

Australia 2026 - The Conscious Country

Barbara M. Bok*
Stander Ruve
Australia

Australia Joins the Awakening of the World

A young Australian's vision of a safe and conscious Australia merges with the World Wisdom Council's vision of global peace and a new dimension of consciousness.

Three Transformative Waves

An analysis of Australia between 2006 and 2026 determined that three waves were needed to bring about the transformation to a safe and conscious Australia. The three waves become visible during the following three phases:

1. 2006–2012 "Increased transparency"
2. 2010–2020 "Different work purposes"
3. 2015–2026 "New humanity program"

Each wave was established by inevitable forces of change that created self-reinforcing cycles that directed the transformation. A model of the Australian system with its components and the relationships between them was used to establish these forces and transformation cycles.

The resulting model contained three nested positive feedback loops (the cycles), the earliest (first wave) on the inside and the latest (third wave) on the outside. Each positive feedback loop explained how the movement from the old to the new Australian conditions occurred. The nesting of the loops explained how the deviation of each loop added to the deviation of the other loops for even greater effect. The model also showed that the system inputs (the main forces) to each loop corresponded to the three dimensions of the futures triangle: the pull, push, and weight of the future, as described by Inayatullah (2005a: 23).

Following are descriptions of these three waves with their main forces and cycles as they happened:

First wave – "Increased transparency" (2006–2012)

Tangible environmental changes lead to greater scrutiny of industry processes to find more sustainable solutions. A generational handover lead to greater disclosure of industry processes to court

* I would like to thank Sohail Inayatullah for his comments on earlier drafts. An essay similar to this one appeared on <www.futuresfoundation.org.au>, November 2006.

the coming generations of consumers. This created a self-reinforcing cycle for greater transparency. More specifically it happened as follows:

The main forces

1) The weight of a finite world: Tangible environmental signals of global warming perturbed Australians, especially the younger Australians (the "Net Generation" born between the late 1970's and the late 1990's). The crises were brought into sharp relief by water restrictions and drought, melting glaciers, forecasts of across-the-board fisheries destruction, forecasts of coral reefs losses, oil peak predictions, and many more disturbing and measurable environment changes. The warnings of previous years have turned from words into overwhelming effects that could no longer be ignored.

2) The weight of the generational hand-over. In 2026 the Baby Boomer Generation is fully in "retirement", the X Generation is "in between", and the Net Generation is dictating the future. The hand-over from the Baby Boomers to the Net-Gen'ers started some twenty years earlier, and the Gen-X'ers facilitated the process with a sense of urgency. The hand-over involved a transformation and not a continuation of the status quo because of the Net Generation's sense of the environment and their values of civic mindedness and being globally unbounded.

The Net Gen'ers, with their access to the Internet and their connections in a boundary-less e-world, were brought up with greater awareness of their own impact on the environment and the consequences of ecological losses for other peoples. New ideas on learning in schools were developed and implemented that allowed young learners to follow their curiosity within an e-environment and gave them access to the environmental and social information of the world. They were encouraged to explore their passions in a global context and discovered the complex interactions between issues, in a way that did not obey the rules of national boundaries.

Reaching higher educational levels, working part-time while they studied, choosing to have children later in life, having a greater curiosity about the world, having greater awareness of international opportunities, and making global e-collaborations through the Internet meant that many Net-Gen'ers chose to travel in their twenties. Their overseas experiences caused some to take up community work in other countries, while others brought their expanded views back to Australia. They came to appreciate cultural differences that went beyond the stereotypical views, even as they themselves struggled to integrate new Australians.

The self-reinforcing cycle

The transparency wave picked up as:

- Australians, but much more so the Net-Gen'ers, were increasingly unwilling to buy items, at first luxury items, at the expense of the environment. They wanted to know the full effects and costs of a product - it must have been produced with sustainability in mind.
- Business found it increasingly strategic to woo the Net-Gen'ers, and started by disclosing greater production information about their products, the "community" value inherent in their products, and even industry information indirectly

related to their products. Media, also in the business of capturing the Net-Gen market, started to seek out and report on the environment and impacts on the environment.

