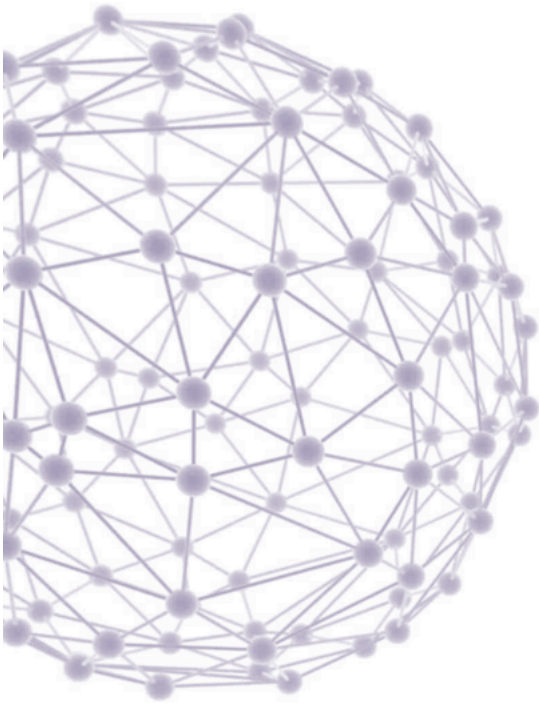




Centre for the Future

Summary Document



CENTRE FOR THE FUTURE

How can we make the world work for 100 per cent of humanity in the shortest possible time through spontaneous co-operation without ecological damage or disadvantage to anyone?

Buckminster Fuller

Some ventures are worth starting even if you cannot finish them. Electrifying the entire world's car fleet, ending our addiction to fossil fuels, assigning poverty to history... These are all examples of hyper-visionary ventures that advance human civilisation but can take decades if not several lifetimes to see through. Too few of us have the courage to start them. Even fewer dare fund them. This is where Centre for the Future comes in. We have a 100 year vision and plan to help reinvent society's most indispensable systems and practices.

Centre for the Future is a global enterprise focused on finding practical solutions to Buckminster Fuller's challenging question. Formed in partnership with some of the most insightful thinkers of our time, we are leading a 100 year *mindful uprising* of leaders everywhere – helping them to revitalise or reinvent systems that are collapsing under the weight of a population now exceeding seven billion people. Our purpose is to define, design and curate a viable world-system within which the truest expressions of what it means to be human can be realised.

Why We Matter

Humanity is at a crossroads. Many things we take for granted are under threat. Some of our most life-critical systems are in a state of imminent collapse. We believe humanity must urgently change its beliefs and amend its ways if future generations are to thrive and prosper in a sustainable world. If we continue blindly on our partisan paths, yielding to an innate bias for choosing quick and easy fixes, we will jeopardise almost everything we have created and cherish.

A wiser alternative is to make better use of the abundant ingenuity of our species to develop conscious transitions into a future that benefits the entire human family. A future we actually choose, rather than one foisted upon us. One we can welcome without fear and with open hearts.

But how can we do that when we have been taught to reason in ways that, even when we feel we are being innovative, often just reproduce the systems we claim to be reinventing? The key has to be in finding ways to *transcend* beliefs that anchor us in destructive practices even after their toxic nature become evident.

Centre for the Future seeks to install a healthier, more empathic worldview - both in our dealings with each other and in our relationship to planet Earth. A worldview where the reframing of conventional practices can be openly embraced. One where barriers to human health and well-being are eradicated and replaced with more enduring alternatives.

We only tackle big picture issues concerning humanity and its activities. In order to be successful we need to shift a great deal of our capital, in all its forms, away from parochial, shortsighted preoccupations, into more civilisation-advancing, system-changing endeavours.

To this end the Centre is not a passive observer. Unconstrained by orthodox boundaries imposed by geography, ethnicity or creed, our work manifests at the edge of evolution, helping to shape future conditions that benefit greater numbers of people.

Our Philosophy

Reaching out from its original node in Melbourne, Australia, Centre for the Future is not one enterprise but a global web of cultural sensors located in strategically significant parts of the world.

