THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Our Impact 2013-2018

An independent evaluation undertaken by

MUTUAL TRUST
**Government-Focussed Initiatives**

2 new public-sector institutions

25 federal departments and agencies have taken part in our 21st Century Service courses

91% of 21st Century Service Level 2 participants (6-day course) ranked it excellent or good

80% of 21st Century Service Level 1 participants (3-day course) ranked it excellent or good

100% of 21st Century Service participants have applied the behaviours and skills to their work

90% of 21st Century Service participants found the course had a medium to large positive impact on their ability to navigate complex challenges

1,000 federal public servants from almost all departments have — through 21st Century Service — built the capability and networks to solve complex problems

90% of 21st Century Service participants built new relationships or contacts

5% of Federal, South Australian, Tasmanian, and Victorian politicians have participated in our Parliamentary Leaders Program — a total of 23 individuals from 6 parties from 5 jurisdictions

96% of Parliamentary Leaders Program participants stated that they would recommend the course to their fellow politicians

100% of Parliamentary Leaders Program participants stated that the course has had a positive influence on their ability to govern

**Support Through Bespoke Solutions**

60 participants in Actions for NSW Agriculture

12 unique consulting projects to support changemakers

3 projects supported with $10,000 seed funding

3 unique processes to solve complex societal challenges

86% of participants Actions for NSW Agriculture feel more confident as leaders; 67% got involved in new projects; 95% formed important new relationships

8 stand-alone solutions to complex societal challenges supported
## Citizen-Focussed Initiatives

- **2** new platforms to engage Australian citizens (My Big Idea and What’s the Future, Australia?)
- **4** citizen-led initiatives supported from What’s the Future, Australia?
- **12** new citizen-led solutions to complex societal challenges in My Big Idea
- **12,000** Australians’ knowledge expanded on 14 challenges and opportunities for Australia’s future
- **58,000** unique visitors to mybigidea.org.au and 9,150 registered members of My Big Idea
- **1,175** ideas submitted to My Big Idea
- **1,100** participants in the Australian National Values Assessment
- **189** stories on My Big Idea in News Corp Australia mastheads
- **$4m** value of media coverage of My Big Idea by News Corp Australia
- **12** white papers on discrete topics as diverse as affordable housing and food systems, and on system-level issues that investigate how the system works, where the levers for change lie, and how to activate them
- **84%** of My Big Idea participants thought it was excellent or good
- **15 million** Australians knew about My Big Idea
- **30 experts** participated in What’s the Future, Australia?
- **12** major cross-sector roundtables convened, leading to new initiatives
- **2** national polls conducted and disseminated through summary analysis
- **2,000** subscribers to the AFP newsletter

## Explaining The Context: Thought Leadership

- **Anchor** of 4 Boss/Optus ‘True Leaders Game Changers’ podcasts
- **Multiple** appearances in the media
- **12** white papers on discrete topics as diverse as affordable housing and food systems, and on system-level issues that investigate how the system works, where the levers for change lie, and how to activate them
Our Team Since Founding

Ralph Ashton
Sean Day
Timotia Devi
Victoria Dimond
Matthew Ericson
Sally Fawkes
Ashley French
Jessica Fuller
Madeleine Gasparinatos
Angela Han
Geraldine Kennett
Fiona McKenzie
Justine Roche
Chloë Spackman
Paula Steyer
Khiem Tudo

Our Advisory Board

Kate Chaney
John Dewar
Jono Gourlay
Rachel Peck
Enrico Rizzon
Ivan Wheen
REFLECTIONS

North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia
The Australian Futures Project really started in 2010 with a question: why is Australia - a rich and well-educated country - struggling to seize the opportunities and address the challenges that pretty much everyone agrees will determine our future prosperity and wellbeing?

