

# Futurewatch

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An information service of current international commentary about our futures, prepared by futures scanner *Jennifer Coote*. Annual dates in final two digits. Any item not accessible via library systems may be obtainable from NZFT.

## Sci/Teth/Biotech/Space

### The Universe Aint What it Used to Be

The familiar structures which apparently make up our universe, from atoms to galaxies, say current physicists, take up barely 4% of the energy and matter around. The rest, called dark energy, is making the universe expand at an accelerating rate. Dark matter makes up about a quarter of this, but its character is unknown. Precise computations form the evidence for this hypothesis, formulated from observations of the constraint on the way the dark matter is distributed in the universe. Evidence of this constraint arises from observations of cosmic microwave background radiation left over from the Big Bang, and of galaxy rotation. Gravity and gravitational lensing (bending light) show that this dark matter not only exists, but that its composition differs from that of visible matter, being more exotic, and slow moving. Very recent scientific simulations suggest that this structure is denser and richer than previously thought. Dark mini-galaxies may abound. *The Economist*, 12 April 03, pp 70-71.

Astrophysics professor *D. B. Cline* describes the search for dark matter, using detectors to measure its transmission through Earth. *Scientific American*, March 03. *Science*, special section, 20 June 03, *The Dark Side*, provides news on dark matter research, and review articles on aspects of dark matter, black holes and dark energy.

Particle theorist *G. Kane* outlines the how the hitherto highly successful Standard Model of particle physics: -the electron, up and down quarks, the gluon, photon and Higgs Boson, needs to be extended. New particles are almost certainly showing up in high energy experiments even as the Higgs Boson is nearing definitive observation. *Scientific American*, June 03. *A.B. McDonald et al*, *Scientific American*, April 03, describe one example, the thirty year-old physics mystery of the inability to detect solar neutrinos from the sun. In 2002 the underground Sudbury Neutrino Observatory determined that these change before they reach the earth, and that they are not massless, but have mass.

*M. Tegmark* explores possibilities of parallel universes, developed from string theory interpretation of the universe. *Scientific American*, May 03. *New Scientist*, 22 Nov 03, provides a pull-out map of the Universe, a 4-degree slice as viewed 13 August, 03, right out to the distant edge of space and time. *Astrofuturism: Science, Race, and Visions of Utopian Space*, de *W. D. Kilgore*, Univ. of Penn. 03, covers the writings and politics of key individuals who contributed to the speculations which contained imperialist, capitalist and utopian hopes and which forms a major strand of futurist thinking. The capitalist drive to explore/exploit space receives bolstering thrusts of ideas and policies, both national and international, *Space: The Free-Market Frontier*, Ed *E. L. Hudgins*, Cato Inst, 02.

### On Risk and Innovation

Economics professor *N. Rosenberg* takes a long view back and forward, on technological change, where unperceived innovations can take massive effect decades and centuries after their introduction. The full

impact of the computer lies well into the future. Today, as technology is diffused widely throughout society, innovations strongly affect many other activities. University-business collaboration should not be expected to produce quick results, since technologies often appear in primitive states. Manufacturing is the vital innovation push to spur living standards, and the rise of the service economy depends on it. *Interview, Financial Times, Aug 27 03, p 9.*

*Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Sept 03* provides a series of expert studies on aspects of Innovation Systems and policies. P. Conceicao, M.V. Heitor, examine in depth *Infrastructures, Incentives and Institutions: Fostering Distributed Knowledge Bases for the Learning Society*. They build on the proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Technology Policy and Innovation, Delft, 01. Innovation should be understood as a broad social and economic policy tied to attitudes and behaviours oriented towards exploitation of change by adding value.

One-size-fits all, or universal design technology is a concept encompassing far more than computers, according to innovative IT designers for disabled people, R. Smith, N. Scott. Making technology simple does in mean making it dumb. Human-centred interfaces for the disabled improve usability for everyone, though they require sophisticated technologies to make them practical. High level interests may also resist the resulting human empowerment. *The Listener (NZ), 6 Dec 03, p 32-33.*

*Phase Change: The Computer Revolution in Science and Mathematics, D. S. Robertson, O.U.P., 03.* Phase change is a phenomenon where very little happens for a long time then large change occurs very rapidly. Currently the explosion of science and mathematics is occurring at unprecedented rates and on very broad fronts, enabled by ew computerised power. Specifics are described in astronomy, biology, physics, mathematics, earth sciences and meteorology.