Each Centre provides a futures-oriented space where different questions can be posed and *conversations for wisdom* can mature. At the same time the network of Centres is a dynamic living ecosystem for cooperation on a planetary scale – a community of high-tech observatories in which perspective-shifting explorations of paradigmatic change can be contemplated, analysed and shared by people everywhere, through a variety of lenses, prior to new systems being designed and prototyped.

In each of the Centre's unique locations the significance of place is paramount. In Australia we imagine and embrace our *deep future* just as we acknowledge and celebrate our *deep past*. A past spanning over 40,000 years of continuous occupation by the first people out of Africa. An exceptional culture that pioneered innovation and whose narrative of endurance and adaptation provides a model of human ingenuity applied to sustainable futures.

What We Do

In directing our attention to comprehending and resolving complex, long-term, global issues in ways that benefit a majority of humanity, we have three primary functions. Over a period of 100 years we seek to:

- Reframe obsolete beliefs, assumptions and practices that comprise the current civilisational *worldview* and world-system
- Prototype and support scalable projects that validate a set of new beliefs
- Encourage and embed viable practices that reify these new beliefs.

In order to help us achieve and apply these emotional, psychological and practical advances we use a unique discovery and prototyping framework comprising three symbiotic elements:

1. **Wayfinding** – invites people from all walks of life into a forensic interrogation of the most profound structural challenges impacting society and life on our planet. This is a dialogical and collaborative design experience - a *knowledge amplifier* where the past is reinterpreted, current systems transformed, and entirely new proposals constructed - all from a deeper awareness of what really matters for current and future generations.
2. **Mindful Uprising** – is an operating agenda for translating the experience of *wayfinding* into applying new constructs, systems and practices that are ecologically benign, culturally desirable, economically feasible, socially acceptable and morally defensible, across and within five pivotal zones of activity:
 - Power & Governance – How can we collaborate and self-organise in ways that advance our humanity, resolve differences peacefully, and use knowledge intelligently in the pursuit of empathic coevolution?
 - Socialisation & Learning – How can we challenge our ideas and discover new wisdom that can be shared and used for the benefit of humanity as a whole?
 - Landscapes & Ecologies – How can we live in partnership with nature, using our resourcefulness to reduce waste and to step more lightly on the Earth?
 - Cultures & Communities – How can we ensure that the human diversity is valued in a world-system where we all live abundantly and in harmony with each other?
 - Economics & Production – How can we redesign the practices of economic production and distribution to ensure that wealth is shared more equitably and that poverty is consigned to history?
3. **The Observatory** – is a high-tech immersive environment and decision theatre for a deeper examination of dynamically complex systemic issues using the *wayfinding* process. It includes tools for visualising unstructured data in real-time and perceiving issues through a range of

challenging lenses and perspectives. This facility helps us explore a more expansive and in-depth interpretation of time and space. It honours the deep *past* while imagining the deep *future* - pulling both into a *present* moment pregnant with alternative options that would otherwise remain obscured and out of reach.

Reinventing the Worldview

Centre for the Future exists for one purpose: to overcome the inertia in the current world-system that favours the status quo by improving the health and well being of more people, in ways that lead to greater empathy, cooperation and peaceful coexistence, in a world that remains aesthetically and culturally diverse, and containing sufficient natural resources to provide for all of humanity's needs – now and for generations to come.

Our founding impulse for establishing the Centre and the rationale for taking such a radical philosophical position are one and the same. It is because we believe:

- there is mounting, irrefutable evidence, that fewer people are able to benefit from the way our current world-system favours certain groups – particularly because of the manner in which wealth is owned, produced and distributed – and that inequality is still considered a “natural phenomenon
- that this trend indicates a collapse in the efficacy of the worldview itself
- that certain aspects of the worldview therefore must be inherently flawed
- that a different, more advanced and sophisticated worldview is needed if we are to realise our vision of a better future for more people
- that in order to create such a future we must challenge the most fundamental tenets within the current worldview – including the view that the current cadre of leaders see themselves as the solution - and be prepared to redesign our most *life-critical* systems and processes accordingly.

