ACTION LAB
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
17 OCTOBER 2013
Welcome. It is indeed a privilege to welcome you all to Government House on behalf of Her Excellency the Honourable Quentin Bryce who is overseas undertaking an Official Visit to the People’s Republic of China. I’ve been briefed on the Australian Futures Project and its very important objective to build our Nation’s capacity to make decisions for a flourishing shared future in the 2020s and 30s. I believe that such an objective is both admirable and essential.

I’ve been involved in public life in various fields for many years and have seen great leadership arise in unusual places. This is not merely a challenge for government, but for us all. It is truly inspirational to see so many sectors of society represented here today – academia, government, defence, civil society, as well as philanthropy, media, the arts, and business.

It has been wonderfully enlightening to read the brief biographies of those in attendance, as well as your individual aspirations for today. A gathering of such diversity from across Australia is indeed valuable – and perhaps uncommon. To achieve such an ambitious goal as that of the Australian Futures Project, it is also essential. This is the right group of people and I applaud most warmly your commitment, including the fact that you have given a day from your hectic schedules, to be here, to contribute.

I wish you all well in your deliberations and hope you enjoy both the opportunity to renew acquaintances and creatively address the crucial and important task before you. Individually, you represent outstanding intellect and a distinguished background. I am confident you also represent a shared hope and an even better future for Australia and beyond. I look forward to joining you again at lunchtime to learn more about your deliberations.

May I also take this opportunity to thank La Trobe University for the role they played in initiating this most important venture.

Thank you.
HONOUR GUESTS
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INVITATION

Private Invitation to Government House

As someone with valuable insights and an important perspective, the Australian Futures Project is delighted to invite you in your personal capacity to work with a select group of established and emerging leaders to build Australia’s capabilities to make and implement decisions for a flourishing shared future.

You will be joining 25 accomplished Australians from diverse backgrounds who have demonstrated leadership in their fields.

Imagine an Australia where long-term decisions were made and successfully implemented.

This will entail a one-hour off-the-record interview, two hours of pre-reading, and a half-day interactive session on 17 October 2013 hosted by the Governor-General at Government House in Canberra. You will be supported and facilitated by an expert and experienced team.

The Australian Futures Project will work with you and others in 2014 and 2015 to develop pilots to test the key ideas that emerge from this group and then implement the successful ideas at scale.

Please see australianfutures.org and enclosed information sheet for further details.

RSVP: 11 Oct 2013
ralph@australianfutures.org
HONOURED GUESTS

Her Excellency, Professor MARIE BASHIR, in her capacity as Administrator of the Commonwealth of Australia
GARY BANKS, Dean and CEO, The Australia and New Zealand School of Government (and former Chairman, Productivity Commission)
NKANDU BELTZ, Founder and Director, Youth Empowerment Programme Australia
STEPHANIE COPUS-CAMPBELL, Executive Director, Harold Mitchell Foundation
JOHN DALEY, CEO, Grattan Institute, University of Melbourne
DEAN DALLA VALLE, President, BHP Billiton Coal
JOHN DEWAR, Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University
ANNA DRAFFIN, Deputy CEO, Philanthropy Australia
KEN HENRY, Executive Chair, Institute of Public Policy at ANU (and former Secretary, Department of Treasury)
PAUL KELLY, Editor at Large, The Australian
ROSS LOVE, Managing Partner, Australia and New Zealand, Boston Consulting Group
DAVID MALOUF, author
JACK MANNING BANCROFT, CEO, Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
JULIA NEWTON-HOWES, CEO, CARE Australia
CATRIONA NOBLE, CEO, McDonald's Australia
JUNE OSCAR, CEO, Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women’s Resource Centre
JULIE ROSENBERG, M H Carnegie & Co
GRAEME SAMUEL, Director, Monash Business Policy Forum (and former Chairman, ACCC)
BRIAN SCHMIDT, Nobel Laureate in Physics, Australian National University
CAROL SCHWARTZ, Director, Stockland
MICHAEL STUCHBURY, Editor, The Australian Financial Review
SOPHIE WELDON, Young Social Pioneer, Foundation for Young Australians
SIMONE WILKIE, Commander, Australian Defence College

APOLOGIES
CASSANDRA GOLDIE, CEO, Australian Council of Social Service
SARAH HARDEN, The Chernin Group
TERRY MORAN, Boston Consulting Group (and former Secretary, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet)
DAVID PEEVER, Managing Director, Rio Tinto Australia
MICHAEL RENNIE, Managing Partner, Australia and New Zealand, McKinsey & Company
ELANA RUBIN, Company Director