The longer term risks arising from this pace of change worries Astronomer Royal M. Rees, *Our Final Century*, Heinemann, 03. How should society guard against being unknowing-

ly exposed by scientists to a not-quite-zero chance of an event with an almost infinite downside? When experiments are exceedingly risky, regulations, or even prohibitions need to be close to 100% effective to be reassuring. Since we are at greater risk now than at any time previously, the choices we make may ensure our survival as a species into the next century.

### Of Genomes, Genes, Sex and Rights

As science agencies and the private sector are following multiple pathways in systems biology research, the US Dept of Energy is developing a Genome to Life programme for environmental microbial biology. This aims to achieve, within two decades, a basic understanding of thousands of microbes and microbial systems in their native environments. This will fill huge gaps in knowledge, technology, computing, data storage and manipulation and systems-level integration. *Science, 11 April 03, pp 290-293.*

A vision for the future of genomics research endorsed by the US National Hch endorsed by the US National Hims to transform human health. After two years of consultations with scientists and citizens, three major themes have been developed. They are envisaged as the floors of a house built on the foundation of the Human Genome Project: -genomics to biology, genomics to health and genomics to society. Each theme presents grand challenges for research scientists. For example, the first involves-comprehensive identification of the structures and functions encoded in the genome, clarification of the genetic networks and protein pathways and their contribution, developing a detailed understanding of the heritable variation in the human genome, understanding the evolutionary variation across species and its underlying mechanisms, and developing policy options to enable application of this research. *Nature, 24 April 03. pp 835-847.*

*Nature via Nurture: Genes, Experience and What Makes Us Human, M. Ridley, Harper-Collins, 03* provides a poplar traverse of new insights into our biology and the co-operative

endeavours with our environments to produce our complex behaviours.

*The Double-Edged Helix: Social Implications of Genetics in a Diverse Society*, Eds. J. S. Alper et al, John Hopkins Univ. Press, 02. These academic studies explore thoroughly the implications of human genetics, highlighting how nondominant (including women) groups in contemporary society understand, and are affected by, genomic technology.

Research into the X chromosome and the smaller Y, are providing new insights, not all of them likely to boost male egos. Anatomist D. Bainbridge in *The X in Sex: How the X Chromosome Controls Our Lives*, Harvard Univ. Press, 03, provides a stimulating survey. Geneticist S. Jones offers an informative and entertaining account of Y: *The Descent of Men*, Houghton Mifflin, 03, showing that being male is far more complex than had been realized, though he is not optimistic about the future of the Y chromosome. Recent research sequencing the Y chromosome, *Nature*, 19 June, 03, pp 810-813, provides remarkable insights into the 300 million years of its development, the mechanisms of genomic change in males, and the survival of Y.

*Drawing the Line* (alt. title *Unlocking the Cage*): *Science and the Case for Animal Rights*, S. M. Wise, Perseus, 02. Several mammalian species show forms of cognitive ability, and through this lens, the case for the legal rights of animals in courts is examined. The inextricable interweaving of animals in human activities poses problems of competing interests. As more is learnt of animal cognition, will this alter the place of the line?

## Economics/Business

### Those Capital Flows

T. Harcourt comments, the deflation gripping the world economy is a function of worldwide supply and demand as production has been spread around the globe but the consequent oversupply has been aimed at the US consumer, a market reaching its credit limit. Until this wealth distribution is addressed the imbalances will remain. *Business Review Weekly*,

10-16 July 03. *The Economist Survey Global Finance*, 3 May, 03, recognises that trade in capital flows is more error prone than that in goods and services, and the resulting punishment is more severe. Ways are suggested to mitigate these errors, if the benefits of unimpeded global finance are to justify its risk. For many economies this is close call, and the definition of unimpeded needs careful analysis.