This core philosophy, driven by a defiant hope that things must change, shapes our approach to each and every grand challenge we undertake and acts as a framework guiding our choice of projects, locations, learning partners and sponsors.

Our Greatest Challenge

All project and outreach activities undertaken by Centre for the Future intersect in ways that contribute to a unique set of experiences aimed at evolving the human story and its practices on this planet. The point of intersection is manifest in four fundamental questions that inform and underlie all of our inquiry and design:

- *What does it mean to be human?*
- *What will it take for humanity to coevolve to higher levels of consciousness?*
- *How can we expedite our ability to reach (for) that threshold faster?*
- *What is the story of the new worldview?*

Our source project investigates the fundamentals in these big questions. “What it Means to be Human” is our flagship initiative - profoundly distinctive from all other projects we may undertake in that it sets out to proclaim the normative world-system we want to create.

During the course of this project we study the evolution, structural events, driving forces and dynamics of the civilisational *worldview*, including its successes and failures, reviewing these through a variety of cultural lenses in order to reveal the new rules, values and practices that are desirable if we are to create a more viable and equitable world-system. Within its defiantly hopeful

discourse we observe the most appropriate beliefs, logics, values and qualities defining the desired world-system. Ultimately “What it Means to be Human” fleshes out the new narrative – a destiny story that can guide the advancement of our species and a wayfinder’s star chart to navigating successive grand challenges that will obstruct our path.

Other Grand Challenges

The following grid represents a taxonomy of the topics Centre for the Future will explore in its undertaking of grand challenges within and across five activity zones.

POWER & GOVERNANCE	SOCIALISATION & LEARNING	LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGIES	CULTURES & COMMUNITIES	ECONOMICS & PRODUCTION
Participative Forms of Democracy	Enhanced Learning Environments	Designing Viable Cities of the Future	Leadership for the Public Good	Cooperative Business Ecosystems
Peer-2-Peer Governance	Propaganda and Corporate Spin	Sustainable Water & Food Practices	Art as Social Identity & Meaning-Making	Orthodox Wage-Labour Formulae
Architectures of Control	Education as Collective Praxis	Conserving Natural Wilderness	Languages & Mindsets	Industrial Ecology & CleanTech
Media & The Industry of War	Cultural Difference as Common Wealth	Agriculture & Permaculture	Principles, Rules and the Rule of Law	The Global Monetary System
The Future of the Nation State	The Influence of Social Media	Connectivity & Spatial Resilience	Cultural Conservation	3D & Additive Manufacturing
The Literacies of Global Leadership	Spirituality & Consciousness	Travelling Through Landscapes	Evolving as One Human Family	Peer-2-Peer Production
Power in Hierarchies & Meshworks	Open Source Communities	Anthropogenic Landscape Ecology	Rewards & Sanctions in Society	Integral Economics & Accounting

Projects will be aimed at exploring in greater granularity and examining more rigorously the main assumptions underpinning “What it Means to be Human”. Once these projects are in a state of active implementation key lessons and consequences will be analysed and inserted into our story of the new worldview so that weak or uncertain aspects of the “What it Means to be Human” narrative can be modified.

Open Futures

Many ordinary men, women and children are feeling trapped and helpless in a world that is not of their choosing. Centre for the Future is committed to working with our partners around the world to deepen the awareness of people everywhere to entirely new options and possibilities.

The Centre’s outreach program enables broad based public access and participation, providing access to shaping the big challenges influencing the future with as many people and institutions as possible.

Designing the future needs to be increasingly shared and democratised - taken out of the hands of the few and into the hands of many. No longer can it be purely the domain of traditional roles and decision makers. Increasingly it needs to be shaped by the minds, hearts and hands of everyday citizens and the movements that they catalyse.

This is what Open Futures will strive to do – in futures precincts where custom installations will shift observers’ perspectives about what is possible, and through live online interaction.