

Working Paper 2011/20

Foresight in New Zealand

Prepared for the International Conference on
Strategic Foresight in National Government,
held in Seoul on December 6–8, 2011.

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Working Paper 2011/20 – Foresight in New Zealand

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An event hosted jointly by the Korean Women's Development Institute and the Korea Institute of Public Administration, and sponsored by the Korean Presidential Council for Future and Vision.

Introduction

This paper discusses foresight in New Zealand, first providing an overview of activity since 1968, then summarising five current government initiatives. It also describes in some detail a recent non-government initiative, StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future, which was hosted by the Sustainable Future Institute in March 2011.¹

Foresight Initiatives from 1968 to Today

Future studies initiatives reflect the time period and part of the world from which they emerge. Figure 1, which shows a timeline of future studies initiatives both in New Zealand and internationally, illustrates the events that fuelled future-thinking in the 20th century and early years of the 21st. This timeline is largely drawn from the Institute's Report 11: *A History of Future-thinking Initiatives in New Zealand, 1936–2010: Learning from the past to build a better future.*

Current Government Foresight Initiatives

Although New Zealand has no central framework to direct or undertake foresight work, the following are examples of current government initiatives that focus on long-term thinking.

Initiative 1: Treasury's Statement of Long-term Fiscal Position

The Treasury is required under the Public Finance Act 1989 (as amended in 2004) to publish at least every four years a statement on the country's long-term fiscal position (LTFP), looking forward at least 40 years.² These reports form the most comprehensive instruments to date for assessing New Zealand's long-term future. The first statement was produced in 2006, with a second following in 2009. This latest statement looks at what drives government's spending and revenue, and the major issues that will need to be addressed if the country wants to maintain or improve its living standards and public services. In 2012 the Treasury aims to canvas a broader range of society, and develop more innovative ways of exploring and communicating strategic drivers in order to publish a more useful statement in 2013.³

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1 See www.sustainablefuture.info

2 See <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/government/longterm/fiscalposition>

3 Paul Rodway, Treasury, personal communication 1 December 2011.

Figure 1. Foresight Timeline



	1982	New Zealand Futures Trust established
	1984	<i>Options for the Future</i> published by James Duncan (see over)
	1990	Upgrading New Zealand's Competitive Advantage Project
	1992	20/20 Group formed to project 20 years into the future
Government of Finland establishes a temporary Committee for the Future (a body which went on to become a permanent Committee in 2000)	1993	
Millennium Project established (USA)	1996	
	1998	The Foresight Project Bright Future: 5 Steps Ahead Initiative (e)-vision Centre for Communication, Art & Technology established
Civic Exchange think tank founded in Hong Kong	2000	
	2001	Catching the Knowledge Wave Project Household Vision Survey
	2002	Local Government: Long term plans
	2003	Knowledge Wave Leadership Forum
	2004	Sustainable Future Institute established The New Zealand Institute established
United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) launched	2005	
First Buckminster Fuller Challenge held to support the development and implementation of a strategy that has significant potential to solve humanity's most pressing problems	2006	Statement of Long Term Fiscal Position (first) published by the Treasury Digital Earth Summit on Sustainability held in Auckland For Māori Future Makers Project
	2007	The SANZ/UNESCO Project launched as part of New Zealand's contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) What Matters Most to New Zealanders launched
	2008	FutureMakers Project A Measurable Goal for New Zealand
Foresight Network established as an online social networking site for futurists	2009	2025 Taskforce established, disestablished June 2011 New Zealand Job Summit held New Zealand Entrepreneurial Summit held Futures Forum Established Statement of Long Term Fiscal Position (second) published by the Treasury
	2010	Welfare Working Group (established by Cabinet)
	2011	New Zealand Productivity Commission StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future



Initiative 2: New Zealand Productivity Commission

One instrument that may prove valuable in progressing future-thinking in New Zealand is the New Zealand Productivity Commission, an independent Crown Entity that has been operational since April 2011.⁴ The principal purpose of the Commission is to provide advice to the government on improving productivity in a way that is directed to supporting the overall well-being of New Zealanders. It has a mandate to conduct and publish its own research into productivity-related issues, and endeavours to look forward several decades for relevant trends in areas such as demographics and technology.⁵ The Commission is modelled on the Australian Productivity Commission, meaning it has a very broad area of inquiry, from industry regulation to disability services to urban water systems. Two current projects are housing affordability and international freight transport expenses. The Commission is headed by four part-time commissioners, and reports to the Minister of Finance.

Initiative 3: Welfare Working Group

The Welfare Working Group was established in 2010 to undertake an expansive and fundamental review of New Zealand's welfare system.⁶ The Group's primary task is to identify ways to reduce long-term welfare dependency. In a recent publication the Group stated: 'We consider that Employment and Support New Zealand [the Crown Entity responsible for welfare payments] should deliver work services based on a long-term investment view. It should have clear accountability based on long-term performance and outcomes (as measured by the forward liability) and it should have access to the full range of instruments to improve long-term performance'.⁷ This approach is described by prominent New Zealand political journalist Colin James as an 'actuarial-investment approach'.⁸ The Welfare Working Group has recently recommended a wide-ranging overhaul of New Zealand's welfare system that will be implemented over the coming years.