*Cybercash: The Coming of Electronic Money*, R. Guttman, Palgrave Macmillan, 03. In USA a three stage process towards cybercash is emerging: access products, electronic purses and digital cash. The cybercash economy raises a wide range of issues including: impacts on the Internet marketplace, regulation, virtual capitalism, financial crisis management. Financial instability could become more varied, with more contagion potential and be harder to combat.

### Theories and Concepts, New and Revised

*Providing Global Public Goods: Managing Globalization*, Ed I. Kaul et al, O.U.P., 03, explores a major concept: that managing globalisation requires understanding and shaping the provision of global public goods so that all parts of the global public benefit. This is a wide ranging, new frontier for international negotiation and management, with many aspects explored and new tools suggested for managing the production of such goods.

London School of Economics academics, T. Besley, R. Burgess, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol 17/3, Summer 03, examine the changing economic understanding on poverty reduction. They find that subnational data provide the most credible base for this debate, with broad-brush policy prescriptions from cross-country studies proving less reliable. In a globalising world, national poverty reduction programmes are no longer suitable. The focus must be on the institutions and policies forming the environment within which individuals accumulate skills and firms produce output and accumulate capital.

*Complex Systems Theory and Development Practice: Understanding Non-Linear Realities*, S. Rihani, Zed Books, 02, provides a fresh take

on the failures of development experts, who appear to be locked in a mindset which is unable to change course. A paradigm shift viewing nations as Complex Adaptive Systems with human development as an endless, exploratory and uncertain trek through a rugged global landscape would change the What? Who? How? and When? at all development levels. What? is modest, continuing, long-term progress (Britain is still developing, many states are not.) Who? comes from healthy local change. How? develops in secure, well-governed open societies. When? comes from national self-improvement.

A complex new understanding of consumers and capitalism is *The Support Economy: Why Corporations are Failing Individuals and the Next Episode of Capitalism*, S. Zuboff, J. Maxim, Viking, 02. Standard enterprise logic seeks to maximise profit in transactions with the mass market, but the new framework is relationship value. Relationship economics redefines commercial processes from the perspective of individual space, where the new consumption provides deep support to help individuals meet the challenges of intricate lives.

An alternative vision, *After Capitalism*, D. Schweickart, Rowman & Littlefield, 02, foresees a challenge to capitalism's contradictions, based on the rich legacy of the socialist-communist tradition. It will build on the past accomplishments, embrace democracy and the rule of law and promote values of generosity, creativity, self-discipline and hard work.

*The Restoration Economy: The Greatest New Growth Frontier: Immediate & Emerging Opportunities for Businesses, Communities and Investors*, S. Cunningham, Berrett-Koehler, 02. The major driver of economic growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be redeveloping our nations, revitalizing our cities and expanding our ecosystems. Eight macro industries are examined with case studies and a resource guide: -restoring ecosystems, watersheds, fisheries, farms and rural economies, brownfields, infrastructures, our heritage and our misfortunes.

Economist B. Easton notes that over the last few decades, traditional international trade theory (inter-industry, or unlike for unlike) is

being revised in light of anomalous developments, such as economies of scale, death of distance, product differentiation and now competitive advantage, or ongoing innovativeness. While already applied in business practice, public policy take-up lags. *The Listener* (NZ), 1 Nov 03, p38.

### Asia Pacific Business

Is Islamic faith a drag on economic development and business success? M. Noland, US economist, using cross-country statistical analysis found that religious belief may have an impact on economic performance (many Islamic nations are on average much poorer than other nations). Generally speaking, there is no strong relationship between any one religious faith and economic performance. Controlling for socio-economic factors at local level in countries such as India or Malaysia, shows that Islamic faith has positive correlation with economic growth. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 Oct 03, p 29. (Full study: -Religion, Culture and Economic Performance, Institute for International Economics, Working Paper 03-8). Several Western finance houses are setting up funds and products specially tailored to meet *sharia* (Islamic law). Three key features: non-involvement with industries deemed sinful, a strict ban on *riba* (interest) and avoidance of *gharar* (excessive risk taking and uncertainty). Interpretations can vary greatly, enabling innovative practice, to attract a wealthy market. *The Economist*, 25 Oct 03, p 73.

