

# Revisiting Tomorrow: Navigating with Foresight

## Lessons from the Commission for the Future and the New Zealand Planning Council

# REVISITING TOMORROW

## 1976 – 1991 NEW ZEALAND AT THE TURNING POINT



*Image above: New Zealand Planning Council members and staff – First meeting on April 3 1977. Photograph from Archives New Zealand. Back row from left: Ted Thompson, Peter Frilling, R.F. Smith, Murray Pringle, Peter Brash, Kemp Mackenzie, Robin Frame, Brian Hunt, Ken Pringleton (Director), Noel Lough. Front row from left: Clive Dudge, George Cain, Sir Frank Holmes (Chair), Kerry Yonck, Anne Dilmore.*

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

#### 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 just been in charge of a subsidiary to market a new product. There is certainly the same challenge and excitement, as well as the corporate spirit of a good sales team.

I feel 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? Is the Planning Council merely making a great song and dance about a simple packaging operation? Has it scrounged just done a paint job on the old NDC?

There 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 Govern-

ment has committed itself to support the new structure.

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

A pilot test

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

The main complaints were the lack of a satisfactory mechanism for co-ordination—planning in compartment—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 the pros and cons of policy options about which choices had to be made. The distributions which emerged between targets set and outcomes achieved did not seem to lead to changes in other targets or policies. Some of the planning bodies became more occupied with lobbying and negotiations with ministers on short-term problems than with serious medium-term planning.

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 current trends and make an informed guess as to where they are heading. This is easier in some areas than in others and we will have to experiment with

there was some innovation, a technical 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 impetus 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 "bottom-up" consultation with many groups and individuals about New Zealand's future which the Government wishes the Council to promote.

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What will the planners do?

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Our thanks to:



LIBERTINE BLENDS

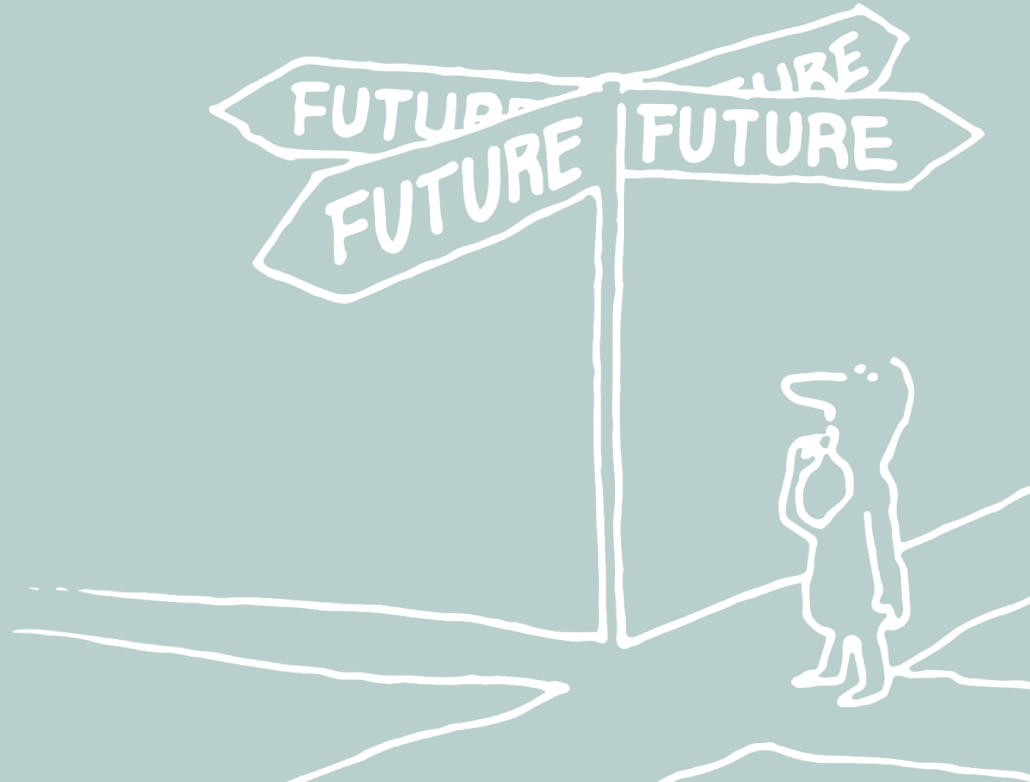
TOMBOY



WILLIS BOND & Co



# Wendy McGuinness



# New Zealand at the Turning Point

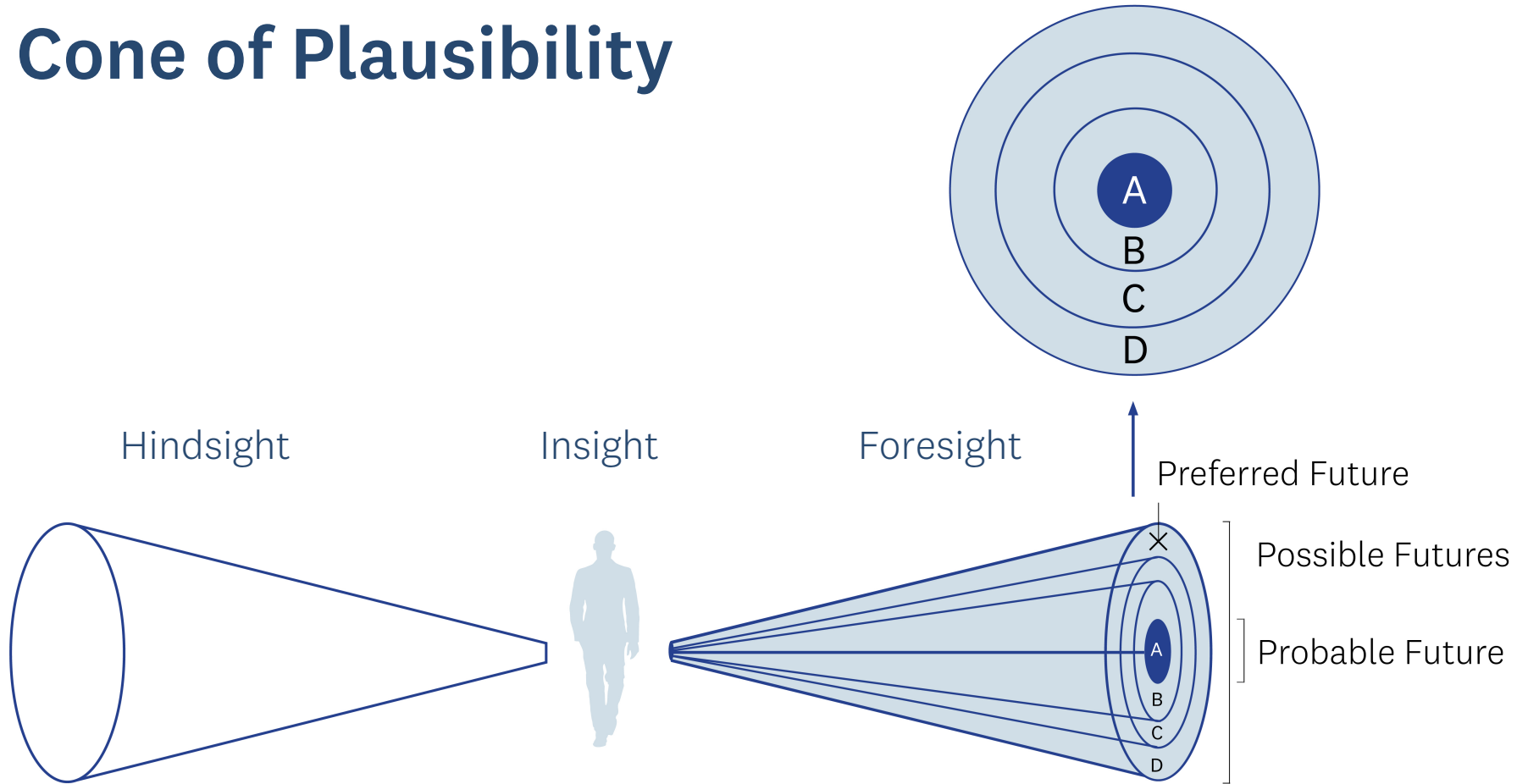
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Planning Council



