.

Network New Zealand Communications in the Future (1981)



NETWORK NEW ZEALAND, 2010 AD: VISION 2





From Birth to Death (1985) McGuinness Institute, 30 October, 2019

From Birth to Death was 4. to ensure personal security Group (SMG) for the New tion of crime Zealand Planning Council. 5. to promote full partici-It was one of the first of pation by all people in deciits kind, in that it used the sions which affect their lives, 'life event approach [...] and to set up structures to

a range of human experience to be covered' (p. 5). From Birth to Death notes not conflict with the rights that its objectives are of others 'strongly influenced' by the Social Development

Council: 1. to ensure all people a standard of living sufficient to meet basic human needs, through an equitable sharing of resources

2. to provide adequate care (p. 12). (physical, social and psychological) for all those who are handicapped by age, temporary or permanent illness or incapacity, or suffering from crisis or disruption in their

3. to give all people access to preventative and curative health care and to encourage the adoption of a healthy lifestyle

the first report produced and security of property, givby the Social Monitoring ing emphasis to the preven-

as a framework for the ensure this presentation of data to allow 6. to guarantee the individual freedom and autonomy to the extent that this does

> 7. to ensure that all people have worthwhile occupation suitable to their

capabilities 8. to provide educational and recreational opportunities for all people, appropriate to their potential'

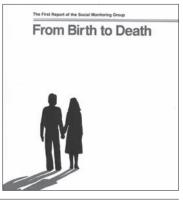


Image middle left: An envisioned advertisement from the year 2010, imagining how communications might affect New Zealand life 40 years into the future. Taken from the 1981 report 'Network New Zealand: Communications in the Future'

Can we plan for the year 2000?

The Dominion, November 3, 1977.

IN AN editorial on November 3 about futures and the Commission for the Future. The Dominion performed a useful public service.

The Dominion asked a humber of questions, perhaps the most important of which

Is it possible to look to the year 2000 with any degree of validity? and

Is it a waste of time and money to continue with the Commission for the Future? These questions require an-

If "to look to 2000 with any degree of validity" means "is it possible to predict the timing of those events which we would expect would interest us in that period", the answer is clearly no.

The problem here, however, is that there is a fundemental misunderstanding as to what futurists are trying

Futurists do not claim to know what lies ahead and they are not trying to predict. They are not prophets.

• Two objects

For most researchers the future field has two main ob-

To provide estimates of future possibilities, and

To help society general-' to recognise the longerm (over 10 years) prosts and the potential for

king at the period up to he futurist is trying to describe, for example, what is likely, if present trends continue; and to show society the range of feasible alternative futures from which we may, if we so wish, choose.

"There is a vast difference between letting changes occur and choosing the changes we actually want," de Jouvenal observed.

The futurist can help in the formulation of goals, and by describing the cost benefits of the various alternatives.

That's the view of the

new chairman of the re-

constituted council, Mr Ian

Douglas, following the coun-

cil's first meeting last week.

set up in 1977 to monitor

trends, issues and options in

relation to New Zealand's

development, has been sub-

stantially altered as a result

of legislation passed by Par-

appointed to the council has

been reduced from 12 to six

plement will be eight, as a

result of the two ex-officio

members, the Minister of

National Development and

the secretary to the Treas-

urv, who have retained their

seats under the new legisla-

been reduced from \$718,400

last year to \$630,000 for the

Perspectives

As a result of the aboli-

tion of the Commission for

the Future, the council's re-

sponsibilities have been

enlarged. Formerly the

coming year.

The council's budget has

The number of members

although the total com-

liament last month.

The council, which was

Not sufficient

The editorial also argued that because Sir Frank Holmes's New Zealand Planning Council is studying the period 5-10 years ahead there is no need for the Commission for the Future.

The editorial assumes that It is sufficient to look ahead only 5-10 years. The fact is quite simply that it is not.