PROJECT TEAM
RALPH ASHTON, Director, Australian Futures Project
FIONA MCKENZIE, Strategy Advisor, Australian Futures Project
SALLY FAWKES, Senior Lecturer, La Trobe University / Australian Futures Project
LEIGH GASSNER, Partner, Reos Partners
FERNANDO LECUNA, Artist, Duel Designs
MEGAN SENEQUE
ANDREW TAYLOR
The objective of the Australian Futures Project is to build Australia’s capacity to make decisions for a flourishing shared future in the 2020s and 30s. The Australian Futures Project believes that Australians can make good long-term strategic decisions for the benefit of future generations. To do so, it is important to create the conditions for deep engagement, motivation, and mobilisation throughout society and across sectors. The Action Lab was one part of an overall strategy to create these conditions. To do this, a three-stage process was created comprising in-depth dialogue interviews with Action Lab participants, a half-day Action Lab, and ongoing follow-up and implementation of actions.

Twenty-five leading Australians from diverse backgrounds were invited to take part in the Action Lab, as a cross-section of Australia’s decision-making system. This included people with backgrounds in government, media, business, public representative groups, the expert community (including academia), and philanthropy. The non-linear agenda for the Action Lab fostered dialogue and shared learning between participants. The aim was to enable participants to step back from their day-to-day work and pressures as well as their existing assumptions, imagine and describe an evolved, desired decision-making system, and then identify strategic leverage points that, if focussed on, would shift the system from its current state to an evolved, desired state. Importantly, participants were invited to listen with an open mind, to contribute their knowledge, wisdom, and creativity, and to open their networks to foster follow-on action. The Australian Futures Project offered to work with participants and others in 2014 and 2015 to develop prototypes to test the key ideas that emerged from this group, and then implement the successful ideas at scale.
The flow of the day was designed around three key stages of dialogue: sensing, retreating and reflecting, and creating. Within these three movements, participants were asked to work together to: co-initiate, co-sense and co-create. Co-initiating is about participants taking the time to explore personal drivers, before moving into co-sensing and understanding drivers of the current system. Co-creating is about jointly identifying possible future actions and innovations to shift the current system to a new state.
CO-INITIATING
As part of a three-stage process, in-depth interviews were held with almost all participants (including four people who could not attend at the last minute) prior to the event. The purpose of these interviews was not data collection but to help the interviewee to express and clarify their own thinking and, through a synthesis report, allow others to step into the world of the interviewee. These dialogue interviews provided voices and perspectives to both surface and challenge prevailing thinking and assumptions that affect Australia's decision-making system. These conversations were the first steps toward creating the conditions to enable the participants in the session to help drive the change process. The following quotes and questions taken from the dialogue interviews were posted on the walls in our meeting space at Government House. To broaden the perspectives even further, a number of young people were engaged through the Foundation for Young Australians to express their views and hopes. Their input was also displayed. Participants were invited to pair up and 'explore' these different perspectives as a way of deepening their understanding of the system and each other.

We have no unifying story that we tell about the country. There is substance out there. We have it in Think Tanks, public service, and some of the lobby groups. But, that doesn't always add up to a well-informed public in places where the traditional media is fading away.

I have a gut feeling there are 4 or 5 big ideas out there that would make a big difference. Australia is small enough to get them done.

I always come back to having a system that throws up the right kind of leaders. The health of our democracy requires us to get the good people into those jobs.

An effective strategic leverage point is usually a combination of right timing, good leadership and a lot of hard work that enables something to 'blossom'. When you deeply care about something it becomes your life work.

If you communicate (which is to not just speaking but listening to what is relevant to the community) and you take a leadership position then you can achieve change.

We need to re-discover the things that worked in the past and address it urgently. The complacency really worries me. You don't want it to be too late. Let's take the learning of what happened to the health care system the US, the learning of environmental issues, and address it urgently.

There needs to be a shift in policy to a 'people' rather than 'legal' side.

People default to battle lines because they don't see a different view of the future.

We need to have conversations that open a new world of thinking around what is possible: creating space for innovation and focusing on process (as well as outcomes) is critical.

In a crisis you can push through a whole lot of stuff. We presently don't have a crisis to justify that. Therefore we have to take the community with us and we only do that on a few issues.