# Part 1: The Futures Context

# Cone of Plausibility

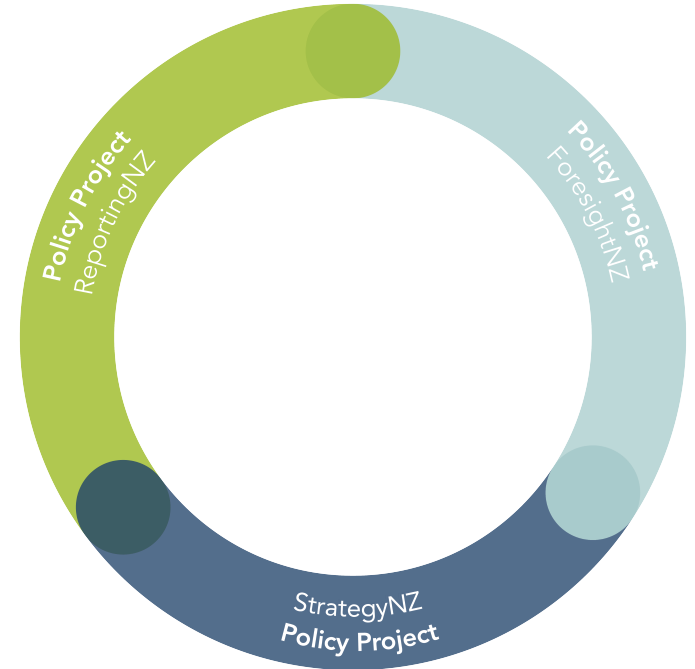


# Policy tools

**Reporting** is about meeting the needs of the user. Skills include the ability to identify the type of information users need to make decisions and understand a range of futures (e.g. what content, in what format, in what time frame and based on what level of assurance).

**Foresight** is about creativity, curiosity and exploration. Skills include the ability to see patterns, develop scenarios, test assumptions and identify wild cards.

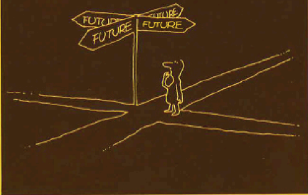
**Strategy** is about working out the means to an end. Skills include thinking about the best way to use resources and relationships to achieve desired outputs and outcomes.



# New Zealand Futures Game

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

**THE NEW ZEALAND FUTURES GAME**



**GRAEME SCOTT**

E. o. d.

**THE PRES**

## Futures Game — playing at N.Z. the way you want it



GRAEME SCOTT, with a selection of cards from the New Zealand Futures Game. He spent 1,000 man-hours over seven months to get the Futures Game to its final stage. One thousand class sets will be distributed to secondary schools throughout New Zealand. They will contain a total of 480,000 cards and 51 issues of cardboard. RICHIE, Treasurer of the Commission for the Future and the commission's secretary, playing the game.

When could New Zealand be this in 30 years time? That is the question hundreds of secondary schools will be asked to consider next year. At least 1,000 class sets of the New Zealand Futures Game will be distributed to secondary schools throughout New Zealand. They will contain a total of 480,000 cards and 51 issues of cardboard. RICHIE, Treasurer of the Commission for the Future and the commission's secretary, playing the game.

will cover high points. But if he cannot do this, he will try to live in a particular way, consciously and so he will move on.

My main hope is that the main "material" use of the game is not the playing of the game, but the thinking that goes on. I hope that the game will be used as a teaching device in the schools. I hope that the game will be used as a teaching device in the schools. I hope that the game will be used as a teaching device in the schools.

The game, which is being played in schools, is being played in schools. I hope that the game will be used as a teaching device in the schools. I hope that the game will be used as a teaching device in the schools.

GRAEME SCOTT has been working on the game for a long time. He has spent 1,000 man-hours over seven months to get the game to its final stage. One thousand class sets will be distributed to secondary schools throughout New Zealand. They will contain a total of 480,000 cards and 51 issues of cardboard.

By MARGARET BUTLER

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# ForesightNZ Playing Cards





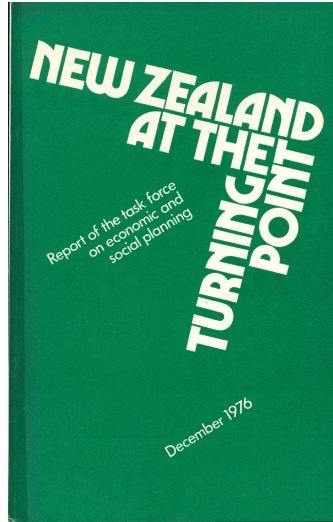
## **Part 2: The New Zealand Context**

# Timeline

- 1960 Industrial Development Conference (Labour)
- 1963 Export Development Conferences (National)
- 1968–69 National Development Conference (National)
- 1976 Task Force on Economic and Social Planning (National)
- 1977 **New Zealand Planning Act 1977 (National)**
- 1982 **Commission for the Future disestablished (National)**
- 1986 Environment Act 1986 establishes PCE (Labour)
- 1991 **New Zealand Planning Council disestablished (National)**
- 1992 Crown Research Institutes Act 1992 (National)
- 2010 New Zealand Productivity Commission Act (National)
- 2019 Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihanga (Labour)
- 2019–20 Zero Carbon Bill will establish Climate Change Commission (Non-partisan)

# 1976 Report of the Task Force on Economic and Social Planning

‘Governments should not draw the conclusion from this experience [NDC] that targets and guidelines should play no part in future planning. Rather they should conclude that planning is unlikely to be effective unless there is **continual appraisal of the extent to which the objectives of planning are being achieved, and if they are not, whether it is the objectives or the policies and programmes which need to be altered**’ (p. 17).