- More research work were being directed at investigating and reducing direct and indirect environmental impacts, accounting for life-cycle effects of products and the resources required to produce products.
- The information informed all Australians, increasing awareness all round. More informed Australians became more critical and selective of what they bought. And so the cycle continued ...

Second wave – "Different work purposes" (2010–2020)

A push for greater well-being and meaningful work lead to the rejection of one-dimensional materialistic workplaces. A leadership change lead to the implementation of structural institutional changes needed to support workplace changes and the transition to a new generation. This created a self-reinforcing cycle that encouraged the formulation of different work purposes. More specifically it happened as follows:

The main forces

1) The feminine push. A renewed push for equal pay for equal work, maternity leave, equal representation, and childcare was once again on the agenda. But that was only the tip of the iceberg. This time, the push was supported from a need for meaningful workplaces, and by values concerned for the condition of the world, about caring and nurturing, and about contributing to society, similar to those of the cultural creatives (Ray and Anderson 2000). Increasingly, women and men, were concerned about the global ecology, rejected working for more than one-dimensional material rewards, and sought opportunities for personal growth and service to others, and found promises from existing enterprises hollow and shallow.

2) The leadership push. There is a break from the past leaders who, by disowning their female selves, could only glorify their testosterone pasts by waging "civilised" wars with their mates. The new Australian Prime Minister was female, in touch with her deeper sense of community service and spiritual connections, not a Baby Boomer, and who saw her role as transitional, paving the way for a different type of leader of the next generations.

The self-reinforcing cycle

The work-purposes wave picked up as:

- Increasingly the demands for meaningful and moral workplaces conflicted with the structural economic expectations of the existing legal organisational structures. Rather than continuing to attempt to change the inadequate status quo, people started looking for new replacement structures that would meet their needs.
- A new legal entity was introduced, a "For Care", with governing principles based on ethics and moral codes, supported by, but not dominated by, economic codes, to break away from the unhealthy behavioural expectations associated with the "For Profit" and "Not For Profit" entities. These entities provided

opportunity for combining the Australian volunteer spirit with meaningful and paying jobs.

- A "greying" population, with healthy and productive members, many of who started retiring in 2010, put a strain on the economy. These people were looking to put back into the community but under conditions that suited their lifestyles. Baby Boomers found it convenient and satisfying to support the "For Care" entities through part-time participation and also mentoring.
- The Net-Gen'ers found in the "For Care" the social interaction and community spirit they wanted and, because of their sense of a boundary-less world, just applied that globally. They started exporting the concept to their peers and collaborators in other countries and began to build global ecologically sensitive and balanced communities.
- As experience mounted with these entities, and confidence increased, greater numbers of women, and men, of all working ages, sought out work at these entities. They saw work at these organisations as contributing to them leading the good life and increasing their general well-being because of the multiple dimensions of life brought into the picture: the physical, emotional, intellectual, behavioural, and spiritual. (Compton 2005: 246-247) And so the cycle continued ...

Third wave – "New humanity program" (2015–2026)

The growing unnecessary costs of an unsafe world increased the desire for, and correspondingly reduced the cost of, novel solutions. A new goal for humanity slowly filtered through into consciousness and shifted the emphasis on satisfying purely physical needs to satisfying a common deep longing for eternal goodness. This created a self-reinforcing cycle toward greater inclusion supporting that new humanity program. More specifically it happened as follows:

The main forces

1) The pull of a safe world. The threat of violence and pain, whether real or imagined, whether through tax money going into military spending or children dying in combat, whether through privacy invasion when being searched and scanned at airports or through the fear of strangers in public or living next door, drew ever closer around the individual Australian. The desire to find more effective solutions to these problems grew correspondingly stronger and novel solutions became comparatively cheaper.

Recently, the military institution has come under scrutiny with a view to restructuring. One proposal still being considered is for the downsizing of the whole "war machine" sector of the military - it is a redundant cost centre in today's world, belonging to a past era of conquest and colonialism. On the other hand the intelligence and weapons expertise sectors could play an important role as consultants to the multi-disciplinary conflict resolution teams starting to appear across the globe. In these teams their roles would be to pro-actively prevent harm being inflicted on one group by another as they carry forth the Australian caring spirit by rejecting the contract of mutual indifference described by Dobbert (2000).