Initiative 4: Futures Forum

The Futures Forum, which was established in 2009, is an informal open community that aims to bring greater coordination and coherency to futures work across the public sector and NGOs.⁹ The Forum has an on-line presence where participants are able to discuss issues of interest, and regularly hosts events with a range of expert speakers. The specific outcomes the Forum seeks to achieve are enhanced coordination of futures work and improved strategic policy capability across the public sector.¹⁰

Initiative 5: Government-funded Research

There are a number of long-term future-thinking projects that have been funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST), now the Ministry of Science and Innovation (MSI). Under one such project Landcare Research, a Crown Research Institute, has undertaken applied research and facilitation in futures studies for a range of clients as well as producing reports exploring New Zealand's long-term future. FRST has also funded Creating Futures, a multi-agency interdisciplinary programme which aimed to develop innovative methods and tools for long-term policy planning. Sustainable Pathways 2 is a FRST-funded six-year programme to enable cities and regions to better plan for sustainable development. The programme also seeks to illuminate and link the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Initiative 6: Local Government and Long-term Plans

Local government bodies are required to adopt a 'sustainable development approach' and take into account the 'reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations'. This, combined with a requirement to produce plans that 'provide a long-term focus', has meant they are looking for ways to develop foresight.¹¹ This remains a challenge, but it is one that local government is working hard to deliver on.

Developing government foresight initiatives in New Zealand is a gradual process. The Institute strongly believes that developing the capability and capacity of both central and local government institutions to address the long-term future should be a priority, and that the advent of the *Statement of the Long-term Fiscal Position* is a major step toward meeting this objective. The Institute is aware of a number of

4 See <http://www.productivity.govt.nz>

5 Murray Sherwin, New Zealand Productivity Commission, personal communication 1 December 2011.

6 See <http://ips.ac.nz/WelfareWorkingGroup/Index.html>

7 Reducing Long-Term Benefit Dependency (2011: 18) See <http://ips.ac.nz/WelfareWorkingGroup/Downloads/Final%20Report/WWG-Executive-Summary-Final-Recommendations-22-February-2011.pdf>

8 Colin James, personal communication 1 December 2011.

9 <http://futureforumnz.ning.com>

10 Marc Rands, Futures Forum, personal communication 1 December 2011.

11 See Local Government Act 2002, s14 and s93 <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/searchquick.aspx>

countries that have engaged in strategic foresight at a national level – in particular, The Republic of Korea, Britain, China, Finland, Brazil and Singapore – and continues to look to these countries as models for embedded institutional foresight.

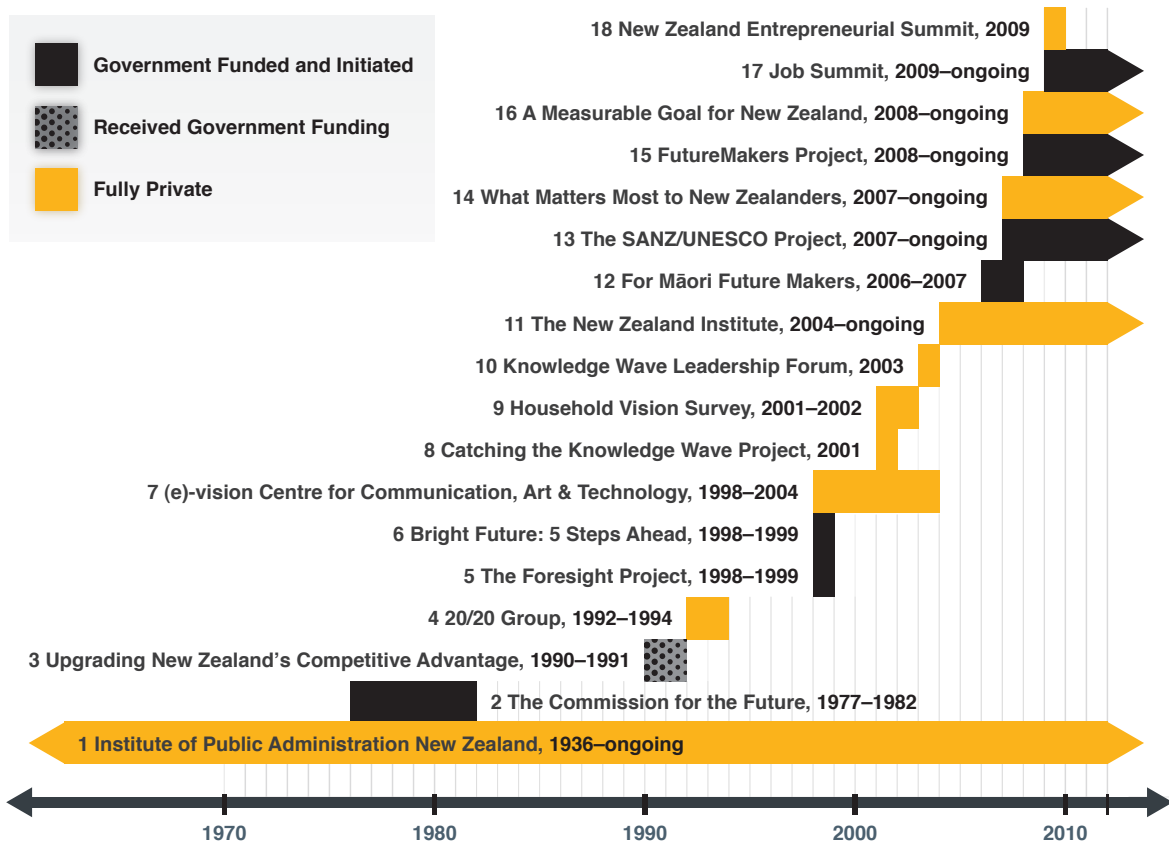
StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future – an Independent Public-good Initiative