1972 NDC ASSUMPTIONS, TARGETS AND OUTCOME  
1970-1975  
(Average % per annum growth)

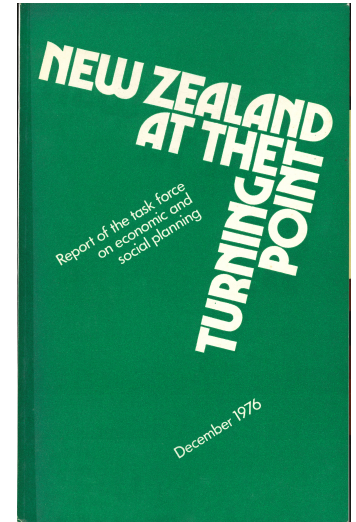
	NDC Assumptions or Targets 1970-76	Outcome 1970-75
1. Population	1.6	1.8
2. Labour Force	2.0	2.2
3. Real Output per Labour Force Member	2.2	1.8
4. Volume of Export:		
a. All Goods & Services	5.5	0.7
b. Agricultural Products	2.5	-4.7
c. Manufactured Products	18.3	12.6
d. Forestry Products	14.8	1.2
e. Services	8.7	14.0
5. Volume of Imports of Goods and Services	5.5	10.5
6. Volume of Consumption	4.0	6.0
7. Real Gross Domestic Product	4.4	4.0
8. Investment/gdp ratio	2.3	5.0
9. Imports/gdp ratio	1.0	6.5
10. Money Incomes per person employed (corrected for productivity)	-	11.4
11. Import Prices	4.8	10.5
12. Price Level (Gross Domestic Expenditure Deflator)	4.7	9.3
13. Terms of Trade	-1.0	0.7

# 1976 Report of the Task Force on Economic and Social Planning

‘New Zealand does not at present have appropriate techniques and institutions to carry out long-term appraisal of trends, issues and options which is necessary to ensure that policy is geared to strike a wise balance in the development of our society’ (p. xii).

‘The material examined in this report suggests that New Zealand is at some sort of turning point. To the extent that the issues confronting governments, and individual citizens, are likely to become more rather than less complex, **a serious planning effort is worth trying**’ (p. xvii).

‘The Task Force hopes that the Planning Council will be established in a Planning Act which also encompasses the Commission for the Future, and **that there will be bipartisan support** for legislation which protects the independence of the Council and the status of those appointed to it’ (p. xiv).



# What were they ‘trying’ out?

## 1. Long-term thinking

- A two-tier approach – long-term explorative (30 years) and short-term planning (10 years)

## 2. Integrate economic, social and environmental factors

- Bringing a wide range of experts together
- Possibility a first

## 3. Integrate central and local planning

## 4. Adopt a non-partisan approach


## 5. Highly consultative

- Public (rather than Parliament) focused

# 1. Commission for the Future (1977)

## Excerpt from New Zealand Planning Act 1977, section 9: Functions of the 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*.

948	New Zealand Planning	1977, No. 76
		
ANALYSIS		
Title 1. Short Title 2. Interpretation 3. Act to bind the Crown	14. Work programme of Council 15. Work programme of Commission	
PART I NEW ZEALAND PLANNING COUNCIL		
4. Establishment of New Zealand Planning Council 5. Functions and powers of Council 6. Membership of Council 7. Terms of office of members of Council		
PART II COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE		
8. Establishment of Commission for the Future 9. Functions of Commission 10. Membership of Commission 11. Terms of office of members of Commission		
PART III RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COUNCIL AND COMMISSION		
12. Coordination of activities 13. Work programmes generally		
PART IV GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO COUNCIL AND COMMISSION		
		16. Temporary Chairman of Council or Commission 17. Details of official members 18. Extraordinary vacancies 19. Meetings 20. Committees 21. Remuneration and expenses of members of Council, Commission, and committees 22. Officers and employees of Council and Commission 23. State Services Act 1962 amended 24. Employment of experts 25. Superannuation or retiring allowances 26. Annual reports 27. Money to be appropriated by Parliament for purposes of this Act 28. Members not personally liable
1977, No. 76		
An Act to make better provision for national planning in New Zealand by establishing a New Zealand Planning Council and a Commission for the Future		
[ 1 December 1977 ]		
BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:		

# 2. New Zealand Planning Council (1977)

## Excerpt from the New Zealand Planning Act 1977, section 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: ... (k).

948 *New Zealand Planning* 1977, No. 76



ANALYSIS

Title	14. Work programme of Council
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PART I	
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4. Establishment of New Zealand Planning Council	16. Temporary Chairman of Council or Commission
5. Function and powers of Council	17. Deputies of official members
6. Membership of Council	18. Extraordinary vacancies
7. Terms of office of members of Council	19. Meetings
PART II	
COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE	
8. Establishment of Commission for the Future	21. Remuneration and expenses of members of Council, Commission, and committees
9. Functions of Commission	22. Officers and employees of Council and Commission
10. Membership of Commission	23. State Services Act 1962 amended
11. Term of office of members of Commission	24. Employment of experts
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12. Co-ordination of activities	25. Superannuation or retiring allowance
13. Work programmes generally	26. Annual reports
	27. Money to be appropriated by Parliament for purposes of this Act
	28. Members not personally liable

1977, No. 76

An Act to make better provision for national planning in New Zealand by establishing a New Zealand Planning Council and a Commission for the Future

[1 December 1977]

BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

# 3. Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (1986)

## Excerpt from the Environment Act 1986, section 16: Functions of the Commissioner

- (1) The functions of the Commissioner shall be—
  - (a) with the objective of maintaining and improving the quality of the environment, to review from time to time the system of agencies and processes established by the Government to manage the allocation, use, and preservation of natural and physical resources, and to report the results of any such review to the House of Representatives and to such other bodies or persons as the Commissioner considers appropriate...



# 4. Crown Research Institutes (1992)

## Excerpt from the Crown Research Institutes Act 1992, section 5: Principles of operation

- (1) Every Crown Research Institute shall, in fulfilling its purpose, operate in accordance with the following principles:
  - (a) that research undertaken by a Crown Research Institute should be undertaken for the benefit of New Zealand ...
  - (d) that a Crown Research Institute should promote and facilitate the application of—
    - (i) the results of research; and
    - (ii) technological developments ...
  - (f) that a Crown Research Institute should be an organisation that exhibits a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which it operates and by endeavouring to accommodate or encourage those interests when able to do so.

# 5. Productivity Commission (2010)

## **Excerpt from New Zealand Productivity Commission Act 2010, section 7: Purpose of Commission**

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, having regard to a wide range of communities of interest and population groups in New Zealand society.

# 6. New Zealand Infrastructure Commission/ Te Waihanga (2019)

**Excerpt from New Zealand Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihanga Bill 2019,  
section 9: Main function of Commission**

The main function of the Commission is to co-ordinate, develop, and promote an approach to infrastructure that encourages infrastructure, and services that result from the infrastructure, that improve the well-being of New Zealanders.