In the face of mounting competition from China and India, the Asean nations are strengthening their economic bonds. Leaders are the Premiers of Singapore and Thailand, who are using peer pressure to speed up economic integration by example with a bilateral trade pact, in the face of traditional wariness from fellow Asean members. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 Oct 03, pp, 16-18. M. Durie, in speaking on *Maori Business Ethics and Development*, Nga Kahui Pou: *Launching Maori Futures*, Huia, 03, noted the emergence of a range of such business over the past two decades and examined their defining characteristics. They deliberately revolve around Maori

people, assets and priorities. They feature: significant contribution to Maori development, linkage into a Maori network, adoption of Maori values in governance and management, gearing to Maori realities and recognition of Maori diversity, creation of choices for Maori consumers and implicit adoption of principles that shape a Maori business ethic. There are six principles: alignment, transparency, balanced motives, integrated goals, best outcomes and alliance.

### Listing

*Entertainment & Society: Audiences, Trends and Impacts*, S. Sayre, C. King, Sage, 03. The world at play has become a major industry, from global media through the arts, sport and tourism. A comprehensive overview.

### Education

#### Diverse Literacies

R. Dykes, college teacher, questions whether it is time to move beyond a single definition of IT literacy, *Computers in NZ Schools*, July 02. He identifies three types of information models: narrow sequential, broad sequential and non-sequential. The first focuses on the ability to conduct computerised research, formal or informal. The second follows the progressive steps of the first, but views it as applied to problem-solving processes in teaching and learning. This becomes a blueprint for education which is constructivist and student centred. The non-sequential focus is more generalised, seeking to imbue learners with a range of skills and strategies for learning, which they can apply comfortably. Studies conducted in NZ schools suggest that the first focus is generally recognised as IT literacy, but that a mind-shift is needed if the next two models are to become widespread.

Canadian cognitive science academic W.M. Roth, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol 15/1 03, questions the traditional approach to scientific literacy which exposes young students to a faint and distorted image of scientist's science. Should science educators advocate science but

also critique its assumptions? A radical approach would take account of the developing citizen science, the conversations about scientific issues involving laypeople and scientists. Here, the process, who has access? who is denied? what is deemed useful? is part of the literacy, which becomes a collective phenomenon. Science is not just the scientific community but part of a larger weave, a fibre among fibres. A curriculum designed from this perspective recognises that not all students need to become competent in the same issues but they need skills and substantive knowledge relevant to real problems in community activities.

*Harvard Education Review*, Fall 03 is devoted to issues of culture, identity and community in education in a globalising world of rapid transfers of multiplicities of culture. C. McCarthy *et al* sum up, by emphasising that popular culture is crucial to understanding the interplay of power in modern life, particularly for the global community of youth cultures. Yet there is a clear distinction between the established curriculum and this everyday multiplicity, which is reshaping culture and identity, to the point of outright conflict in some institutions between established knowledge and alternative forms. Ideological assumptions of the cultural monologists consider culture as the property of particular groups, clearly demarcated and commodified. An alternative approach emphasises the complex transborder flow of cultures, on a deep current of awareness of community, interdependence and cultural translation across difference. This would frame a curricular approach which draws on multiple sources, emphasising the constructed nature of all knowledge, and the changes being wrought by globalisation.

Design Lecturer, B. Matheson reflects on the creative alternative pedagogies which help students respond to creation of structures both political and cultural, facilitating responses to what cannot be foreseen. This would mean an inclusive approach to decision making and emphasis on How? processes which are both interdisciplinary and holistic. A paradigm shift in learning would feature: a diverse range of individuals and community-based student/teacher structures in addition to present ones; knowl-



edge as power relationships forming a core to a multi-level range of education; and students and teachers as co-creators in both the content and structure of education. Education is adapted to ever changing societal and cultural needs framed by the people involved. *Journal of Futures Studies*, May 02.