What was true in 1910 was still true in 2010, and remains true today:

But enough people who I respected and trusted encouraged me. These people are my heroes because they backed something when it was just a kernel of an idea. They met with me when plans were murky, explored intangible concepts with me, and over time became generous funders, partners, colleagues, advisory board members, connectors, and sounding boards. I acknowledge especially John Dewar, Emily Fuller, Jono Gourlay, Kerry Graham, Fiona McKenzie, and Emma White. Many more were to follow. Thank you.

We began with the intention of experimenting for three years and then taking stock before setting out on our next phase. In the helter-skelter of a small start-up non-profit, that three years became five years. So here we are. As you’ll read in this report, we have had big successes and learnt big lessons - for us and for others trying to solve similar challenges whether in Australia or overseas. Our fifth birthday marks an important milestone as we move from experimental start-up to a more focussed “adolescent” committed to big picture, catalytic impact.

My biggest lesson from the last five years has been that the very parts of society most accused of causing the problems (politicians, the public service, and the media) are the very ones who have been most willing to acknowledge the problems, and accept responsibility, take risks, and display personal vulnerability in trying to find systemic solutions. That should be recognised and rewarded.

The adjective that I am most proud of hearing people use to describe Australian Futures Project is courageous. I remain a firm believer that we each create our own realities and we collectively create the national reality. It’s only when individuals take responsibility for their own predicaments that we can make significant strides to our desired collective future. Our arenas are different sizes, our time in the dust and sweat and blood will vary, and some of us will need help, but when push comes to shove, society is not an abstract concept run by “someone else”; it is us. I therefore hope you will be courageous in supporting us, as we commit to being courageous in supporting Australians.

Ralph Ashton,
Executive Director and Co-founder

Excerpt from US President Theodore Roosevelt’s speech “Citizenship In A Republic” delivered at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France on 23 April, 1910:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

From the Founders

By 2013, I decided it was time to jump headlong into the arena. I started having discussions about how I was going to do something to understand and fix short-termism in Australia. A common response was a simple, ironic, defeated, “good luck with that!”.
The Australian Futures Project didn’t start with an idea. It started with a question. Could Australia do more to proactively create a better future for the nation and all its citizens? The resounding answer from Australians from all walks of life was yes.

However, we quickly realised that while many leaders have the duty to paint much stronger future visions, no one, least of all us, has the right to tell others what their future should be. The future we spoke about became futures. It became clear to me that while there was no single ‘Australian’ vision, it was probably for the best. Instead, there were many shared values, behaviours and efforts that added up to a collective human endeavour to improve on yesterday. I personally have taken great inspiration from the diversity of people who care about the future and the different visions that they have for it.

Like many areas of complexity, Australia’s future-making is dynamic and self-organising. The outcomes are wonderfully emergent — reliably taking shape while resistant to attempts for tidiness or control.

For five years, we have targeted our efforts on building the capabilities, networks and behaviours of leaders and decision makers to play an even greater role in the collective pursuit for betterment. We’ve purposefully worked across government, business, academia, media, civil society and community. And we have tested, adapted and improved our ability to work with future makers on many complex challenges across numerous disciplines and sectors.

I have been humbled by the deep commitment of the partners and participants who have journeyed with us. I have been blown away by the good will and great ideas that everyday Australians have brought to the table. And I have immense confidence that, working together, we are on the right path to forging a brighter tomorrow.

Fiona McKenzie, 
Director of Strategy and Co-founder
It's so easy to accept the status quo, it's also easy to complain about the status quo but you have to be brave to fight for change. Because the biggest problems have the highest walls and deepest moats with incumbents willing to defend at any cost.

Our world, our nation is changing quickly on so many levels and the team at Australian Futures Project have charged themselves with the mission to help “future proof” our nation in many ways both small and big.

The team at Australian Futures Project are brave and they have achieved many victories over the last five years and I sense there are many more victories to come.

My hope is that Australian Futures Project continues to get increasing traction and is able to work collaboratively with a broad cross section of Australians to effect good and meaningful change. I thank Ralph and his dedicated team and I also thank many others who have also given their sweat, hard earned money and support to help make Australia even more wonderful tomorrow than she is today.