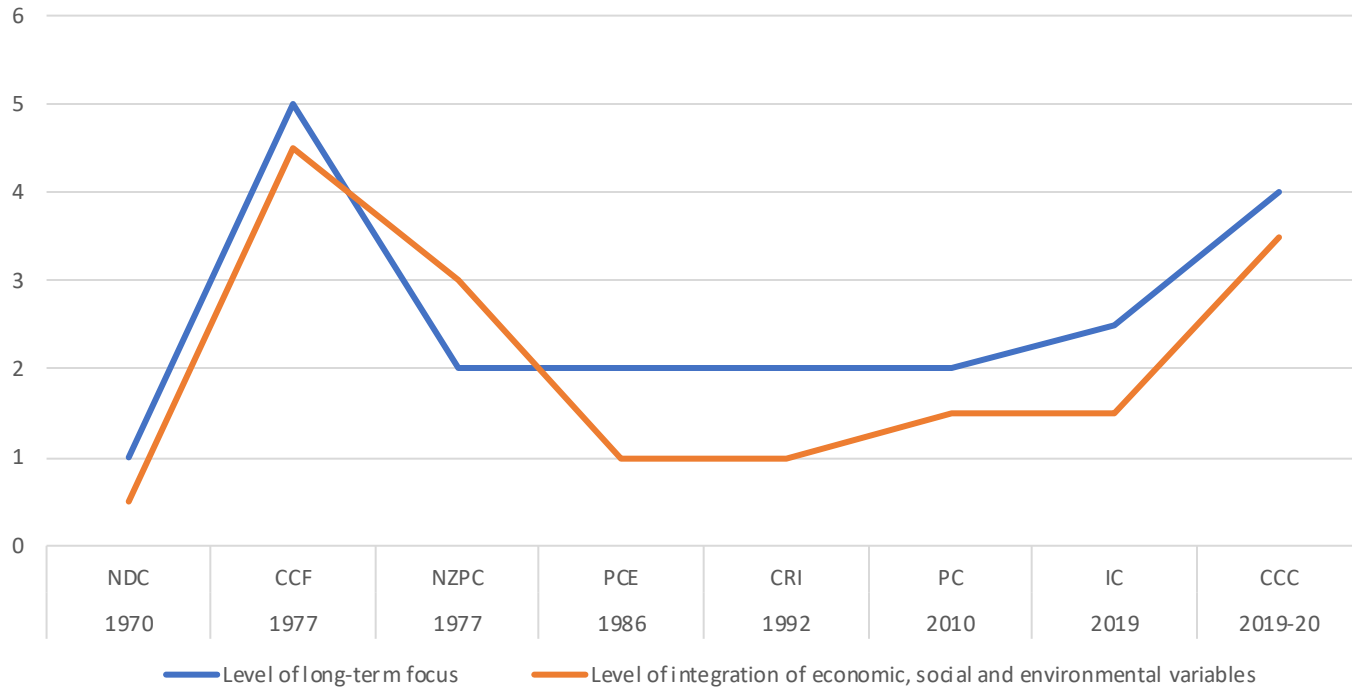
# 7. Climate Change Commission (2019/20)

**Excerpt from the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill (as at October 2019), section 5B: Purposes of Commission**

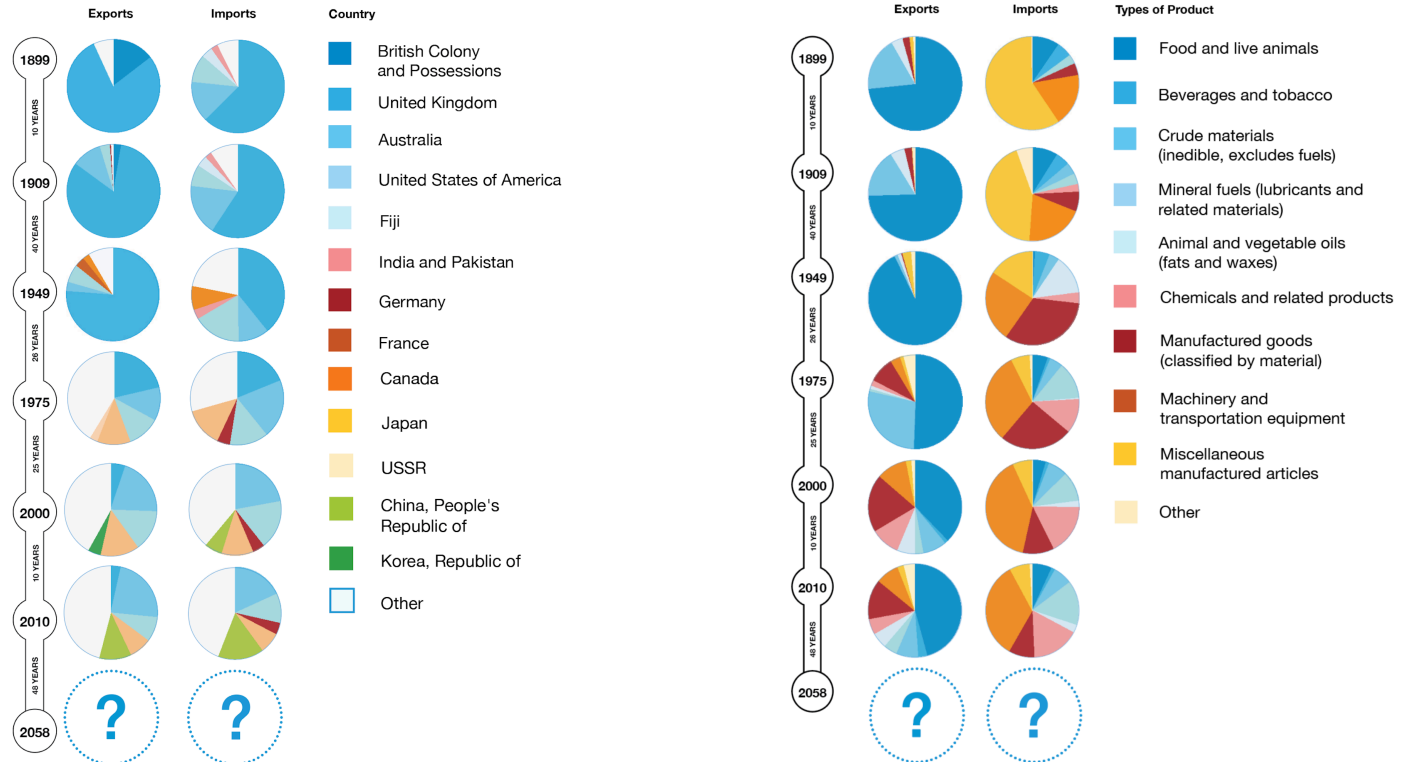
The purposes of the Commission are—

- (a) to provide independent, expert advice to the Government on mitigating climate change (including through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases) and adapting to the effects of climate change; and
- (b) to monitor and review the Government’s progress towards its emissions reduction and adaptation goals.