As the EEC's Europe Plus Thirty Report has stressed -"if decisions or actions taken now or in the near future can produce important consequences in the long term, the forecasts for a correspondingly long period are useful."

New Zealand needs 10-15 year forecasts if it is to be able to develop a coherent system of goals and strategies.

The Maiden committee's research team found it necessary to consider the period up to 2025. But energy planning in New Zealand is hampered by the lack of other long-term sectorial forecasts, let alone a clear indication of the goals of New Zealanders and this country's most likely futures.

As well as energy, urban and rural development, transport and education all involve major infrastructural investment, with consequences that can continue well over the 50year mark.

Recent work in systems theory - a field in which the Commission for the Future is sponsoring New Zealand-related research - has demonstrated that complex systems often react to short and medium-term policies in the direction opposite to their long-term response.

A small nation like New Zealand needs, in fact, to pay particular attention to longterm planning, not only at home but also abroad.

THE New Zealand Planning Council will continue as an effective body despite the depletion of its numbers, the reduction in its budget and its increased responsibilities.

putting the council under any political pressure.

council worked on medium-

term perspectives while the

commission concentrated on

cil have been revised to in-

corporate longer-term per-

spectives which used to be

the responsibility of the

forming the new council was

debated the Labour Opposi-

tion claimed the reduction in

appointed members, com-

bined with the reduction in

budget, would lessen the in-

claimed the change in the

function of the council -

formerly it was charged

with advising the Govern-

ment, but under the new act

it is simply to comment —

claims. The new council

would be as independent as

was making related to the

ratio of appointed members

to ex-officio government

members, which was for-

merly two to 14, and is now

Mr Douglas rejects both

The point the Opposition

was significant.

the old one, he said

The Opposition also

dependence of the council.

When the legislation

The functions of the coun-

In the face of dire necessity we are at present attempting to shift our trading patterms on to a more sound

By parliamentary reporter Lynne Walsh The Evening Post, October 1982.

Planning Council sees

continuing useful role

longer options.

Focal point

By SAM PENTECOST

But if we do not study as closely as possible the longterm goals, aspirations, and plans of our major present and potential trading partners, how are we to decide that what we produce they will want to buy?

Can we really afford to look only 5-10 years ahead?

The Planning Council acthe Commission for the Future have distinctly different sets of functions. It would not be sound administrative practice to have one body combining both roles.

The Planning Council advises the Government on the co-ordination of planning and on choices of priorities for development.

It serves as a focal point for consultation about trends, strategic issues and policy options for New Zealand's medium-term development. The commission is less

closely linked to the Govern-

ment. It is not a planning The commission can best be seen as a look-out organisation and advisory body.

• Key task

It will among other things, mondor short and medium term planning to ensure that the long-term consequences are fully understood.

Exploration of possible alternative futures will be one of its key tasks, and it is charged with encouraging widesproad public debate about them.

The Planning Council and the cormission complement each other. Communication and co-operation between them will be strenthened by the Government's recognition of their complementarity, by the presence of Dr Robin Ir-vine (Vice Chancellor of Otago University) on the boards of both bodies, and by the planned co-location of both organisations' secretar-

"But I don't see that as

The Government mem-

bers, by my understanding,

and by my admittedly lim-

ited experience of one meet-

ing, were very careful about

discussion in any area that

they felt was sensitive by

one of perception, and would

have no practical effect, he

the Opposition claim that the

functions of the council had

between giving advice and

cant change . . . more as a

subtle change of emphasis."

smaller council, which he

said was the number ori-

ginally recommended by the

task force before the ori-

ginal council was set up,

would allow the council to be

fewer people to consult, and

discussion around the table

tended to be more ex-

peditious with fewer people.

The fewer people on the

council would not mean a

There would now be

more efficient.

been significantly altered.

The ratio problem was

Mr Douglas also disputed

"There's a pretty thin line

"I don't see it as a signifi-

Mr Douglas believes the

virtue of their position.'

any political pressure.