People are becoming quite cynical which is the next step after losing trust.

We need to know how to make space for the voice of young people. It is a sign of maturity to recognise that young people have ideas for their future.

We have some good thinkers capable of meeting and honestly putting our issues on the table and working through those. It is just not up to the government; it is up to us as Australians. This is a new ball game and Governments can't be the only players. Not acknowledging someone's reality is to deny their humanity.

We need new ways of thinking, planning and implementing.

CO-SENSING: GALLERY WALK

PARTICIPANT THOUGHTS

It's too early to be talking about a vision. We need to spend some time understanding how bad things currently are.

If we don't empower our young people our future is pretty messed up.

Reform is easier to introduce in a period of crisis rather than prosperity. Australia has come off a long growth cycle (since 2003), and a period of prosperity has lead to complacency, which is the enemy of reform.

We need to balance the benefits of economic growth with awareness of equity considerations – with equity as the organising principle.

The key leverage point for quality decision-making for a shared flourishing future is education. It is the only way we can get our citizens to want to achieve more for our future.

If there were easy policy decisions out there to be made, they would have been made already. By definition everything here on in that is going to be good for the country is going to be politically difficult.

The key issue is one of framing problems: we need leaders who help understand the context and environment of the problem and serve as navigator, guide, explainer rather than being compelled to have the answers and act.

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CO-SENSING: MAPPING THE CURRENT SYSTEM

To continue the process of “sensing” the system, participants were given the following simplified model of the current decision-making system developed by the Australian Futures Project. They were asked to discuss in small groups their understanding of how the system works today. Participants were invited to amend the Australian Futures Project’s model to better reflect their understanding, or to draw a new one altogether. This exercise allowed conversations about the drivers influencing the system, why these drivers are operating the way they do and how these drivers have been allowed to arise. It also created conversations about which individuals and sectors are (or have) contributed to the operation of these drivers. It is at this point that participants also began to recognise positive aspects of the system that need to be appreciated as well as those aspects of the system that are causing it to be stuck or possibly ineffectual for the future well-being of Australia.
ON IMPROVING THE AUSTRALIAN FUTURES PROJECT’S MODEL OF AUSTRALIA’S DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM, PARTICIPANTS SUGGESTED:

- Citizens are the sum of everything, not just unique groups, and should be placed around the system and not represented just as a discrete sector
- Philanthropy, NGOs, and the third sector should be added
- Government should be expanded to show that it isn’t just one entity: there are parliament (government, the opposition, minor parties, and independents), the executive, and the bureaucracy and there are State and Federal governments
- Government should not be at the top: no single group is really central
- There needs to be some way to represent both historical context and international / external context
- The system is much more fragmented and complex than the model
- There are crossovers between sectors already – universities as businesses, citizens as journalists
LUNCH: RETREATING AND REFLECTING

LUNCH WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPANTS TO RETREAT AND REFLECT ON EARLIER DISCUSSIONS.
CO-CREATING: MOVING TO AN EVOLVED SYSTEM

Having considered the state of Australia’s current decision-making system, and having reflected over lunch on the morning discussions, participants were asked to what a desirable, evolved system might look like. They were invited to consider what would need to shift both in them personally and in the system to move from the current system to an evolved system. Participants identified a range of leverage points to enable this shift. Although there were overlaps and outliers, they fell broadly under five ‘domains of opportunity’:

1. Vision, leadership, and storytelling
2. Competent government
3. Active and connected citizen engagement
4. Connection and collaboration between sectors
5. Capital market investment choices