Ivan Wheen, Chair of AFP Advisory Board

The Australian Futures Project started in 2013 as a three-year program to improve Australia’s future by providing an antidote to the prevailing short-term, ad hoc and fragmented approaches to policy and planning across the nation.

Five years later, we have reflected on our achievements and what we’ve learned. I am proud of the willingness and rigour with which the dedicated team, led by its founder Ralph Ashton, turned the looking-glass inwards to critically assess the initiative’s performance and impact.

This process has not been easy. It has involved tough questions and honest discussions over the course of many months but has been a critical step to ensure that the reach and impact of the Australian Futures Project can continue to grow.

For La Trobe University, the Australian Futures Project’s bold and unique mission resonates with us as much today as it did when we joined as the founding education partner five years ago.

La Trobe has a proud history of doing things differently. Our vision to promote positive change and address the major issues of our time is strongly connected with the Australian Futures Project’s commitment to confront the most complex challenges we face by taking a long-term view of what is in the best interests of our nation.

The Australian Futures Project serves as a fundamental link between citizens, academia and policy makers as we engage in a national conversation on the issues that will affect Australians in the years ahead.

I look forward to the next phase of this important work, and invite others to join us as we forge ahead to achieve positive, systemic change – and, ultimately, a better future for the generations of tomorrow.

John Dewar, AFP Advisory Board Member and Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University (AFP Foundation Partner)
WHY WE’RE HERE

Swan River, Western Australia
Our Reason for Being

The Australian Futures Project (AFP) grew out of a desire to build Australia’s capacity to make decisions for a flourishing shared future in the 2020s and 2030s. Our co-founders, Ralph Ashton and Fiona McKenzie, spent years travelling the world working on ‘wicked problems’ – complex, dynamic, urgent challenges, such as climate change – in multi-national organisations and with small grassroots innovators. Despite seeing inspirational work in many places, they became frustrated by the lack of progress and poor decisions being made in fragmented, short-termist, risk-averse organisations whose mandate was, nominally, to create a better future.

Surely, they thought, if we can get this right anywhere, it will be at home in Australia. They conducted wide-ranging research to map gaps and opportunities in Australia’s democratic decision-making system and confirmed a need for better translation of the country’s best thinking into effective action. And so AFP was born.

Our vision is of a flourishing Australian future. Our mission has been to improve how Australia creates that future. Many for-purpose organisations are dedicated to specific challenges, whereas to our knowledge we are the only organisation working on and across the decision-making system itself. Our focus for five years has been to:

• Improve the understanding among Australians of the issues and opportunities the country faces

• Improve the quality of discussion about Australians’ desired future

• Improve the quality of action towards Australians’ desired future

To those ends, we stimulate and support leaders, experts, and the community to identify, test, and build initiatives to create the Australia we want tomorrow, today. We have spent five years developing unique expertise in how to solve complex challenges and how to engage the public on the big issues, and we have created a powerful platform from which to launch several exciting new and expanded initiatives in our next five years. We invite you to explore what we have achieved, what we have learned, and where we are headed next.

What we set out to do

Five years ago, we launched a bold experiment. As one of our keystone funders says, we dreamt up “a crazy idea to make Australia a better place.” We asked:

• Can we effectively support organisations and people working on discrete parts of Australia’s decision-making system and improve their capability to shape our future?

• Can we make a difference to the decision-making system itself?

• Can we do a good job and be recognised for it, building strong relationships for AFP along the way?

As pioneers in a complex and dynamic arena, we deliberately set out on a journey of exploration and discovery. That journey gives important context to this evaluation of our impact. Over time, we have adopted increasingly sophisticated approaches to evaluating our individual projects and have worked hard to identify our impact on the system itself. However, we recognise that that is a long-term project.
About this Report

This report is a meta-analysis that aims to aggregate and synthesise five years’ data and interviews with many of our closest stakeholders, to tell a story about what we’ve achieved, and to share lessons that we and others can use in future. It is based on an evaluation undertaken by Mutual Trust to ensure the independence of the findings.