# Relationship between long-term future focus and integrated thinking



# New Zealand Official Yearbook import and export data – by country and product



# 1970s

- Population reaches 3 million
- Two oil crises 1973 and 1979 (carless days)
- Britain joined the Europe Communities in 1973
- Rising inflation (price and wage freezes)
- Unemployment
- Balance-of-payment difficulties
- Land march
- Occupation of Bastion Point
- Dawn Raids
- Anti-nuclear movement

# 2020s...?

- Population reaches 5 million
- Global climate crisis
- Global emissions crisis
- Brexit and the rise of populism
- Poverty and inequality
- Aging population
- Antibiotic resistance
- Water quality issues
- Mental health crisis
- Terrorism and white supremacy
- Social media regulation issues

# Hon Hugh Templeton – 13 Dec 2010

## Lessons from the Commission for the Future

‘I did not put the time that I should have into trying to oversee and nurture the Planning Council and certainly the Commission for the Future. I basically blame myself for the Commission for the Future going off the rails on the security issue and inducing Muldoon to dump it.’





# Part 3: The Global Context

# 1. 1958



## **Problems of simplicity**

*Two variables*

Dr Warren Weaver described the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries as the period in which physical science learned how to analyse two-variable problems.

These are problems where ‘... the behaviour of the first quantity can be described with a useful degree of accuracy by taking into account only its dependence upon the second quantity, and by neglecting the minor influence of other factors.’

(Undertaken first, before 1900)

## **Problems of organised complexity**

*Many interrelated variables*

Weaver goes on to describe a great middle region that had remained relatively untouched by science and yet was critical for the future of humankind:

‘... But much more important than the mere number of variables is the fact that these variables are all interrelated ... They are all problems which involve dealing simultaneously with a sizeable number of factors which are interrelated into an organic whole.’

(Undertaken last, from 1950)

## **Problems of disorganised complexity**

*Numerous random variables*

‘[A] large billiard table with millions of balls flying about on its surface, colliding with one another and with the side rails.’  
‘...The great surprise is that the problem now becomes easier: the methods of statistical mechanics are now applicable. ... On the average how far does a ball move before it is hit by some other ball? On the average how many impacts per second does a ball experience?’

(Undertaken second, between 1900 and 1950)

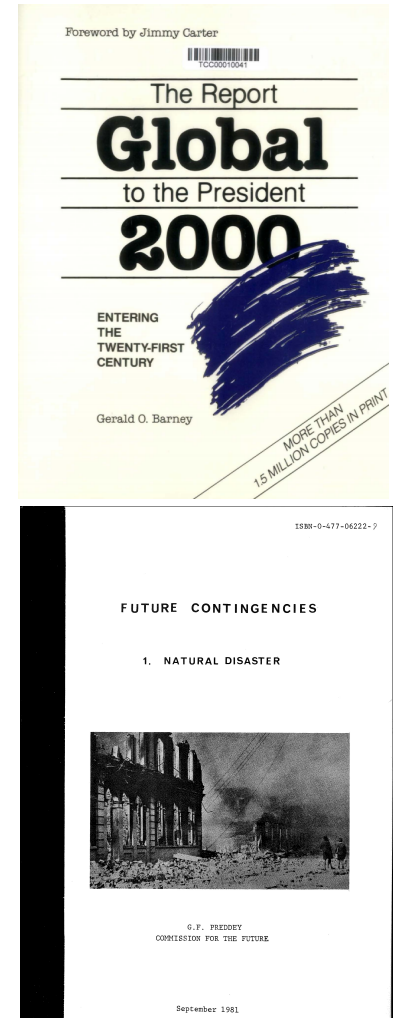
## 2. 1980

‘The Global 2000 Report to the President presents a picture that can be painted only in broad strokes and with a brush still in need of additional bristles. It is, however, the most complete and consistent such picture ever painted by the U.S. Government.

Many rapid and undesirable developments are foreseen if public policies concerning population stabilization, resource conservation, and environmental protection remain unchanged over the coming decades.

Vigorous and determined new initiatives are needed around the world. These initiatives need to be taken soon while the picture is yet fluid and nations are still preparing to enter the twenty-first century’ (p. iv).

This report was also quoted in George Preddey’s 1981 Commission for the Future report *Future Contingencies: 1. Natural Disaster*.

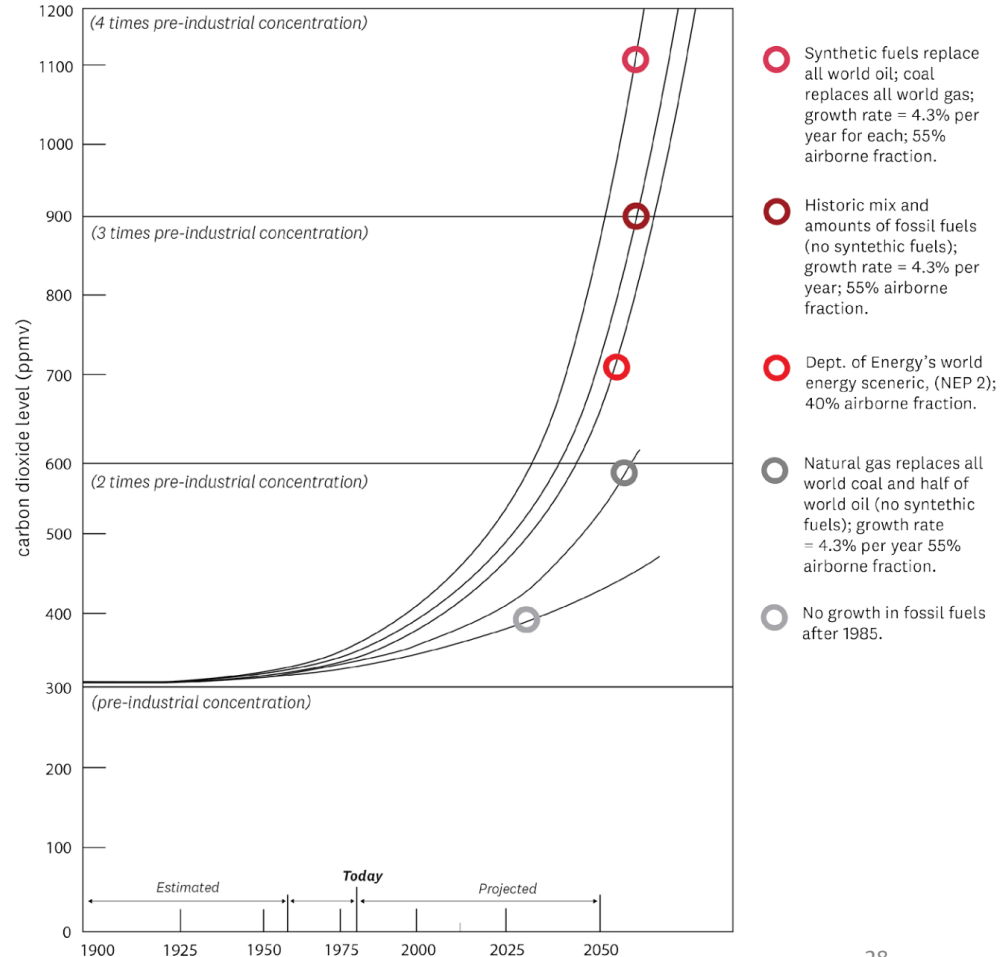


## 2. 1980 cont.

‘Probably the most serious anthropogenic threats to the stability of climate are CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and releases of chemicals that deplete stratospheric ozone. In both cases it is impossible for an individual nation to protect itself against the consequences of other nations’ actions. These problems are truly global in scope, and there is no human institution now established that can adequately address them’ (p. 269).