The Sustainable Future Institute’s two-day workshop StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future was the Institute’s attempt to create a space and framework within which New Zealanders could have a conversation about the kind of future they wanted for their country. The workshop was based around the Harvard Business School’s strategy mapping model, first described by Professor Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton. This model has been successfully applied in a range of contexts, including the development of national strategies, such as strengthening economic development in Brazil.¹²

Stage 1: Exploring the Landscape

While StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future took place over two days in March 2011, behind it were several years of research by the Institute and decades of work by our peers in the future-thinking community. One of the Institute’s major projects has been to locate itself within the rich body of work and knowledge that exists in New Zealand, and in February it published its eleventh report, entitled *A History of Future Thinking Initiatives in New Zealand 1936-2010: Learning from the past to build a better future*. Eighteen initiatives were reviewed in an effort to learn lessons from the past and to develop a useful model for future initiatives, to provide greater access to existing knowledge, and to provide a repository for the knowledge that had been accumulated. Figure 2 lists the 18 initiatives, and identifies those that are on-going.¹³

Figure 2. Review of 18 Future Thinking Initiatives in New Zealand



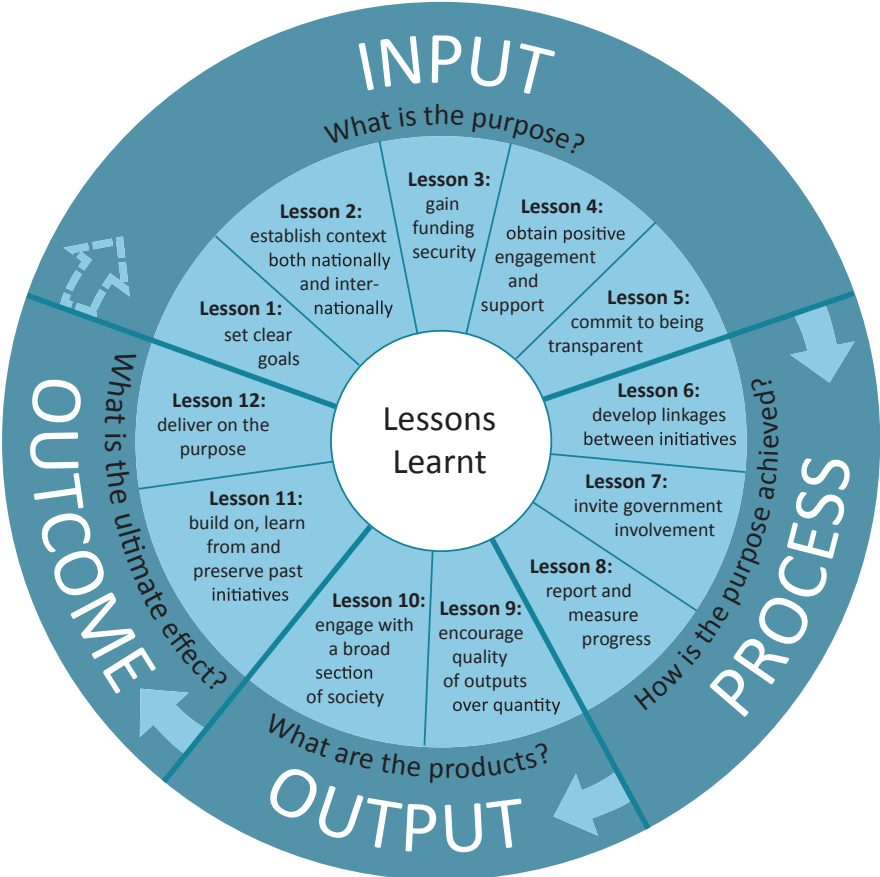
12 See *The Execution Premium*, by Professor Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton (2008: 80)

13 A number of criteria had to be met for initiatives to be included in the study: they had to be New Zealand-wide; integrated across a broad range of themes and groups in society; show evidence of two-way communication with participants and the incorporation of ideas into outcomes; demonstrate a long-term perspective, and be non-partisan.

Funding for individual projects was derived from both public and private sources, and they were initiated both within and outside government. However, it is significant that the only government-wide, government-funded initiative was the Commission for the Future, which existed from 1976 to 1982. (The Institute’s own work was not included in the analysis owing to the difficulty of ensuring objectivity.)