We share it, in part, to thank our many supporters, who have invested time, money, and faith in us since our inception, and to whom we owe our very existence. This document sets out what your support has allowed us to do. We share it also with other organisations and individuals whose mission aligns with ours – we have been transparent about the hard parts of the journey, hoping that others can avoid some of our mistakes and challenges – and be inspired by our successes.

The report’s structure builds on the three questions we set out to examine. Chapter 3, Program Impact, looks at how we improved discrete parts of the system through our programmatic work. Chapter 4, System Impact, examines our role in changing the system. Chapter 5, Organisational Effectiveness, turns the lens inwards, and asks how effectively we designed and ran our own organisation. In Chapter 6, we look ahead and outline the exciting plans for the future that our work to date underpins.

The report contains many quotations, because we think that giving a voice to our supporters, partners, and clients is an important reflection of how we work. Any system is made up of people. In a complex, information-rich world, we put people first – and that approach is something others tell us they most value about us.

We have experimented courageously, achieved significant impact, and gleaned valuable insights into what works and what doesn’t. We are proud to have built a strong foundation from which to launch into our next five years.
In 2013, we set out with three big questions. So did we...
Identify opportunities to improve discrete parts of the system?

Yes: We have strong evidence that our work has produced real impact for organisations and individuals working on the big issues affecting Australia’s future.

But: We’ve done too much, stretching the team and confusing our supporters. Looking ahead, we plan to reorganise our resources so we can sharpen our focus.

Positively change the system itself?

In some ways: We have created programs that focus on the big levers for change: broad leadership and active contribution from all levels of society (especially the political class, public servants, and the public); 21st century competence for a complex, fast-changing world (especially public servants and change-makers across sectors); and new, productive relationships across all sectors.

But: We have not worked out how best to measure the long-term ripple effects of our work, nor how to scale our impact and embed new ways of working deeply into the system over time.

Build trusting partnerships based on a reputation for bold, high-quality, innovative work?

Yes: We have worked with blue-chip organisations and respected individuals across Australia, and built a large, enthusiastic network of supporters that includes leading figures in many sectors. In five years, we raised almost $4m of cash (donations, partnerships, and fees) and $10m of in-kind donations.

But: We have more work to do to secure sustained core funding.
Why We’re Here

From the Heart

Reputation

Improving the way Australia creates its future is in many ways a crazily audacious mission for a team that has averaged fewer than five people over our first five years. While many Australians are frustrated and want a quick fix to our systemic dysfunction, my experience tells me that real and lasting change comes with sustained effort, and that plain-sailing is a rare luxury or a lie; one should expect a mix of success and failure, a mix of quick wins and plodding progress. Reputation is one of the most important arrows in the quiver on this journey. While it’s essential for us to continue to have the courage to take big calculated risks, we must temper any temptation or encouragement to take shortcuts with a keen eye on maintaining and building our reputation as non-partisan, focussed on the big picture, catalytic, courageous, and bold.

Ralph Ashton, Executive Director

Relationships

Real systems change requires humility, vulnerability and a willingness to try to understand, and find ways to work with, those on all sides of the debate. Our engagement with government at all levels is based on a customer intimacy lens, genuinely working with individuals and teams to build trust and mutual understanding: the foundations for finding long-term, collaborative solutions.

Chloë Spackman, Director of Programs
Partnerships

Our deep commitment to partnerships across our work is driven by the knowledge that complex challenges cannot be solved by any individual or organisation alone. Our partnerships aren’t just nice to have, they are a must have. To us, collaboration is essential and at the core of how we work. At the end of the day, whether Australian Futures Project becomes known for its work is irrelevant. What matters is the change we've made in the world and that change has only been possible because of the partners who have worked at our side through it all.

Fiona McKenzie, Director of Strategy

Culture

They are optimistic! Everything they frame is hopeful – and we don’t have enough of that.