After reviewing different models of the current system, based on previous group discussions, and having jointly identified key strategic intervention points, participants then broke into groups to discuss the opportunity domain of their choice, with the aim of identifying concrete action within that domain to enhance Australia’s decision-making system. Large groups formed around the first and second opportunities. Three people discussed the third. No one chose to work on the fourth or fifth.
Interestingly, these five opportunity domains are similar to those the Australian Futures Project uncovered through in-depth dialogue interviews with 19 participants ahead of the Action Lab at Government House on 17 Oct 2013, an Australian Futures Project Boardroom Lunch for business leaders hosted by Ashurst Lawyers on 9 Oct 2013, and conversations with 375 leaders over the last 18 months. They are presented here in a matrix under four meta-themes to show this overlap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOSTERING A NATIONAL IDENTITY, VISION, AND LEADERSHIP (in government, in business, and across the decision-making system)</th>
<th>ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTRIBUTION (in government, in business, and across the decision-making system)</th>
<th>BUILDING COMPETENCE FOR THE MODERN WORLD (including in complex adaptive systems)</th>
<th>REPAIRING AND STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS (between and within communities, between sectors, and between levels of government)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action Lab at Government House (17 Oct 2013)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Vision, leadership, and storytelling</td>
<td>• Active and connected citizen engagement</td>
<td>• Competent government</td>
<td>• Connection and collaboration between sectors</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dialogue Interviews in preparation for the Action Lab at Government House</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fostering leadership</td>
<td>• Recognising that government can’t act alone</td>
<td>• Succession planning</td>
<td>• Connecting as people</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Engaging the public</td>
<td>• Giving young people a voice in the future</td>
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<td>• Movement between sectors</td>
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<td>• Having a long-term national vision and narrative</td>
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<td>• and collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ashurst Boardroom Lunch (9 Oct 2013)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Creating a national vision through a State of the Nation address</td>
<td>• Creating the conditions to enable businesses to more fully contribute to the future of Australia</td>
<td>• Building skills for working in complex adaptive systems / systems thinking</td>
<td>• Improving collaboration (and reducing prejudice) across government, business, and academia</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Embracing Australia’s place in Asia (including through Asian presence in senior business leadership)</td>
<td>• Creating a greater role for business leaders in explaining complex change to the public</td>
<td>• Overcoming Australia’s love affair with the tangible (farms, mines, factories) in a more and more intangible world</td>
<td>• Improving Australia’s Federation (state-federal relations)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conversations with 375 Established and Emerging Leaders</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of storytelling and leadership</td>
<td>• Prosperity leading to complacency</td>
<td>• Complexity, idiosyncrasy, and confusion</td>
<td>• Broken and weak relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Speed and misaligned incentives</td>
<td>• Misplaced power</td>
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The following section reflects the discussion about the current system as well as the discussion about an evolved system. Comments have been grouped here to better present the strong themes that arose throughout the day.

VISION, LEADERSHIP, AND STORYTELLING

**Diagnosis**
- If we as Australians were to genuinely embrace a national vision and narrative, government would be authorised and empowered to implement better policy and to act with courage
- Anxiety is being generated by an over-dramatisation in the media, which emphasises government's lack of control, to which government over-reacts by over-emphasising their level of control, which in turn causes citizens to lose faith and refocus their efforts where they have control – in their own lives and at the local community level
- Creating a national story is a challenge for all settler societies
- The levers to effect change have changed dramatically
- Privately constituted groups work out action, which is not sold well to the public
- Intellectual battles are being refought by each new generation; debates that were thought to have been won decades ago are re-emerging
- We have lost trust in leaders
- We cannot just produce good leaders. The only thing we can do is help the communication process. A leader may emerge who is happy to take up communication process. If you have a leader with good process, then we can be confident that action can ensue.
- Who are we and what do we all share?
- Do we need more of a nation building exercise?
- How do we bring effective community consultation into this at many levels?
- Do we need a deliberative assembly that is not run by government so we can have a national conversation?
- Can we create a sense of ownership within a collective story? How do we go about developing that story? Is it through media?
- Do we need to formalise or institutionalise the telling of stories or is it already happening with individuals and communities? Is the national story the sum of all those stories? Is it about coalescing individuals’ stories into a national narrative? How can we do this and keep the multitude of voices within our collective story so people can customise the story to fit with their experience?
- How we approach conflict resolution?

**Leverage Points**
- Reframe our narrative and leadership to confirm everything is in service of the people and the environment
- Create a sense of belonging, whether an individual and their family have been Australians for 6 years, 225 years, or 60,000 years
- Describe and build a national identity
- Better explain what the country needs to do and why:
  - What our endowments are
  - What our values, beliefs and cultures are
  - Prospects, opportunities and challenges
- Promote an ongoing national conversation that also fosters the intergenerational adoption of ideas
- Keep refining our national narrative so that the story we tell ourselves in 30 years should have evolved from that we tell ourselves now
- Cultivate a broad range of storytellers
- Identify and foster those with leadership potential
- Foster clear vision and courage of convictions and communications in government (e.g., Hawke (Federal); Greiner (NSW) who every day for 3 months portrayed a problem with trains that got on the front page of the newspapers, so when a solution was presented, the public understood: a good model)

**Proposed Action**
- 'State of the Nation' Address: Determine how best to institute an annual ‘state of the nation’ address that goes beyond the immediate election cycle, explains the context of the next 5-20 years, and sets out what the country needs to do and why. The address would be presented by the Prime Minister or Governor-General but with safeguards so it did not become a political football. It would be informed by content from leaders from a range of sectors and drafted through a dialogue process (not just by the Prime Minister’s Office).