In 2019

1. The scenarios were accurate (in September 2019 we are 408.41 ppm, well over 40 ppmv).
2. If the first two scenarios were implemented in 1985 we would not have a climate crisis in 2019.

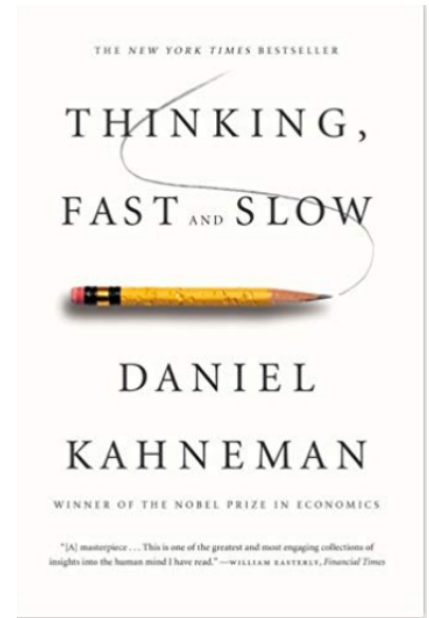


# 3. 2015: ‘Growing, Fast and Slow’ speech

‘What follows is a cocktail of economics, history, sociology and psychology. For those seeking a common denominator, it is sitting between your ears. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman says the brain has two ways of thinking (fast and slow). The same may be true, and for many of the same reasons, when understanding growth (fast and slow).’

The question Haldane explores is which comes first: sociological or technological transformation?

‘Sociological transformation supported, perhaps preceded, technological transformation ... And sociological transformation was at least as important as technological transformation in catalysing the lift-off in growth.’