Commission failing in its objectives

THE COMMISSION for the Future has chairman of the commission, Professor neither grabbed the attention of the Government nor the public.

It is right that the commission's own future should now come under scrutiny as its largely unobserved role in the community becomes increasingly ap-

All the signs indicate that the commission is losing whatever faith the Government had in its deliberations. The Minister of National Development, Mr Birch, says no decision has been made to "do away" with the organisation, as claimed by the deputy leader of the Opposition, Mr Lange. But Mr Birch has not gone out of his way to give an assurance that the commission is here

Significantly, the minister states that there needs to be a strong linkage and constructive dialogue between those involved in medium term planning and those in longer term planning, and that there may be some value in having a stronger interlocking through the mediness must be called into question. um term planning functions of the Planning Council.

It has been recognised from the start that there could be overlapping in the work of the Commission for the Future and the Planning Council, and if sufficient interlocking has not been achieved by this stage it would indicate a failure on the part of one or both organisations to get together as they

The Commission for the Future has a multi-faceted brief with its sights fixed on 30 to 35 years ahead, and this must be one of the major reasons why it has the activities of existing bodies. failed to excite public interest. The

Duncan, says the job of the commission is to do two things — to research into long term possibilities which might be significant to New Zealand and to make

sure the public knows about it. With so many contemporary problems engaging — and worrying — the community it must, however, be a daunting task for the commission to try to win the public participation it is seeking. And it would seem to be no nearer doing that than when it was launched.

In the longer term planning with which the commission is concerned, there is real danger that many of the conclusions reached will be more idealistic than practical and there are already indications that the commission is turning up this kind of philosophy.

While some of the activities of the commission have attracted commendation — such as the promotion of science fairs in schools — its general effective-

It has altogether too much on its plate to evoke confidence that it can make a credible job of any or all of its

We cannot ignore the future in the long term, but we have the Planning Council and other agencies, well versed in their subjects, available to do the job. We are not suggesting that the commission should be replaced by a growth of new organisations in the New Zealand mushrooming manner but that serious consideration should be given to today. the idea of incorporating the work in

NEW ZEALAND IN WORLD SOCIETY: TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000 WHICH WAY TO PICCADILLY CIRCUS

Image above: Article from New Zealand International Review 1978(4), by Peter

Commission may not have future

The Evening Post, April 2, 1981.

THE future of the Commission for the Future appears to be on

At this stage the commission is "talking, not fighting" for its future, the chairman of the commission, Professor James Duncan, said

Government members who were looking at the operation of the commission had not made up their minds yet, he said.

The Minister of National Development, Mr Birch, said on Radio New Zealand this morning that he was concerned the commission was "not plugged into any assessment by the Government" of its work.

One option might be to provide some sort of link between the commission and the Planning Council, he

Another option which had been discussed was the handing over of much of the commission's work to universities. Members of the public might view this as "ivory towerish." If this approach were taken he would propose to found a privately funded commission.

'But I think it would be far better to have it within the government system, doing what may be an awkward job," he said.

"I see this as a major contribution to democracy.

Professor Duncan said he had very good relations with the Government. However he was critical of some of the work of the commission. 'Sometimes some of the

Thus, independence would be most unlikely, she

things have come out far too quickly, before people have had time to get used to the new ideas," he said.

A debate about armed neutrality and possible withdrawal from Anzus was perhaps overplayed, he said. report on alternative

of liquid energy had perhaps not given government people much time to respond, he said.

'It takes time to educate. You can't do it in a hurry. Some of the work had not been done with finesse, he

Asked why this work should not be seen as his responsibility as chairman. Professor Duncan said: "Ultimately the responsibility is mine, but you have to work with the people you have

Moving

The director of the commission, Commander Dick Ryan, said it was unlikely he would be with the commission through to the end of this year, because he had bought a property in the Bay of Islands and wanted to practise some of the things he had been on about in the commission.