Corporate Sector Client

Relevance

As a nation, we are caught in the terrible vice of short-termism. There are so few organisations that look over the horizon with any sanity, let alone with genuine independence and values, as AFP does.

Alan Oakley, News Corp Australia
The First Five Years Impact Evaluation

PROGRAM IMPACT

Sydney CBD, New South Wales
Citizen-Focussed Initiatives

Overview

We create and run bold initiatives to engage the public in creating our future, providing citizens with mechanisms to contribute to change and to hold leaders accountable. We have kindled a national conversation on topics Australians say they most care about – and supported the public to act.

• My Big Idea: a world-first national ideas competition to stimulate discussion and action on the most important topics for the future of the country – based on a statistically valid national poll on the issues Australians most care about.

• What’s the Future, Australia?: a nationwide initiative to engage Australians with decision makers and experts to create positive change in four big topics: the Energy Crisis, the Future of Work, Housing Affordability, and Thriving Kids.

Government-Focussed Initiatives

Overview

We designed two programs (both are social enterprises) to address the increasing challenge of governance in the face of complexity. The best ways to solve yesterday’s societal challenges are not appropriate for tomorrow’s wicked problems, which are significantly more complex – and yet our democratic system has lower tolerance for innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking than ever before.

• 21st Century Service: In 2016, we co-designed 21st Century Service with 6 Federal Government Departments. It comprises specialised courses for building culture and capability in the public service. The courses range from ½-day workshops, to 6-day intensives, to a train-the-trainer program and bespoke 6-week coaching and training solutions on live department projects. We also offer specialised courses for the Senior Executive Service, and a post-graduate accreditation is available through La Trobe University.

• Parliamentary Leaders Program: Politicians know how to get elected – but that is only a small part of the job. The Parliamentary Leaders Program is Australia’s first and only leadership program dedicated to federal and state parliamentarians from all parties. It was designed in 2014 with input from politicians and political parties and offers participants an intellectually challenging experience using small group discussions, scenario building, workshops, case studies and high-profile guest speakers.

AFP’s citizen-focussed initiatives had greater reach than we dreamed of – we are incredibly proud to have raised the awareness of 15 million Australians about our nation’s future. Our challenge: Are initiatives like this scalable? How do we maintain momentum?

We have had a lot of success with our 21st Century Service courses, but the challenge is to address the barrier that most departments are not geared to easily adopt new ways of working into business-as-usual. The next step is to work with department teams on live projects to embed the skills and behaviours into everyday work, and to make it broadly visible.
Support Through Bespoke Solutions

Overview
We work as ‘consultants’, advising clients on how to address complex, systemic problems. We have developed a reputation for matching technical and intellectual horsepower with an intimate, people-first approach.

Project highlights include:
- Developing a 10-month social innovation lab, ‘Actions for NSW Agriculture’ (with the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation), in which 60 people developed new solutions to complex societal challenges. It culminated in a pitch event, Flourish, with $30,000 of seed funding and 9 months of coaching in prizes going to the teams behind three of the ideas.
- Ensuring Australia’s biosecurity system meets its future needs
- Undertaking a strategic analysis of Australia’s future transport needs
- Improving the equity of access to employment for injured workers
- Shifting long-term outcomes for vulnerable children and communities

An essential element of these bespoke solutions is our success in supporting clients to reconnect with disengaged stakeholders, and to engage with new ones. Our challenge is to grow the volume of our work to grow our impact; we’ve made a strong start but, as one supporter puts it, we need to move past the ‘cottage industry’ stage to reach our potential.

Explaining the Context: Thought Leadership

Overview
We analyse themes of critical relevance to Australia’s future, and have shared our findings through a range of channels. We have published many thought-provoking papers; conducted interviews with over 600 decision-makers about our mission and shared the findings; held many high-level convenings on solutions for our mission; and conducted two national polls.