COMPETENT GOVERNMENT

**Diagnosis**
- We have a problem if the bureaucracy is weak, unskilled, and controlled
- We need politicians who are prepared to trust the bureaucracy and allow them to think things through well
- Quality of consultation is important
- Who is on review committees is important
- Competence comes at the start and at the finish (i.e., competence to understand the problem properly and influence the solution)
- Government is presently a monoculture of elected parliamentarians
- There may not be agreement between citizen groups but it is critical that they have a more informed view about what it is all about
- What do competence and leadership mean?
- What is ‘good process’?
- How could we go and tell the story of what was done in this room today and how we think good process is critical?
- Do we have a critical mass of leaders who can lead us into future?
- Who would want to be in government? What are the incentives to get the best people into positions of decision-making power?

**Leverage Points**
- Attract better people into government
- Strengthen governments’ strategic capacity building
- Strengthen links and trust between elected politicians and the bureaucracy
- Reinstate good process because good process in its widest sense is fundamental: proper and orderly decision-making, transparent policy based on proper investigation and independent enquiry to identify policy issues and set priorities
- Apply a ‘test of the future’ on decisions
- Cultivate in non-government sectors a culture of responsibility for outcomes
Foster and enable more diversity of citizen input into government
Enhance direct communication between government and citizens
Build technical capability in all sectors

**Proposed Actions**
- Personal Commitment to Support Good Process: As a group that met today, in our various interactions with government, reinforce support for good process based in evidence (e.g., root and branch reviews, audits, commissions, inquiries). While remaining at arms length from government, support government and stand up and be counted, and defend to our networks that this is something that needs support.
- Policy Case Studies: Analyse Australian public policy case studies from the past 30 years to understand what influences decision-making for the long-term collective good (see Annex for more information).
- MP Professional Development Prototype: Develop a prototype for a professional development initiative for members of parliament (see Annex for more information).

**ACTIVE AND CONNECTED CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

**Diagnosis**
- Citizens have power and can effect change
- Citizens have trouble gathering support for change; it is easier to gather support to oppose something
- There is already a propensity in the community to take ownership, shown through high levels of volunteering. How can this come together as a collective?
- How do we connect? By sharing stories?
- Do we need a new mechanism that is separate from government and connects individual community hubs? Or is there an existing one we need to empower and make people more aware of?

**Leverage Points**
- Create resilient connected communities
- Empower citizens
- Build shared spaces to bring individual stories together and connect communities around Australia in facilitated hubs so they can share interests and speak with influence
- Educate and train citizens
- Have community service instead of schoolies week

**Proposed Actions**
- Youth Engagement: Engage La Trobe University students in discussion and action about Australia’s future through Saepod, a mobile video recording pod (see Annex for more information).
- Community Connection Prototype: Develop a prototype for connecting communities around Australia in facilitated hubs so they can share interests, inspirations, and success stories, and speak to those with power.

**CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN SECTORS**

**Diagnosis**
- A great deal of work and thinking comes out of academia but this intellectual power is not converted into something to influence government
- There is not necessarily agreement between groups within the business sector, within the citizens sector, or even within the media sector
- Individual relationships matter in our country. We need to expand the space in which decisions get made. This might get better outcomes than if left to politicians.
- There are many broken or weak relationships, represented by the lines between sectors in the Australian Futures Project model, including:
  - Business-Government
  - Government-Citizens
  - Government-Experts
  - Politicians / Executive-Bureaucracy / Public Service
  - Government-Media
- The ideal would be when all the links are strong and there is trust between sectors
- When some connections are broken or weak, other connections become stronger (e.g., Government-Media has become stronger as Government-Citizens has atrophied)
- Strong links between all sectors do not guarantee better decision making
- The Media-Government link might not be effective and there might be antipathy between those sectors, but that does not mean the link is not powerful
- More discussion is needed around media and its ability to set the agenda: media is filtering the messages that are getting to others

**Leverage Points**
- Foster multi-disciplinary leaders
- Enable and encourage movement between sectors
- Enable and encourage intra- and cross-sectoral collaboration
- Foster responsibility and accountability in sectors other than government
- Build technical capability in all sectors
CHECK OUT:
THOUGHTS ON THE DAY

On People, Process, and Optimism

- An extremely good group to work with. I leave with extreme optimism. There are remedies for mild ailments.
- Fantastic group.
- Terrific group to be part of. The mission continues to be worthy. How do we find our place?
- Good process.
- The goodwill is tangible.
- Reassured as an Australian. Inspired and hopeful.