# Speakers



Rt Hon Jim Bolger



Dame Silvia Cartwright



Peter Rankin



Tāmati Kruger



Amy Fletcher



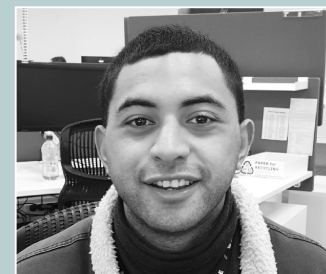
Wendy McGuinness



Madeleine Foreman

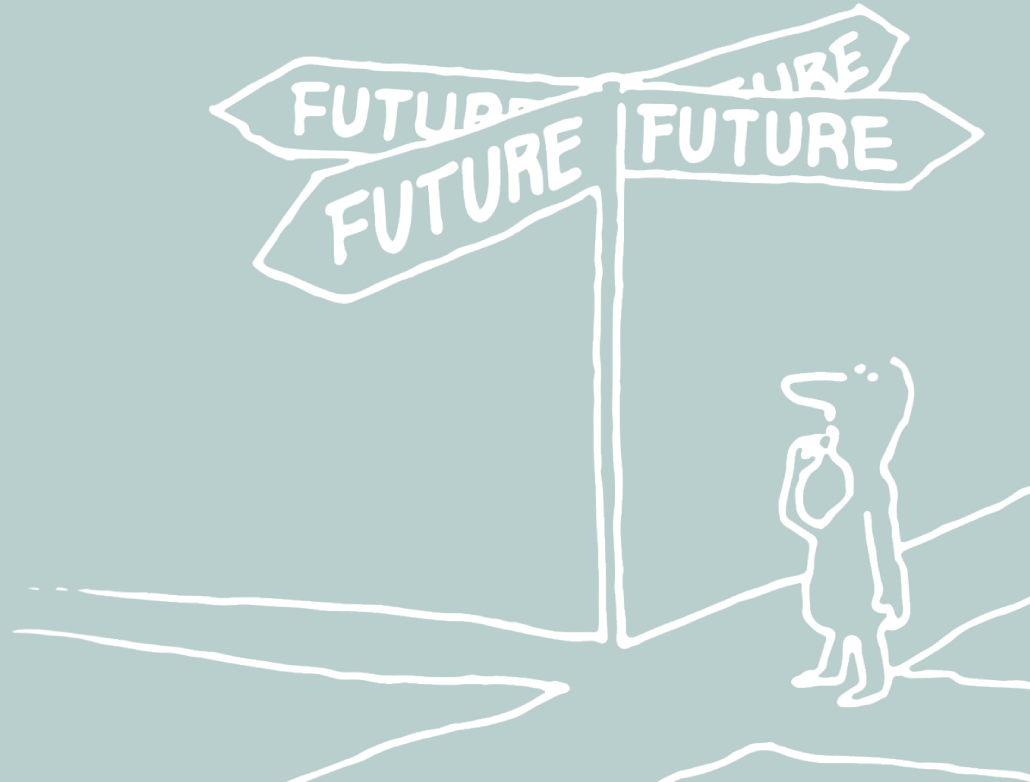


Sally Hett

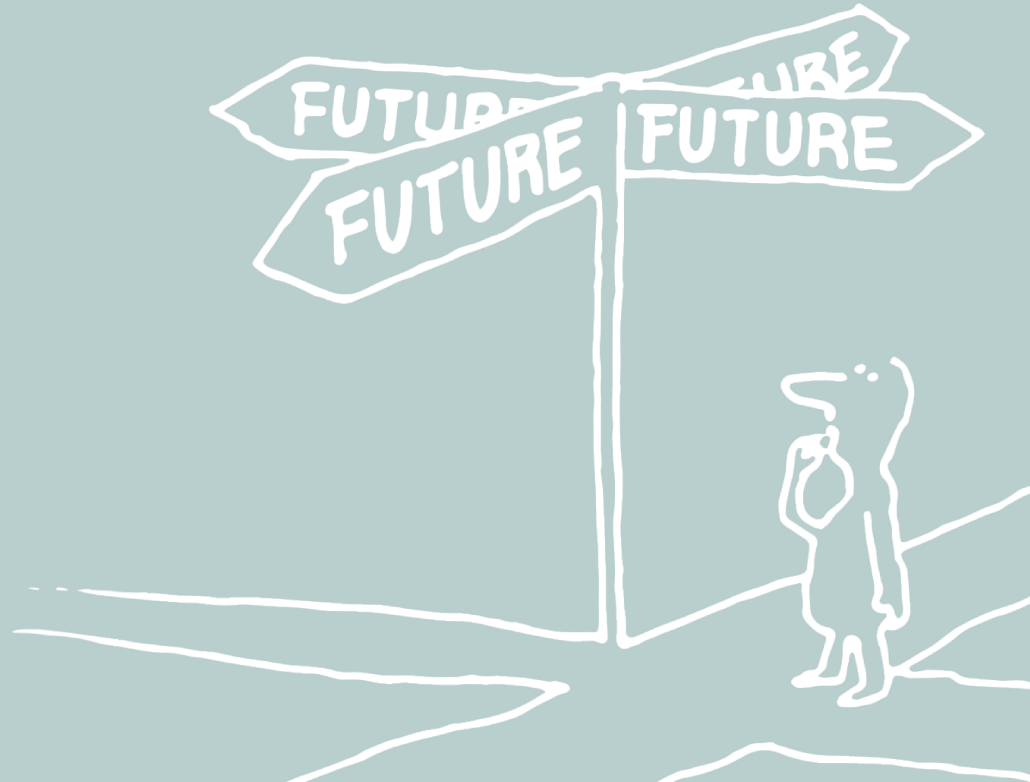


Samu Telefoni

# Rt Hon Jim Bolger

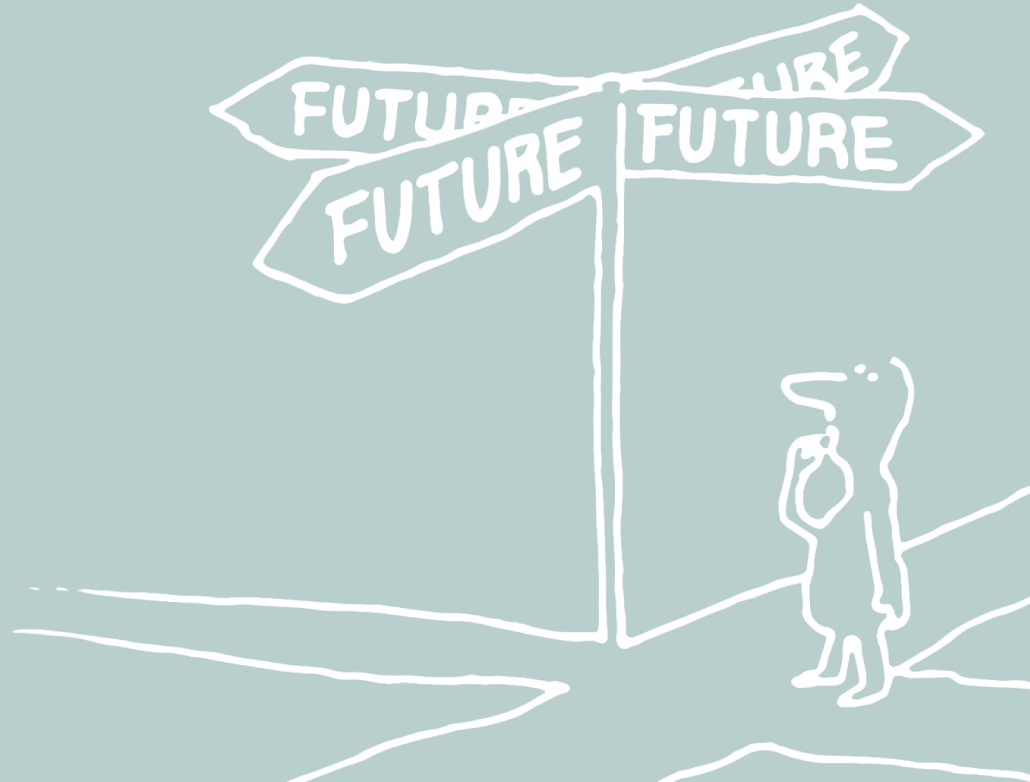
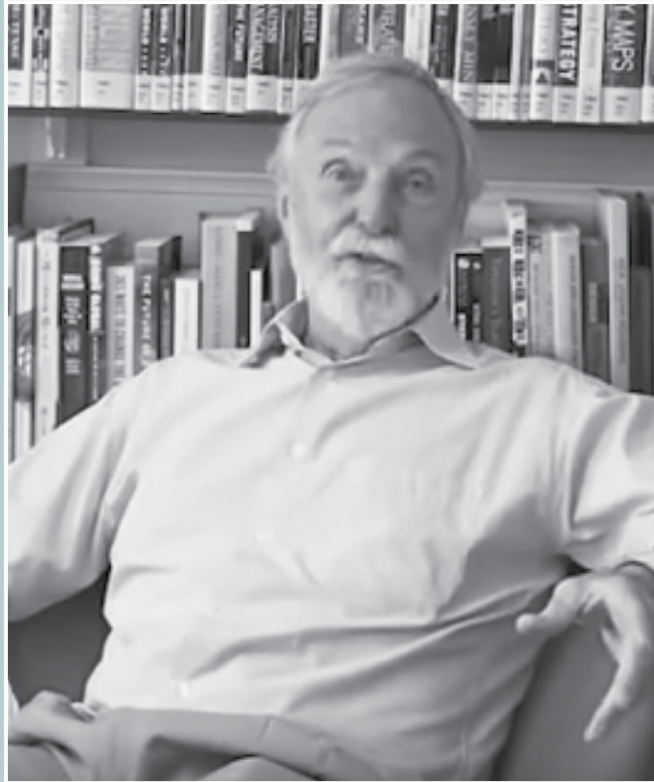


# Dame Silvia Cartwright





# Peter Rankin



# 1. Crucial Elements

- Urgent v Important
- Information – base for people to understand
- Positive path forward – base for people to act
- Trust in Fairness – costs/benefits fairly shared

## 2. Information

- Economic Monitoring Group
- Maori Round Table
- Population
- Social
- Income and wealth distribution
- Sectoral
- Employment
- Environment