### Resourceful Tools and Ideas

*Why Smart People Can be So Stupid*, Ed R. J. Sternberg, Yale Univ, 02. How intelligence is used, and the failures therein, individual and collective, matter more than the establishing the levels of intelligence. Stupidity has cognitive and moral implications, but justifiable mistakes should not be labelled stupid.

*Teachers As Owners: A Key to Revitalising Public Education*. Ed E. J. Dirkswager, Scarecrow Press, 02. Teachers should have the same opportunity as other professionals to work for themselves or in partnerships in single or multi-specialities. The implications for this approach and for related organisations, such as unions, are addressed.

*Educational Policy and Analysis*, OECD Centre for Education Research and Innovation, 02 examines five key concerns for this organisation: strengthening early childhood programmes, improving quality and equity, teacher shortages, the growth of cross-border education, and rethinking human capital. Also, *What Schools for the Future?* OECD CER, 02. Four overview chapters cover: The wider environment of schooling; deep trends and driving forces; schooling developments and issues; Scenarios for the future of schooling; and policy goals, tensions, questions. A number of expert specialist studies form Part II of a succinct but comprehensive assemblage.

*Better Brains: How Neuroscience Will Enhance You*, Whole Issue, *Scientific American*, Sept 03, presents eight expert summaries of the research into: ultimate self-improvement, the quest for a smarter pill, taming stress, new hope for brain repair, mind-reading machines, genes of the psyche and neuroethics. See also, *Understanding the Brain: Towards a New Learning Science*. OECD CER, 02. Brain based learning does offer some new directions for pol-

icy-makers and educators who want more informed teaching and learning. This summary for general readers raises many important and far-reaching questions, including the nature/nurture balance, the importance of the early years, the age-relatedness of learning specific attitudes and skills, and more.

### Higher Education

*As the Walls of Academia Are Tumbling Down*, Eds W. Z. Hirsch, L. E. Weber, Economica, 02. 13 essays by leading US and W. European higher education leaders examine the increasing permeability of their institutions, both within the university disciplines, and between the institutions, their communities, industry and each other.

*The Decline of the Guru: The Academic Profession in Developing and Middle-Income Countries*, Ed P. G. Altbach, Palgrave Macmillan, 03. Even as higher education numbers have expanded rapidly in these countries, the conditions of academic work have deteriorated, shaped by massification, accountability, privatization and market forces. The overwhelming influence of the leading Western economies is evident in the academic systems and the flow of students to the North. Improvement is unlikely.

*Beyond the Modern University: Towards Constructivist Postmodern University*, M. P. Ford, Praeger, 02. The modern university is implicated in global impoverishment, and needs to move beyond academic disciplines, philosophical materialism, and economism. An alternative model moves away from training individuals for specific jobs and from self-serving theory. It would be problem-and place-based, explicitly value-laden, earth-centred and focused on practical social change.

### Futures Thinking

*D. Morgan, Futures*, Nov-Dec, 02, examines the concept of images of the future as being fundamental to the definition of a particular era and culture, and the rise and fall of civilisations. This hardly applies to earlier historical periods but it does emerge with the European Renaissance, with ideas of progress, natural law and utopian socialism, as these became

realizable, dynamic and living goals for humankind. This intensified as human optimism grew with the application of reason to the natural world in the Age of Enlightenment. Reason and faith fostered images of utopia- the Kingdom of God on Earth. In America, the rational middle class virtues crystalised into a progressive view of life, American and later global. Progressive and Utopian images of the future suffered reversals in the post war era, reflected in the critiques by Existentialists.

The dynamic of these two modes constitutes a holistic image of the future with the progressive containing ideas of continuous and perpetual change, largely driven by science, technology and improving social organisation, while the utopian depicts a stable, perfected social order, with awareness of the need for reconstruction. The tensions between the two eventually produced the conflicts of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lately the two modes have re-emerged; the progressive socialist has led to the globalisation movement, while the utopian emphasises sustainable development, systems theory, global consciousness etc.