"It's a question now of what the Government wants. The National Party set this thing up in the first place. If it's not what they want, they will restructure it.

Personally I think future studies is a very important part of the new age we are

It was inevitable when

putting up social and economic options that not all could concur with Government policy. If these options promoted public discussion and enabled people to make up their minds, the commission had been doing its job, he said.

A comment by the director of the London School of Economics, Ralph Dahrendorf, summed up the situation, he said. It was that future studied

would have to be a cot industry, because gov: ments and public servants tended to be "hermerically sealed.

"They can't afford to acknowledge that there are different paths down which they might go," Commander

Planning Council belt-tightening worries planners

A proposed reduction in the membership of the Planning Council is viewed with concern by the New Zealand Planning

In written submissions to energy select committee, which is considering the New Zealand Planning Bill, the institute's president, Mr Wallace Ross, said it opposed the proposal in the bill to reduce the number of appointed members from 12 to

The Minister of National Development and the secretary to the Treasury also have a seat on the council.

Reduction in membership seemed inconsistent with the increasing responsibilities and value to the country of the council. It also did not appear to recognise the additional workload imposed on the council as a result of the dissolution of the Commission for the Future.

Any reduction was likely to frustrate the council's attempts to continue as an effective planning body.

Mr Ross said his institute did not support abolition of the Commission for the Future, which is also contained in the bill.

In other written submissions, Mrs Myra

Harphan, a former director duct of its business," she of the Commission for the said Future, suggested member-Mr Birch's suggestion of ship of the council, as con- a small panel of specialists tained in the bill, was "disap- to offer advice to the council

In the explanatory note, native, she said. and in the speech by the Minister of Development, Mr the manner described in the Birch, in introducing the bill into the house, emphasis was given on the greater independence of the new council, said Mrs Harphan. She suggested a greater independence was unlikely to be

• Four of the eight members of the council would be on the Government payroll.

achieved because: -

• Both the Minister of National Development and the secretary to the Treasury are to be members.

• Eight members chosen as outlined in the bill could not hope to reflect the expertise and diversity of opinion in society, yet they were required to develop a programme relating to all aspects of New Zealand society, and with no constraints on the planning horizon.

Mrs Harphan said the planning council should be 12 members.

This would allow a wider range of views to be considered and also ensure that the number able to attend any meeting was sufficient for the adequate con-

Future group demise

surprises

was not a suitable alter-

bill, would be more isolated

from important sections of

New Zealand opinion outside

the Government from opin-

ions inside.

A small council, chosen in

THE planned abolition of the Commission for the Future is particularly surprising for the timing of its announcement.

Minister for National Development Mr Bill Birch made the announcement on Friday last week, six days after election day.

The response in some quarters has been one of surprised speculation as to why a newly elected Government, still unsure then if it had a majority, should make a small statutory body the object of

its earliest attention.

New Zealand Times,

December 13, 1981.

It is also felt to be a strange happening immediately before the Christmas period, when, with the difficulty of working out details, staff will inevitably be left up in the air as to their own

At this stage it is thought future studies will be carried out by the Planning Council, with a likelihood of staff working for the council. Director Mrs Myra

Harpham says discussions are now under way to decide how this will be accomplished.

The commission's first monthly meeting since the announcement of its coming demise will be held on Tuesday.

two to eight. lowering of expertise.

MRS HARPHAM ... Government didn't like publicity given to development of options that weren't its own.

Director lays blame for axe

By ROSEMARY VINCENT

Times reporter

THE Government is closing down the Commission for the Future because it can't live with ideas that differ from its own, says director Mrs Myra Harpham.

She says the commission was set up as an exercise in participatory democracy, but the wide range of policies and philosophies put forward in its reports had obviously not been what the Government expected

"Our brief was to study possibilities for New Zealand's social and economic future, and raise public debate on issues that might be important to that future. "We did just that," Mrs Harpham

"Our reports have reflected a great

variety of viewpoints and values, including those of capitalists, socialists, environmentalists, and so on. "I think the Government probably

expected the future possibilities turned

up would be in a very small range

around its own policy. It didn't like the

publicity given to the development of options that weren't its own.