The Institute’s review of the 18 initiatives evaluated: the *inputs*, which related to a clear definition of each initiative’s purpose and goals; the *process*, the means by which the purpose was achieved; the *outputs*, the products that resulted from the process; and the *outcomes*, the ultimate effects of the work. To present this information succinctly a ‘four-step model for planning future-thinking initiatives’ was developed (see Figure 3). The model also shows the conclusions drawn from the study, which take the form of lessons learnt.

Figure 3. Four-step Model for Planning Future-thinking Initiatives



Two of the most important lessons from the study were the need for robust process design that reflects well-designed goals that are articulated at the outset of the work, and the need for transparent objectives, which also need to be articulated, so that performance can be measured against them. These lessons and the others identified in the study were used in planning the Institute’s own future-thinking workshop, StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future, applying the four-step model to its design.

As noted above, New Zealand has only once attempted to create centralised, government-integrated long-term thinking and planning, with the establishment in the 1970s of the Commission for the Future. The Commission was tasked with studying, informing, promoting and reporting on long-term economic and social opportunities for New Zealand. However, it was disbanded in 1982 when its recommendations relating to nuclear preparedness and national security were found to be unacceptable by the government of the day. New Zealand’s future-thinking landscape has since been defined by ad hoc initiatives that have attempted to fill the void created by the lack of long-term planning within the government framework. The Institute values the work of the Commission for the Future, and in particular its chairman Professor James Duncan, so highly that it has named its library the James Duncan Reference Library.

Stage 2: Pre-workshop Preparation

The aim of StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future was to explore how New Zealanders might develop a strategy map for the long-term future of the country. In order to achieve this, a diverse range of participants were encouraged to attend the workshop so that people of different ages, professions and backgrounds would be working together. Our aim was to gather a broad range of perspectives by ‘putting New Zealand in the room’.

Prior to the workshop the Institute also ran a ‘Three Questions’ survey inspired by Harvard Business School Professor Robert Simons’ book *Seven Strategy Questions*. Those registering for the workshop as well as a range of other New Zealanders were invited to complete the survey prior to StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future. The survey asked ‘What strategic uncertainties keep you awake at night?’ in regard to the respondent’s business, Christchurch,¹⁴ and New Zealand. The response to the survey was large, and the answers varied. The latter were published in a working paper that was provided to workshop participants to help them prepare their strategies. Figure 4 shows the responses to the third question, relating to New Zealand.

Even before the two-day workshop began, a number of inputs were put in place. Dr Peter Bishop, director of the graduate programme in Futures Studies at the University of Houston, ran a two-day introductory course in future studies. Almost half the participants of the workshop attended this course, during which they were introduced to the basic concepts, context and application of future studies.

The workshop itself included a range of other inputs, such as official statistics papers, Sustainable Future Institute reports and think pieces, a workbook designed specifically for the workshop (which included the timeline shown in Figure 1) and a draft of the Institute’s book *Nation Dates*. The workshop programme was structured into six parts.

Stage 3: Workshop

Part 1: Setting the global context

The workshop was opened by Sir Paul Callaghan, Kiwibank’s 2011 New Zealander of the Year. He was followed by NASA Chief Scientist Dennis M. Bushnell, Dr Peter Bishop, and Aaron Maniam, the first head of the Singapore government’s Centre for Strategic Futures. All these speakers contributed significant insights into the wider global context for future thinking.

Part 2: Where New Zealand is today

In Part 2 of the workshop, eight prominent New Zealanders put forward their observations, perceived obstacles and opportunities for the country’s future. These speakers came from a range of backgrounds, and included academics, scientists, economists, entrepreneurs, and lawyers. They challenged the participants to think critically about a whole range of subjects concerning New Zealand.

Part 3: Preparing a vision, strategic intent and a strategy map

Part 3, preparing the strategy maps, was hard work. The participants were divided into ten groups, or ‘teams’, each of which was represented by a colour, with members receiving T-shirts in their team colour. The teams worked together throughout the afternoon, and many of the participants stayed through the night to complete the task.

It was clear from early on in the organisation of the workshop that one of the best ways to communicate the desired thinking space would be visually, with innovative design. The Institute was very fortunate to have the assistance of Dr Mick Abbott, director of the Masters in Design programme at the University of Otago, who put together a talented group of designers to assist the teams. Each team thus included a designer, who not only participated in the discussion but also helped to communicate the resulting strategies. A talented pool of consultants with different areas of expertise were on hand to assist participants in the development of their strategy maps.

¹⁴ New Zealand’s second-largest city, Christchurch, has been hit by a series of earthquakes since September 2010, the worst of which struck the city around midday on 22 February 2011; 182 people lost their lives and thousands were made homeless (Nation Dates, 2011: 122).

Figure 4. What Strategic uncertainties keep you awake at night with regard to the future of New Zealand



The groups were asked to create three outputs, and they had ten minutes in which to present these to the judges on the following morning. While the presentation format was left open, all three outputs had to be integrated into a compelling story which would resonate with the audience.