On the Importance of Diversity and Dialogue

- Today reminded me how important diversity is – challenges thinking and brings new thinking. I will hold myself more accountable to gather more diverse groups.
- I was reminded how many hats we each wear that multiply our potential to influence, once commitment is made.
- A unique gathering and a chance to think more broadly about how Australia works right now and how to improve it.
- Shows the importance of creating safe spaces for people from a wide variety backgrounds to talk about the problem. We need to find a way for people to talk publicly about that.
- There is discontinuity between the political system and the people. The divisions in the political system have become very profound since the 2001-2004 election, which has been very destructive. It has exaggerated the extent of disagreement in the community. There is more hostility and antagonism. Politics is a contest of competing interests. But in a sense this gathering is a template for the moral that there is more potential capacity for agreement in the community and crossing bridges in the community than we see in the political system itself. For us to make progress, we've got to drain some of the hostility out of the political system. However we can do that in discussion among civil society groups the better it will be.
On Common Themes
- There were common themes across discussion groups.
- Getting broad directions – the need for “inclusion and better decision making processes” is an important general message.
- Surprised there was broad agreement things aren’t good enough. A starting point for progress has to be understanding of where we are.

On the Importance (and Difficulty) of Action
- Still trying to fix the old system instead of creating a new one.
- Today struggled to become concrete.
- It’s easier to identify problems, but harder to identify practical actions.
- There were powerful suggestions around relationships. I have many new insights to think about. What we can do ourselves is still a mystery...
- Solutions – hard to get a big group coalescing on a ‘to do’ list.
- I’d be disappointed if it just ended up with recommendations.
- We can build an army of change makers. Then we can start piloting.
- What struck me is that when there is something that needs improving in the system, it is natural to point to government - but what is encouraging about today’s discussion is that people understand that it is not something that can be left to government. It is only going to be fixed and improved if there is broad-based involvement in finding better ways.

On Next Steps
- I need time to digest and percolate.
- An important role for the Australian Futures Project will be to bring next steps and continue the momentum.
- It would be good to have a summary report that crystallises today’s discussions and conclusions, and summarises what others have to say in follow-up meetings.
NEXT STEPS

Promisingly, progress was made at the Action Lab along four streams:
1. A diverse, insightful, and influential group of leaders who do not often have the opportunity to do so, met each other, shared views, and made connections
2. Participants contributed to a deeper collective understanding of Australia’s past, present, and desired decision-making systems
3. Participants identified a suite of leverage points that provide fertile ground for concrete action to improve Australia’s decision-making system across the following five opportunity domains:
   a. Vision, leadership, and storytelling
   b. Competent government
   c. Active and connected citizen engagement
   d. Connection and collaboration between sectors
   e. Capital market investment choices
4. Participants proposed at least six specific ideas for such concrete action:
   a. A ‘State of the Nation’ Address
   b. Personal Commitment to Support Good Process
   c. Policy Case Studies
   d. Professional Development for Members of Parliament (Prototype)
   e. Youth Engagement
   f. Community Connection (Prototype)

In general, participants thought the Action Lab was time well spent, and called on the Australian Futures Project to foster follow-on action. Therefore, in addition to existing planned activities (see www.australianfutures.org), and mirroring the four streams above, the Australian Futures Project will work in four ways to build on the significant progress at the Action Lab:

1. Offer opportunities for those who met at the Action Lab to stay connected with each other and to work together on next steps
2. Communicate with the public at large and targeted groups the diagnosis of Australia’s past and present decision-making systems, characteristics of an evolved, desired decision-making system, and opportunities for action
3. Work with Action Lab participants and others to identify, develop, and implement further concrete actions that respond to the leverage points identified under the five opportunity domains (see above)

4. Work with Action Lab participants to implement the six concrete proposed actions (see above): where appropriate, this will involve prototyping – see text box for detail

What is Prototyping?