About a year ago, Minister of National Development Mr Birch had indicated the Government was finding it difficult to live with the commission. then in existence for four years. He suggested Government funding be stopped

In December came the announcement that the commission would close once the Planning Act under which it was formed was amended. It was suggested that the Planning Council, an advisory body to the Government, could take over its work

Since then had followed an "incredible" four months during which the winding up of the commission, a small statutory body with a budget of \$300,000 in the last financial year, had been the subject of a lot of talk and paperwork between Cabinet, senior public servants, the Planning Council, and its own members and staff

The commission could well have taken charge of its own winding-up operations, and for a while it looked as if that might happen, Mrs Harpham said.

Then came last month's controversial nuclear disaster report, after which the winding-up process was firmly taken over by the Government.

its funding ends. It will exist in name only after that date, until the Planning Act is amended Speculation in some quarters suggests a strange coincidence between the

with a skeleton staff until May 12, when

release of the nuclear disaster report and the hurry to close the commission. Mrs Harpham says the Government could have got its own report on nuclear

war, and done what it liked with it. It could have kept it quiet if it wanted to. But the commission went ahead and

published its own report, thereby reducing the power and mystique of Government and its monopoly on information. The whole idea is there are some topics the Government thinks it's more capable of talking about than anyone

"It's also possible that the release of this report — which suggests there's not

much possibility of New Zealand being affected by nuclear fallout - could lead reaties. This could make some aspects of Government more difficult. The commission is now operating

There were other commission projects which had been badly received by the Government, she said. One was last year's Televote. The majority of people taking part in this national exercise had opted for a good quality environment and had not supported the Government's Think Big policies

last June, has a background in science and teaching and many years' experience as a director of a computer consulting company She said as a result of Government

Mrs Harpham, who took up her job

funding ending on May 12, some commission studies currently under way could not be published unless private

finance was found for them. These included Dr George Preddy's series on disasters that could befall New

Zealand (of which the nuclear disaster report was part) and a futures kit aiming to improve people's ability to make

Other subjects that could have been more fully explored included the direction education was taking, the effects of new technology, and unemployment. Government reform was something

else that could well have been looked at.

Western parliamentary-type democracy

was nearing its end, and it seemed that in an increasingly pluralistic society the two-part system would have to change. Mrs Harpham said it was not unreasonable for the Government to review a statutory body like the com-

mission after four or five years. 'But this wasn't a review, it was a unilateral decision to end it

She said hope for future studies lav with university, industry, and other groups around the country that were starting to do these studies themselves. Unfortunately though, these groups

were doing their studies for themselves

and not to provide information to the public at large. As the Planning Council was a Gov-

ernment advisory body, it also seemed it would study a narrower range of future possibilities if it took over the com-

CLASSIFIEDS

New Zealand Planning Act 1977

5. Functions and powers of the Council—(1) The general functions of the Council shall be -(a) To advise the Government on planning for social,

economic, and cultural development in New Zealand: (b) To assist the Government to co-ordinate such planning: (c) To comment to the Government on programmes for social, economic, and cultural development in New Zealand, and to recommend the priorities that should be accorded to them:

(d) To act as focal point for a process of consultative planning about New Zealand's medium-term development:

(e) To foster discussion among agencies (Government and private) concerned with planning, particularly in the economic, environmental, social, and cultural fields:

(f) To submit advice to the Government on links between planning at the national and regional levels:

(g) To prepare reports on any matter affecting the economic, social, or cultural development of New

(h) To submit any report prepared by it to the Minister if it thinks fit:

(i) To recommend that any report submitted to the Minister under paragraph (h) of this subsection be laid before Parliament:

(j) To publish documents on planning topics which in the view of the Council merit wide consideration and