The first output, a cover for the current affairs magazine *New Zealand Listener* in 2058, was inspired by a Harvard Business School workshop held by Professor Robert G. Eccles to represent vision (see three of the ten covers in Figure 5). The second output was derived from a competition held in 1908 in which New Zealanders were asked to design a new Coat of Arms to represent strategic intent (see the ten Coat of Arms in Figure 6). The most important output was the strategy map, where participants applied the Harvard Business School strategy mapping process (see two of the ten strategy maps in Figures 7 and 8). To understand how these elements are linked, see the strategy pyramid in Figure 9.

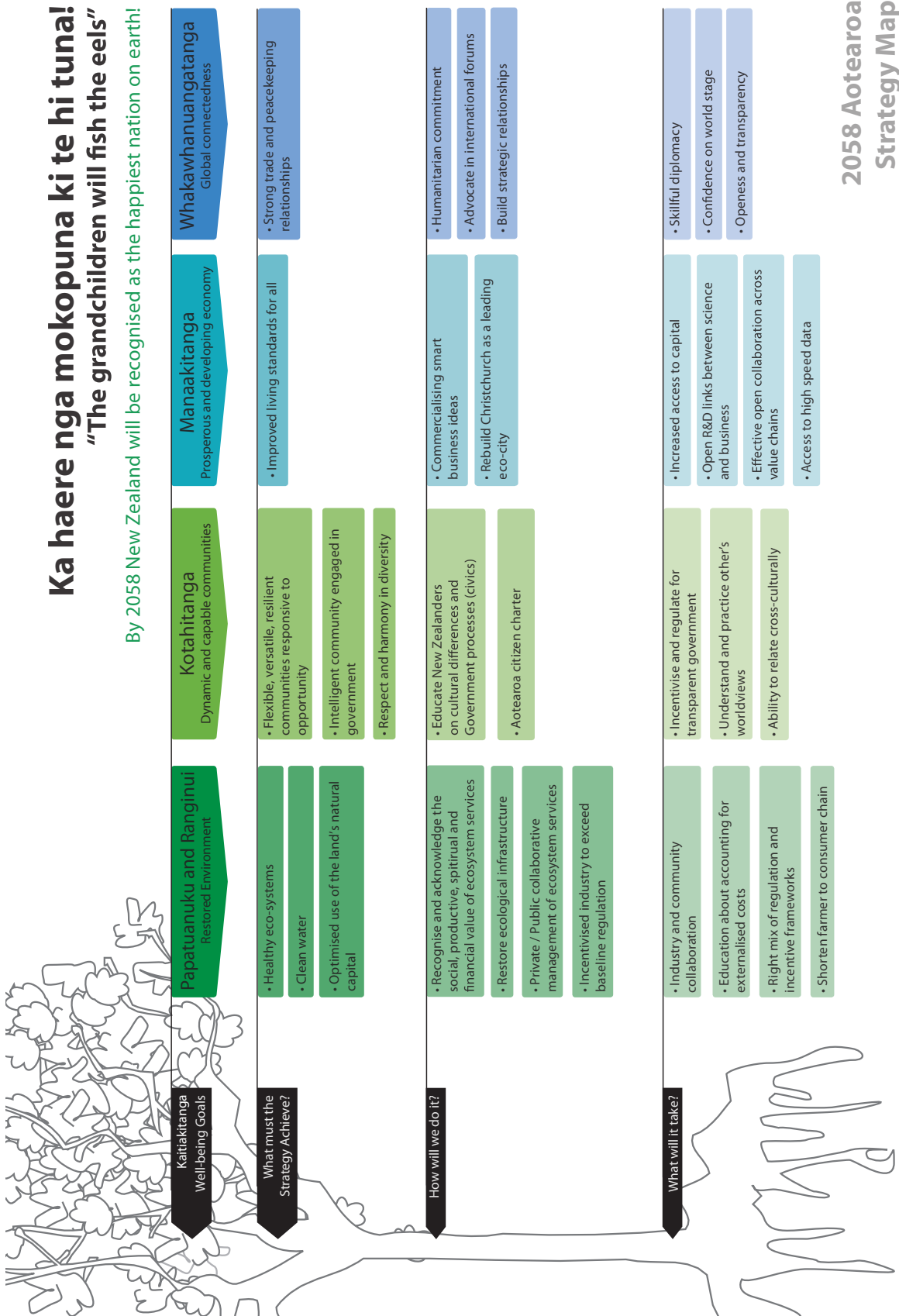
Figure 5. Exploring the cover of *New Zealand Listener* in the year 2058