2) The pull of a planetary vision. Our common humanity and common global home that we cannot vacate when it becomes unsuitable for habitation, nor merely have the police deal with the unruly neighbours, filtered through into consciousness. Furthermore, the increasing divide of inequality because of a drive for material wealth brought into question the continued wisdom of the old humanity program to improve human quality of life through control over nature. After all, it was widely known that material reward (for example a salary) is a hygiene factor: being denied of it is cause for unhappiness, but once received, more of it does not increase happiness.

A new humanity program was formulated: "A worthy humanity ecologically protected in its Sol capsule is the most effective way, indeed the only available way, to survive the long journey through space and time toward the ultimate birth".

The self-reinforcing cycle

The humanity-program wave picked up as:

- Increasingly people were working on global problems, but they had to consider the problems in a different light. An economic example demonstrates this difference: the problems of a national economy open to the world can be "fixed" by importing and exporting, but a global economy has no other place to import from or export to and thus global economic problems require novel solutions.
- Civil inattention (invisibility in a crowd), described by Bauman (1990: 66-70), has proven its utter failure as a long-term survival technique. Instead, you had better give attention to what that man is doing with his bag because your and other people's lives may depend on it. You had better listen to what that woman is saying on her mobile phone because it may save lives. And if you do not know her language, culture, or customs, you had better start learning.
- Civil attention, on the other hand, eventually demands consciousness of, moral attendance to, and regard for the wellbeing of others. Australians started to pay moral attention through their "For Care" organisations and communities. Protection and safety now started to come from local collective knowledge of who is who, and who needs what.
- These "For Care" organisations were also exporting civil attention to other countries, coming to treat the underlying inequalities that lead to avoidable violent behaviour. In the process, their understanding and awareness of global problems and the solutions required took on new dimensions. The boundaries of problems changed so that for example the person trying to escape the conditions of their country for better conditions elsewhere were now perceived in an entirely new light - just like that global economic problem was seen differently. And so the cycle continued ...

And Now?

Did that twenty-two year old Australian's vision of a safe and conscious Australia, connected globally, back in 2006, come about as smoothly as I have shown? Not at all. It has not always been easy for people to recognise that the transformation was not merely about fiscal policies, trade negotiations, economic factors, minimum wages,

foreign aid dollars, or quality of life. We often had to remind ourselves that it was about considering, in fundamentally new ways, how humans live on this earth for the long haul, and then to behave in ways that secured that for everyone.

Australia has joined the world in an irreversible process of global awakening and many more people have joined the likes of Barbara Marx Hubbard (1998), Ervin Laszlo (2006), Sohail Inayatullah (2005b), and Hazel Henderson (1996), to name but a few, in putting up signposts and urging us to consciously evolve to a new planetary civilisation and even beyond. Now that major constraints are beginning to be removed a tremendous pool of human potential is eagerly forming to drive that process forward. Looking towards that future, along the path the signposts are laying out, it is clear that humans will have to discard the cloak of anthropocentrism. Will Australians be ready for that part of the journey?

Correspondence

Barbara M. Bok
Stander Ruve
P.O. 250
Chadstone Centre
Victoria
Australia 3148
Email: bmbok@standerruve.com.au

References

- Bauman, Zygmunt. (1990). *Thinking Sociologically*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- Compton, William C. (2005). *Introduction to Positive Psychology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Dobbert, Marion Lundy. (2000). "Anticipatory anthropology and world peace: a view from 2050." *Futures*. 32: 793-807.
- Henderson, Hazel. (1996). *Building a Win-Win World: Life Beyond Global Economic Warfare*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Inayatullah, Sohail. (2005a). *Questioning the Future: Methods and Tools for Organizational and Societal Transformation*. Taipei: Tamkang University Press.
- _____. (2005b). "Waking Up to A New Future." *Journal of Futures Studies*. 10(2): 55-62.
- Laszlo, Ervin. (2006). "Paths to planetary civilization." *Kosmos*. April.
- Ray, Paul H. and Sherry Ruth Anderson. (2000). *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing The World*. New York: Three Rivers Press.