(k) To consider any other matter which is referred to the Council by the Minister or which is relevant to the proper performance of the functions mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (j) of this subsection.
(2) The Council shall have such other functions, powers,

and duties as are conferred or imposed on it by or under

this Act or any other enactment. (3) The Council shall have such other powers as may be

reasonably necessary to enable it to carry out its functions. **6. Membership of Council**—(1) The Council shall consist

(a) Not more than 12 members to be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Minister, of whom one shall be appointed as Chairman:

(b) The Minister: (c) The Secretary to the Treasury **9. Functions of Commission**—(1) The general functions of the Commission shall be-

(a) To study the possibilities for the long-term economic and social development of New Zealand: (b) To make information on those possibilities available to all Members of Parliament, and to publish such

information for wider dissemination: (c) To promote discussion on those possibilities and information relating to them:

(d) To report to the Minister on those possibilities. (2) In carrying out its general functions the Commission

(a) Give special attention to the long-term implications for New Zealand of new or prospective developments in science and technology; and

(b) Have regard to prospective trends, policies, and events in New Zealand and overseas which could have important consequences for the country's future.

(3) The Commission shall have such other functions. powers, and duties as are conferred or imposed on it by or under this Act or any other enactment. (4) The Commission shall have such other powers as may

be reasonably necessary to enable it to carry out its functions.

10. Membership of the Commission—(1) The Commission shall consist of— (a) Not more than 7 members to be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the

Minister, of whom one shall be appointed as (b) A Minister of the Crown to be appointed by the Minister of National Development:

(c) A Member of Parliament to be appointed by the Minister on the nomination of the Leader of the Official Opposition:

(d) A member of the Council to be appointed by the Minister on the nomination of the Chairman of the (e) The Director-General of the Department of Scientific

and Industrial Research.

New Zealand Planning Act 1982

21. Abolition of Commission for the Future—(1) The Commission for the Future established by section 8 of the New Zealand Planning Act 1977 is hereby abolished.

New Zealand Planning Council Dissolution Act 1991 **2. Commencement of Act**— The New Zealand Planning Council Dissolution Act 1991 shall come into force on the 1st day of December 1991.

3. Dissolution of Council— As from the commencement of this Act, –

(a) The Council shall be dissolved; and

(b) All real and personal property of the Council and all rights and liabilities of the Council shall vest in the

COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE: **COUNCIL MEMBERS** 1977-1982

1977 Prof James Duncan Silvia Cartwright Hon Roger Douglas (Labour) Prof Alan Frampton Dr Robin Irvine Malcolm Latham Norton Moller Hon Hugh Templeton (National) Beverley Wakem

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Beverley Wakem 1979

Norton Moller

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1980 Prof James Duncan (Chair) Silvia Cartwright Hon Warren Cooper (National) Hon Roger Douglas (Labour) Heather Little

Dr Eddie Robertson

Beverley Wakem 1981

Prof James Duncan (Chair) Hon Warren Cooper (National) Hon Roger Douglas (Labour) Dr David Kear Heather Little Dr Eddie Robertson Beverley Wakem

1982 Prof James Duncan (Chair) Hon Warren Cooper (National) Hon Roger Douglas (Labour) Dr David Kear Heather Little Dr Eddie Robertson

Beverley Wakem **Chief Executives** 1977-1981

Commander Dick Ryan 1981-1982 Margaret Hunn & Myra Harpham

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COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Commission for the Future:

Country's Future lie?*#

Chance for Change*#

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1979

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Dr Mervyn Probine

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Peggy Koopman-Boyden

Noel Lough (Secretary

Noel Lough (Secretary

1978

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K. and Young, S. J.

McCarthy, T.

burg, G.

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1982-1990 Peter Rankin 1990-1991 Bret Lineham **NEW ZEALAND PLANNING COUNCIL: PUBLICATIONS 1978**–

1980–1981 John Martin

1981–1982 Graeme Ansell

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