### Visions for/of NZ

V. Jayne examines real possibilities for a shared vision for New Zealand, *Management*, June 03, arising from a poll of 400 senior executives. While the majority supported such a development, many thought it should be a government initiative, and that it might also form the basis for a written constitution. Identifying descriptors ranged widely with equity, harmony, prosperity, the environment, honesty and innovation recurring readily. M. Menzies, NZ Futures Trust, identified four possible approaches as a starting point: the great leader, systematic, deep-end, and complex. The focus should be on creating processes and the media for strategic conversations to happen. Anew NZ is attempting one such initiative.

P. Matthews, *The Listener*, 18 Oct 03, p53, reflects on recent international recognition of NZ filmmakers, their tenacity, determination and a singular vision which is apparent in both *Lord of the Rings* and *Whale Rider*, a land-mysticism, a sense that magic and goodness are vanishing,

and need for messianic leadership.

### Strategic Foresight

A. Leigh, Harvard, examines this term, meaning policy development based on long-run scenario planning, and its applications in UK, USA and Australia. D. Adams, J. Wiseman, provide a detailed account and analysis of *Growing Victoria Together*, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, June 03.

A number of expert commentaries from *Futures: April*, R.van Wynsberghe et al, examine the *Georgia Basin Futures Project*, B.C, and its methods of community engagement, using expert workshops and a computer based sustainability tool as the base for a larger process of community engagement. June, T. J. Chermack, L van der Merwe.

Examine the strong relevance of the constructivist approach to teaching and learning in the processes of scenario planning. Oct, BC sustainability academic J. Robinson enlarges on the use of backcasting in scenario analysis, applied in the Georgia Basin process above. Dec, G. Burt, K van der Heijden focus on the practical hurdles faced by scenario planners, especially developing a trusting relationship with clients and assisting managers to a better understanding of what is involved. C. Harries, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol 70, 03, pp 797-817, provides a framework for evaluation of scenario planning and other strategic decision making techniques. There are multiple uses for these process, depending upon the client, the operational environment and the techniques.

### Social

#### Te Ao Maori

Nga Kahui Pou: *Launching Maori Futures*, (see above) comprises recent addresses given by leading Maori health and development specialist M. Durie, on topics ranging from health and social development to Maori in governance. Maori are facing a second millennium of significant challenge since their arrival in Aotearoa, each requiring dynamic adaptation. The foundation for eventual success lies in

*whanau* (extended family) capacity for six key qualities: -to care, to share, to act as guardians, to empower and to plan ahead. On this healthy lifestyles can develop, providing access to the full scope of the Maori world's capacity for healing and adding value to lives which have broken free from entrapments of poverty drugs and crime. Durie emphasises key principles and objectives for all the topics covered and the need for forward thinking and planning.

B. Hokowhitu researched the social and cultural antecedents of Maori male violence and its correlation with Maori male preponderance in sport. These linkages explain why so many men favour physical and sporting activities and employments, because there are few role models of Maori masculinity emphasising intellectual rather than physical prowess. The warrior, noble or savage, has conditioned representations of Maori in the external world and to themselves, and restricted the masculine options compared with those available to non-Maori. *NZ Sociology*, Vol 18/2, 03; *Summary NZ Education Review*, 5-11 Feb 03, p 5.

### The Autonomy Movements

A. Starr; J. Adams, *New Political Science*, Vol 25/1, 03, researched one of the three forms of anti-globalisation social movements: -radical reform, peoples globalisation and autonomy (delinking). Autonomy has had little research, but it covers a wide range of activities worldwide. They can be divided broadly into movements for local production and/or for local politics.

Local societies efforts to maintain livelihoods in face of corporate globalisation include fisher folk, forest dwellers, community currencies and variety of self-provisioning arrangements. The food system is a key aspect of local autonomy, shortening the links between producer and consumer through: community supported agriculture, urban gardens, slow food, waste recycling systems, community kitchens, etc.

Sustainable food production has become a global social movement of activists, practices and theories, which is mastering sustainable technologies for agriculture, economies, water

and waste management, energy, health education and political life.

