

## The Futures of Australia – Editor's Introduction

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Australia stands at a cross-roads. The used future – reminiscent of the cultural politics of the 1950s – appears to have reached its dead-end. The blind following of the neo-liberal economic model with little concern for social, environmental and spiritual consequences has created a richer but divided Australia. What will happen next? Inspired by the October 2006 Ozforesight conference – futurists met in Melbourne to create new futures for Australia and the world – JFS brings together these contributions.

These essays explore the futures of Australia – particularly what will happen as the current liberal-national leadership faces challenges from within and without. But while the predictive dimension is not lost, it is the imagination of alternatives that these essays excel. Inayatullah imagines a far greener, spiritual, transcultural and global Australia. Saul imagines and develops the politics of Australia's future around the theme of happiness, harmony and sustainability. While the future is beset with foundational contradictions (the aged and the youth; globalization and localization; industrial growth and climate change). Bussey describes two Australias that inhabit the same geographical space but subscribe to very different visions and actively make the world in these images. Gunther sees hope coming from an alternative economics focused on cooperatives. Bok goes even further, imagining Australia as conscious, as part of a global cultural and spiritual awakening.

While the precise future cannot be predicted, without imagining alternative futures, we will continue to adopt the discarded. For Australia, the time for the novel has come.

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