Figure 6. Exploring New Zealand's Coat of Arms in 2058



Figure 7. Example of a Strategy Map – Group 1



2058 Aotearoa
Strategy Map

Figure 8. Example of a Strategy Map – Group 4

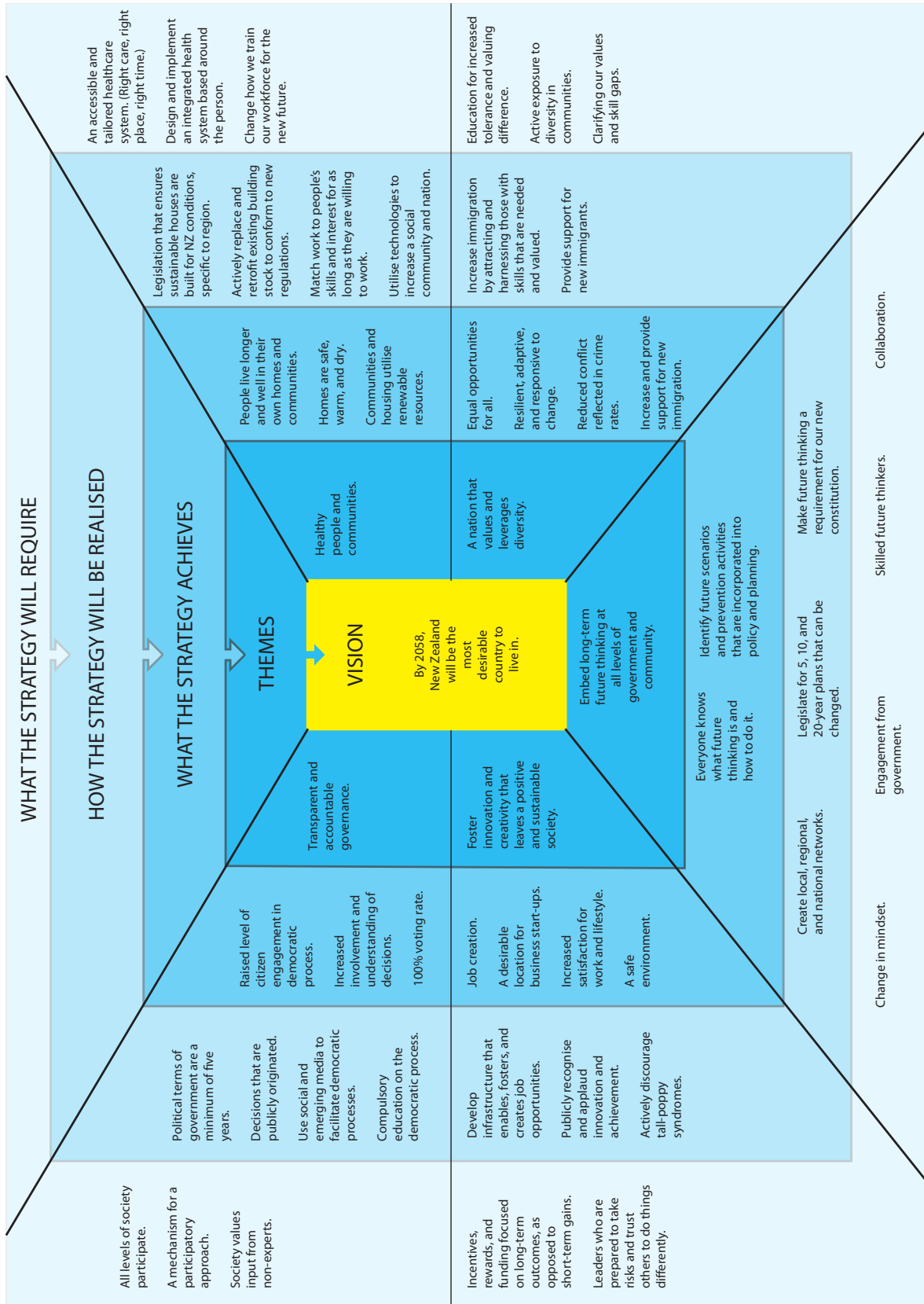
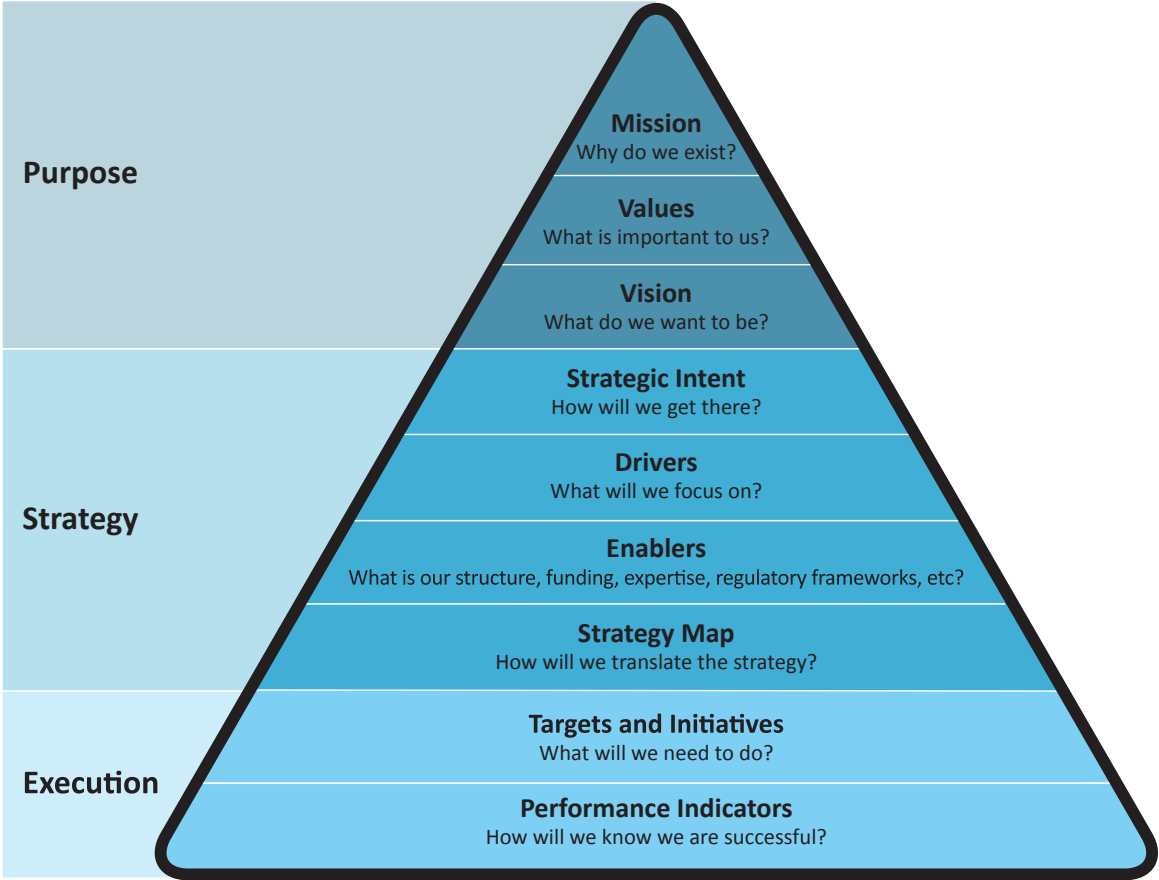