Autonomous movements assert their capacity to find solutions to their own problems within their own cultural traditions and collective talents. This revolution of everyday life, is exemplified by Mexico's Zapatista, who campaign for indigenous ownership of land and autonomous political control. They also open up new political space by encouraging local, regional, national and global networks of such movements. These include: -subsistence co-operatives, collectivized clinics, independent media groups, autonomous schools. A network of grassroots community, indigenous, academics and urban anarchist groups battled successfully against the privatisation of Cochabamba, (Bolivia) water supplies. Government and economic breakdown have stimulated a wide range of autonomous productive and distributive movements in Argentina, including popular assemblies building from neighbourhood level. Homelessness or landless has stimulated widespread squatting and resettling movements in Brazil, Egypt, S. Africa, Japan, and several European nations.

The diversity of actors reflects the range economic and political analysis focused on growth, dependency and colonialism, stimulated by rising awareness that modernization will never deliver to benefit indigenous peoples, genders, and the environment. Serious criticism can be made about continuity of adequate provision, survivability in face of natural disasters, the potential for abuse by small business, the vulnerability of elites to external influence and, for urban intelligentsias, the loss of freedom.

### On Participatory Citizens

Volunteering is recognised as a prime aspect of social capital, an expression of active citizenship. Surveys usually define volunteering in specific, mainstreamed ways, intensified by recent increased co-operation between state and NGO sectors in delivery of services. The mainstream volunteer contrasts with those in Aboriginal societies. Indigenous help is not from choice, it part of the primacy of family/cultural connection. It may also be part of one's



responsibility to a wider group-e.g. official welcomes to visitors, and yet not be regarded as volunteering. Western concepts of volunteering imply individual choice and fulfilment. For indigenous peoples it is a key to racial and cultural survival, self-determination and mutual responsibility. *Australian Journal of Volunteering*, Vol 8/1 03.

M. Mowbray analyses the attack on NGOs expressed by Australian right-wing think-tanks, reflecting similar US groups and attitudes. Their key concern is the competition NGOs provide in advocacy and influence regarding free markets. NGO campaigns for human rights, corporate social responsibilities, industrial and environmental benchmarks, are deemed objectionable, and methods are used which seek to undermine the credibility of the NGOs. *Just Policy*, July 03. A joint report, *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century NGO: In the Market for Change*, *Financial Times*, 20 June 03 p1, by an international consultancy, *SustainAbility*, *UNEP*, and *UN Global Compact*, indicates that if NGOs are to sustain their influence in international affairs, they must ensure that their accountability process are as transparent as those required for business. This is the more necessary as NGOs and private companies engage more closely.

*Nature*, 23 October, 03, E. Fehr, U. Fischbacher examine the scientific understandings of the nature of human altruism. This is a powerful force and unique in the animal world, but it varies considerably. The altruist/selfish individual interplay is vital to human co-operation since a minority of one type can strongly influence the majority of the opposite group. Current gene-based evolutionary theories cannot explain important patterns of human altruism, indicating that cultural influences may prove equally significant.

A telephone survey conducted by A. Vromen, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 38/1,03, among nearly 300 Australians aged 18-34 explored their experience of participation in social and political concerns. This Generation X sample did not show homogenous response. Most of them had some form of involvement, though for nearly 20% of these, it was some form of sport or recreation. Four distinct types

emerged: -activist, communitarian, party and individualistic. Participation rates are higher for women and for those with higher education. Traditional assessment of participation could be widened to encompass this generation of political actors, but more in depth research is needed.

## On Cities

*Edgeless Cities: Exploring the Ellusive Metropolis*, R. E. Land, Brookings 03. These form vast, sprawling office developments which contain far more of urbanised office space than the CBDs. They are cities of function, not form, difficult to access by public transit, and growing.

*Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously: Economic Development, the Environment, and Quality of Life in American Cities*, K. E. Portnoy, MIT Press, 03, is a pioneering approach to neglected issues in implementation of sustainability. The key element for a serious focus is a sustainability plan, usually a strategic plan incorporating sustainability indicators. An Index of these is provided.

*Big & Green: Toward Sustainable Architecture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Ed D. Gissen, National Building Museum, 03. This is a pioneering exploration of the transformative power of sustainable design, focusing on big buildings which provide the greatest challenges but have major impact. Photo-essays in nine categories: energy, light and air, greenery, water and waste, construction and urbanism.

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