# 3. Positive Path

- Sector employment forecasts
- Tomorrows Skills
- To schools
- To Hui a Iwi

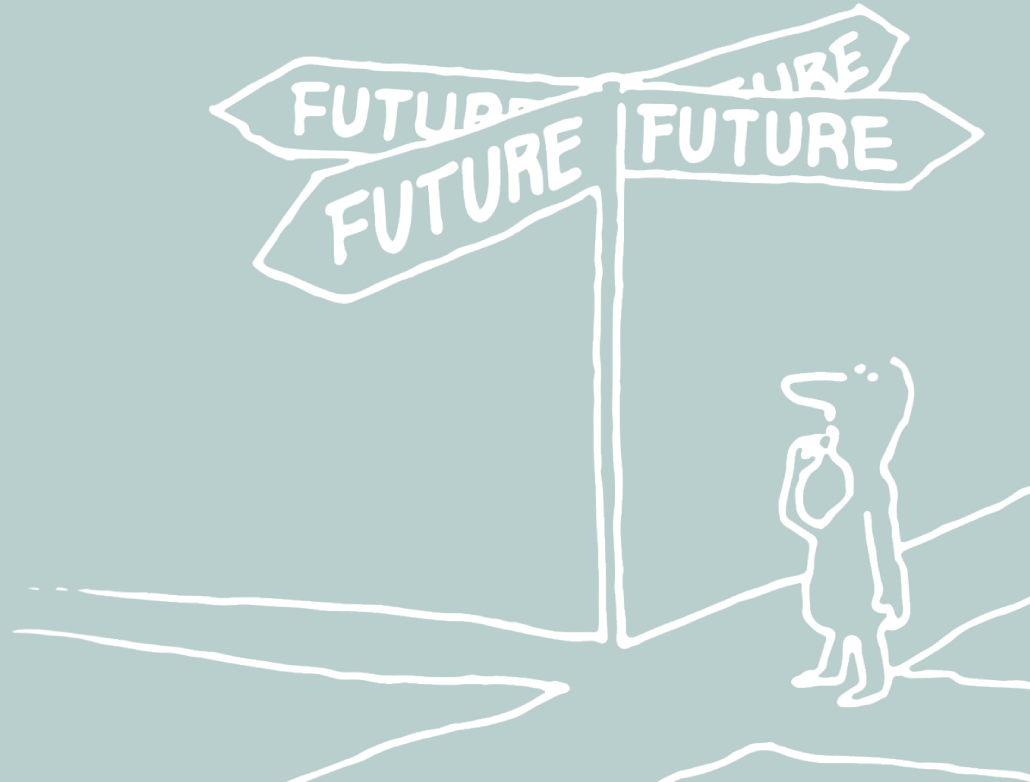
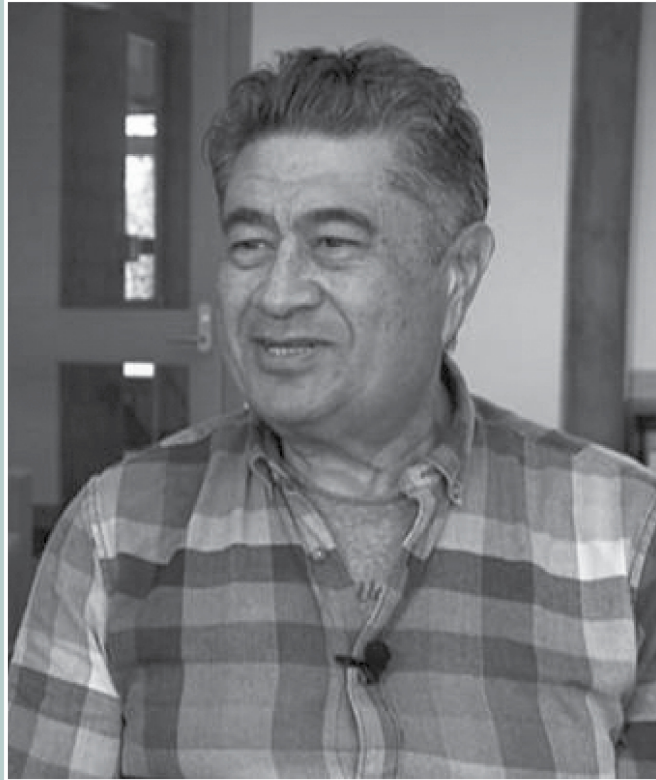
## 4. Trust in Fairness

- NZ has become an increasingly unfair society
- Wealth = freedom to choose; power to resist
- Poverty = lack of choice
- Change favours those who can choose
- Poor will need resources
- Trust that costs and benefits will be shared fairly

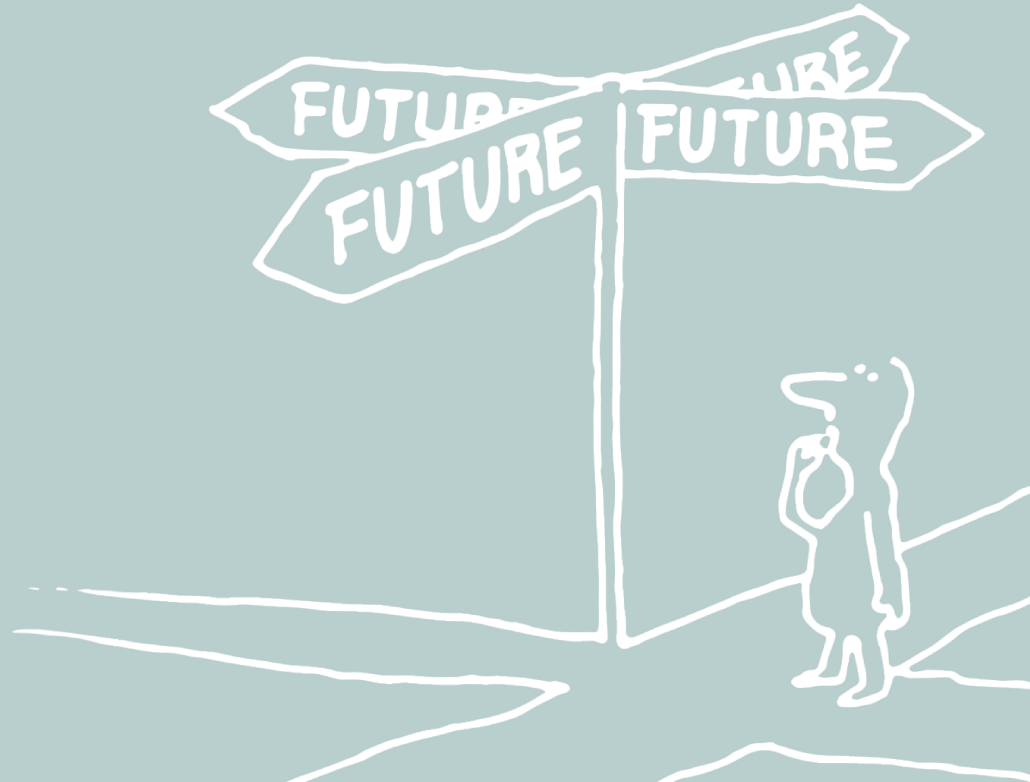
# 5. Embedding Foresight for Action

- No single institution
- DPMC – Treasury
- All Ministries – trends and challenges
- Local government – improve LTPs
- McGuinness Institute

# Tāmati Kruger



# Amy Fletcher





# Thank you

Level 2, 5 Cable Street  
PO Box 24222  
Wellington 6142  
New Zealand

Phone | +64 4 499 8888  
Email | [enquiries@mcguinnessinstitute.org](mailto:enquiries@mcguinnessinstitute.org)



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