Figure 9. Strategy Pyramid



While the groups were under a lot of time pressure, and had to work hard to complete their three outputs, all ten groups succeeded. The process encouraged conversations about New Zealand’s future among the team members, some of whom were as young as 16, while others were well past retirement age.

Part 4: Presenting and judging strategy maps

Part 4 began on the second day at 10am, when all ten teams presented their outputs to the four judges. While the level of detail contained within a strategy map does not lend itself to being easily communicated in a ten-minute presentation, the groups did an outstanding job of delivering their strategy maps, Coats of Arms and magazine covers. Groups described the results their vision would deliver, identified how these outcomes would be achieved, and detailed what resources would be necessary to enable the vision. Four maps were selected by the judges to be presented at the Legislative Council Chamber of Parliament that evening. After the judging, the winning teams dispersed to boardrooms around Wellington to polish their strategy maps and presentations.

Part 5: Three workstreams

Participants not selected for the presentations at the Legislative Council Chamber had a choice of two working lunches. The first of these was a panel chaired by Dr Peter Bishop, which discussed international futurists and how New Zealand could collaborate more effectively with international futures organisations. The second panel was chaired by Jane Diplock of the Securities Commission, who led a discussion on integrated reporting and measures of progress in this area.

Part 6: Presentations to Members of Parliament at the Legislative Council Chamber

Part 6 was the presentation of the four selected strategy maps at the Legislative Council Chamber in Wellington on the evening of March 31. Two Members of Parliament who had actively supported StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future, Charles Chauvel and Chris Auchinvole, agreed to co-host the presentation. The four maps were presented to a 240-strong audience who, in addition to those who had taken part in the workshop, included current and former mayors, ambassadors, MPs, councillors and other friends of the Institute. Political journalist Colin James also presented a paper titled 'History is full of unpredicted futures', and final remarks by Charles Chauvel and Chris Auchinvole brought the workshop to a close.

It is important to note that this process was an experiment. The Institute's aim was to put New Zealand's long-term future in the room and start exploring this unfamiliar yet crucially important territory. The group outputs speak for themselves, and the objectives of the workshop were well and truly met. The quality of the strategy maps demonstrates the commitment of the workshop's participants to developing long-term, inclusive and robust strategies to deliver a sustainable future for New Zealand.

Stage 4: Post-workshop

Just as the Institute had worked hard before the workshop to put together resources for the participants, it was essential to work equally hard afterwards to put together and publish the outputs and gather the reflections and feedback of the participants. The Institute's Report 13, *StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future Strategy Maps: From Te Papa to the Legislative Council Chamber*, documents the inputs, processes and outputs of the two-day workshop. This publication was designed to provide participants and other interested parties with a resource that they could use to revisit and put in place the methods, ideas and strategies generated over the two days. The report also includes a number of contributing papers from the speakers and others involved with the workshop.

Among the lessons learnt from the Institute's earlier analysis of 18 future-thinking initiatives was the importance of reporting and measuring progress – before, during and after the initiative. It was essential to seek feedback and take lessons from the workshop, and to keep the participants engaged. To this end two post-workshop publications were produced, one that put together reflections from the participants and another that synthesised feedback after the event.

The e-book *Reflections from Participants of the Workshop – March 30/31* is a testament to the knowledge and motivation of the participants. The e-book contains 30 reflections written by participants, which are arranged into the categories vision, foresight, strategy, execution and final reflections. To ensure the opportunity to learn lessons from the initiative was not missed, a working paper, *StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future Participant Feedback*, was also produced. This was largely based on the results of an online survey conducted by the Institute, together with other feedback received after the event.