The Australian Futures Project is engaging wide a wide range of individuals and organisations through various fora to surface ideas for actions to enhance Australia’s underlying decision-making system. The Action Lab at Government House on 17 Oct 2013 was a major part of this discovery process. Building on the insights and motivation that have emerged from this engagement, the Australian Futures Project aims to use prototyping to develop and test such ideas.

Prototyping is an approach to developing, testing, and improving ideas at an early stage before large-scale resources are committed to implementation. It provides a way to experiment, evaluate, learn, refine and adapt ideas without the pressures of needing to be ‘correct’ or committing a lot of resources upfront. Informed by design thinking, prototyping is an iterative learning approach that allows ideas to mature as you go along. Prototyping can be useful when an idea exists but a clear understanding of the exact specifications of implementation are yet to emerge. The idea might be ‘rough and ready’ but it can be tried early and rapidly - failure tells us more about the idea and is useful. A prototype can inform the specifications for a pilot at a later stage. The pilot would then help to resolve practical aspects of implementation in particular contexts before large-scale roll-out and resource commitment.

At its most basic, prototyping involves the following steps:

- Involve relevant people at an early stage
- Develop ideas with the people who will help you find answers
- Make those ideas tangible and test them
- Refine those ideas
- Use the prototype to inform and improve the design of the final ‘product’
Participants at the Action Lab proposed six specific ideas for such concrete action:

1. A ‘State of the Nation’ Address
2. Personal Commitment to Support Good Process
3. Policy Case Studies
4. Professional Development for Members of Parliament (Prototype)
5. Youth Engagement
6. Community Connection (Prototype)

This Annex provides initial thoughts for next steps on three of the six. The Australian Futures Project will continue to develop next steps for all six.

**Policy case studies**

The Australian Futures Project proposes to work with La Trobe University, other academic partners, and participants at the 17 Oct 2013 Action Lab to undertake analysis and engage with experts to:

■ Understand what influences long-term decision-making based on Australian public policy case studies from the past 30 years
■ Distil the major trends that will shape Australia’s future including the contexts in which decisions will be made and implemented
■ Uncover what is working (and not working) in other countries’ decision-making systems that we can learn from and apply in Australia
■ Identify capabilities we need to strengthen and / or build in Australia to enable decision-making for a flourishing shared future
■ Develop trusted frameworks to gather existing case studies or document new ones, and to evaluate policy-making (over time, to build up over time a larger set of case studies from which to learn)
Professional development for Members of Parliament

The Australian Futures Project proposes to develop, in conjunction with La Trobe University, other partners, and the federal political parties, a prototype for a professional development initiative for members of parliament. This builds on the model developed by the Institute for Government in the United Kingdom. The first iteration of the prototype would be offered to 15 MPs across both houses of Federal parliament, and run for one day. It will draw on input from current and former politicians and their advisors, as well as leaders outside the political class. It is grounded in the twin understanding that:

- The job of a modern member of parliament is complex, pressured, and difficult
- Unlike other professions, members of parliament receive very little (if any) formalised training or ongoing professional development

Topics covered in the prototype would be refined through discussion with the political parties and partners, but the following serve to start discussion:

- Navigating the Modern Media Landscape
- Evidence and Policy Making
- Australia’s Federation and the Westminster System
- Governance
- Ethics
- Leadership

Youth engagement

Saepod is an innovative mobile video recording pod to capture people’s stories of the past, feelings in the present and hopes and visions for the future. Saepod is a mobile story space brought to life by Sophie Weldon’s Creative Ventures to fulfill the story capturing needs of community groups, museums, organisations, and businesses who believe in the power of stories and the essential need to capture them in innovative ways.

The Australian Futures Project, Sophie Weldon / Creative Ventures, and La Trobe University propose to engage the La Trobe student community around their ideas for the future by using the Saepod. The Saepod will be located on campus during 2014 O-week to act as a platform to record the students’ visions for their own future and for Australia’s future. By using new technology and innovation, students will be intrigued to step inside the Saepod and record their own video via the touch screen interface.

The videos recorded in the pod will be edited and made accessible for all the students to view on a micro site, or on the La Trobe website. Politics, media, and journalism students will be invited to assist in post-production. Both La Trobe and the Australian Futures Project will share rights to the content. Students who recorded videos will be encouraged to tag and share their video story on social media and with their networks. The Australian Futures Project will use the videos to carry the youth perspective into important dialogue and planning sessions for the next phase of the project.