Popular publications include:
- A New Era for Australia’s Decision-Making System? In-depth Conversations with 400 Leaders
- Welcome to the Future: Drivers and Trends that will Shape Australia’s Future
- Complex Adaptive Systems: Implications for Leaders, Organisations, Government, and Citizens
- Megatrends and Australia’s Future: Older and Wiser?

Our thought leadership work has been used by government, non-government and business organisations to trigger new approaches to complex challenges. But we could do more with our IP to grow our profile and increase the power of our voice.
Program Impact

Citizen-Focussed Initiatives

Outputs

• 15 million Australians knew about My Big Idea
• 57,654 unique visitors to and 9,154 members on mybigidea.org.au
• 1,175 ideas submitted to My Big Idea
• 189 stories and $4.14m worth of coverage in News Corp Australia mastheads
• Built start-up capability of hundreds of school children and 100 citizen innovators, and provided coaching to 12 winners
• 30 experts participated in What’s the Future, Australia?
• 4 citizen-led initiatives supported from What’s the Future, Australia?

Outcomes

• 71% of My Big Idea participants agreed or strongly agreed they have a better understanding of the things Australians care about
• 84% of My Big Idea participants thought it was excellent or good
• 5 stand-alone, citizen-led solutions were created and supported by prominent organisations (some built; others in progress)
• Many everyday Australians, who often feel excluded from political discourse on complex societal issues, were actively engaged and felt empowered

What we Learned

The great, the good

An appetite exists in Australia for democratising the process by which everyday citizens engage with the big issues our society faces. We learned that young people – including the oft-maligned millennials – care and want to do good.

Technology has an important and underutilised role to play in connecting the public with democratic decision-making processes.

Our political independence has been crucial for AFP as we established our credibility as builders and backers of these national, people-first initiatives.

The challenge

Long-term impact through the citizen-led solutions depends on factors beyond AFP’s control. The statistics are against them: most start-ups fail. If we ran My Big Idea again, we would build stronger wrap-around support for the winners as they prototyped and developed their idea in the early stages.

Our citizen-led initiatives worked as one-offs. But can they be scaled over time? We created great momentum but haven’t built on it, and the risk is that it will peter out and be forgotten.
My Big Idea and What’s the Future, Australia gave a voice to people who often don’t have one. AFP used technology in the right way to make it fun and accessible – they built a movement.

AFP Client and Senior Business Leader

The National Values Assessment is one of the few genuine pieces of work that put the issues that ordinary people really care about on the agenda.

Alan Oakley, News Corp Australia

Most of us can’t do anything about the issues we talk about.

A father, talking about the role of My Big Idea in giving people a sense of possibility and an opportunity to act

An opportunity for AFP is to more deeply engage millennials in their mission - they’re the future.

Emma Harrison, Gourlay Charitable Trust
Government-Focussed Initiatives

Outputs

- 1,000 federal public servants from 25+ departments have participated in 21st Century Service courses
- 91% of 21st Century Service Level 2 participants (6-day course) ranked it excellent or good
- 80% of 21st Century Service Level 1 participants (1-day course) ranked it excellent or good
- 5% of Federal, South Australian, Tasmanian, and Victorian politicians have participated in our Parliamentary Leaders Program – 23 individuals from 6 parties from 5 jurisdictions
- 96% of participants in the Parliamentary Leaders Program would recommend the course to their fellow politicians

Outcomes

- 100% of 21st Century Service participants have applied the behaviours and skills to their work
- 90% found the course had a medium to large positive impact on their ability to navigate complex challenges
- AFP has contributed to innovation strategies of the Australian Public Service and two specific departments
- 100% of participants in the Parliamentary Leaders Program stated that the course has had a positive influence on their ability to govern
- Based on our analysis of the opportunity, we convened a meeting of senior public servants from different Federal departments – over 20 of whom were working on the same issue but had never met. They have since formed a community of practice and are now enthusiastically working together with our support.

What we Learned

The great, the good

A problem exists that we can fix, and participants – both politicians and public servants – consider the solutions our programs deliver to be high-impact and high quality. They particularly value their bespoke, intimate, trust-focussed nature.