Another feature of the Institute's post-workshop work was the publication of its first book, *Nation Dates: Significant events that have shaped the nation of New Zealand*. This book was initially distributed to participants as a draft containing a timeline of 220 significant events. However, by the time feedback from the workshop participants had been incorporated and the final book was published it had grown to 440 events organised into 65 different historical threads. See Figure 10 for a full list of publications from the StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future event.

Stage 5: New Initiatives Resulting from the Event

There was a strong sense of energy following the workshop and a huge amount of positive feedback, in addition to which many people were asking 'What next?' With so many people already engaged it was important to build on the outputs of the workshop and carry this momentum forward. Sir Paul Callaghan delivered a powerful presentation at the start of the workshop in which he stated his belief that another 100 exceptional entrepreneurs could significantly improve New Zealand's fortunes. This was a key theme that resonated with the participants. A major theme of the final strategies was the importance of attracting talent to New Zealand and retaining it, and the desire to move to a much more entrepreneurial, high-income society.

In response to this idea, the Institute invited a group of successful and influential entrepreneurs to meet with Sir Paul Callaghan to consider how New Zealand's education, immigration and employment systems could be recalibrated to ensure the country becomes 'a place where talent wants to live'. There has been a very positive response from the group, and the Institute looks forward to supporting them in any initiatives they wish to pursue.

Another key theme was New Zealand's forthcoming constitutional review (now in progress), and in particular concerns over the length of the country's three-year electoral cycle. There was also a clear appetite from our young people to develop youth forums and find ways in which they can become part of the solution, and a realisation that while we need to act nationally, we must think globally. This means not only being a good global citizen, but also being connected globally so that we obtain the latest information, adopt and applaud best practice, apply the best methods and models, export quality products and services, and keep asking questions about the best way forward.

To this end the Institute has undertaken a new project, EmpowerNZ, which aims to facilitate discussion among New Zealanders around the current constitutional review and our long-term future. EmpowerNZ (www.empowernz.co.nz) is primarily focused on ensuring the voice of our nation is heard at a time when major decisions about our constitutional framework are being made. This project aims to strengthen the ability of young people to become better informed and more connected, and as a result more committed and able to work together to shape the future of New Zealand.

Looking Forward

Society is clearly better off when individuals, groups, and government work individually or together to achieve common goals. The Sustainable Future Institute has worked to locate itself within the rich body of work and knowledge in future studies that exists in New Zealand. StrategyNZ: Mapping Our Future was the Institute's attempt to put a committed group of New Zealanders together with the aim of developing and charting their visions for New Zealand's long-term future. The Institute has endeavoured to learn from past futures work and to use this knowledge to develop methodologies and frameworks for its own initiatives.

The opportunity to learn from other countries that have embedded institutional foresight (such as Korea), is a significant contribution to the on-going discussion on how New Zealand might become a more intelligent nation. However, given we are now in a period where collective problems facing the global community have become increasingly urgent, a networked model of inter-state relationships, where intelligent nations work together to address what is becoming an evolving constellation of complex issues, is likely to be a critical part of the solution.

Developing a shared understanding of the study of foresight and ideally a shared intelligence of the future, must be a prerequisite for solving global and regional problems. Shared foresight will not only provide nations a *common view* as to the type and nature of the problems we may face, but provide nations with a *shared set of skills and networks* today so as to engage early with these issues in order to minimise the impacts and optimise the opportunities for current and future generations.

Figure 10. Outputs from StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future

I. Exploring the Landscape

- Report 11: History of Future Thinkers



II. Pre-workshop

- Nation Dates (book)
- Workbook (Report 12)
- Two-day Future Studies Course (Dr Peter Bishop)



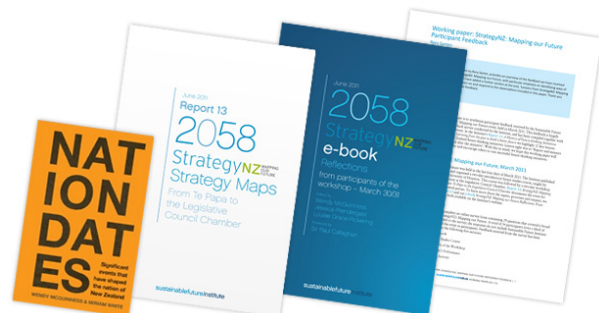
III. Workshop

- Part 1: Setting the global context
- Part 2: Where New Zealand is today
- Part 3: Preparing strategy maps
- Part 4: Presenting and judging strategy maps
- Part 5: Three workstreams
- Part 6: Presentations to Members of Parliament



IV. Post-workshop

- Strategy Map (Report 13)
- Feedback (Working paper)
- Reflections by participants (e-book)
- Final Nation Dates Book Published



V. New Initiatives emerging from StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future

- Constitutional Review Project and EmpowerNZ website
- 'A place where talent wants to live' Project and Sir Paul Callaghan lunch
- In addition the event reinforced the importance of two ongoing projects: Project 2058 and Project One Integrated Report





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