Overall, we were early players in a movement that includes greater awareness of innovative ways of working, changes in common language around innovation and systems-thinking, and greater acceptance that complex challenges need to be tackled with new problem-solving approaches. Departments are now commissioning large pieces of work dedicated to these approaches. Our Parliamentary Leaders Program remains Australia’s only professional development opportunity specifically designed for politicians.

Some of the value we create just can’t be measured. One client says: “I just want to have coffee with them, often. I really value their ability as innovators to throw things against the wall.”

The challenge

Too often public service staff are trained in ‘new ways of working’, but struggle to know how to apply those skills in a work force, or struggle to have the confidence to bring it to managers and other colleagues. To realise our potential impact on the system, we need to develop dedicated support to embed training into day to day work over time.

Most departments are not structured in a manner which allows them to easily adopt new ways of working. The relevant skills and behaviours need to be both demonstrated, and authorised by, senior leadership, and staff that do make an effort to employ these new skills and behaviours need to be recognised and celebrated.
AFP has an ability to connect public servants in a way that we cannot connect ourselves.

Janna McCann, Head of BizLab, Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

It’s a great course and I picked up some techniques that I think will fundamentally change the way I work.

21st Century Service Participant, Australian Department of Human Services

In the public service, the big challenge is making it stick.

Susan Forbes, Australian Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

The leadership program (PLP) is essentially about power - not the power of the position we hold, but of us as people to bring about change. I wish a course like this had been available when I was elected to parliament. I am a more powerful and effective representative because of it.

Parliamentary Leaders Program Participant, Julie Owens, Member of Parramatta

For a Parliamentarian, it is your leadership that will be your legacy. The PLP will define how you lead in the future – to be a transformer.

Parliamentary Leaders Program Participant, Susan Lamb, Member for Longman

“As truth becomes dangerously malleable in the wake of international tensions and challenges, people all over the world are losing trust in governments.

... Ultimately, I make the fundamental point that if we want the public to respect and have faith in our democracy and parliamentary institutions, it is crucial that people in this and other parliaments display principled attitudes and behavioural characteristics.

... So how do we tap into our better sides? One entity that attempts to facilitate this is the Australian Futures Project. By working with government, business, media, experts and the public to address complex challenges, the Australian Futures Project is fulfilling a mission to improve how Australia creates its future. In November last year, I undertook its Parliamentary Leaders Program, led by executive director Ralph Ashton with the support of a number of other people active in the program, as well as those who support it through financial, moral or board assistance.

The Parliamentary Leaders Program features three sections focusing on the context, the leader and the change agent. The program assists parliamentarians to be more self-aware and consider our aspirations, motivations, biases, ethics, health and relationships as we assess our approaches to various situations and decisions.”

Excerpt from “Trust in Parliaments” by Jonathan O’Dea, Member for Davidson, reported in the NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard on 1 May 2018
Support Through Bespoke Solutions

Outputs
- Undertook 12 unique projects
- Supported the creation of 8 stand-alone solutions to complex societal challenges
- Supported 3 projects each with $10,000 seed funding
- Advanced knowledge of specific societal challenges through a range of detailed synthesis reports

Outcomes
- Early childhood development - built new relationships, and shared understanding of systemic issues and leveraged points amongst stakeholders from many different backgrounds with competing agendas
- Agriculture - 90% of participants in Actions for NSW Agriculture agreed that through their participation, they were able to identify specific actions to improve the viability of agriculture in NSW
- Biosecurity – supported a review of the animal health system that included engaging over 200 stakeholders across the national system. The review resulted in reforms to the roles and responsibilities within the client department to help build a stronger biosecurity system,
- Transport – developed a new approach to stakeholder driven scenario development that led to increased strategic analysis on future trends; created a mechanism to engage over 300 organisations in the process
- Workers – created a new investment process for funding solutions that address social and personal barrier to returning to work for injured workers

What we Learned

The great, the good

Technical skills and intellectual horsepower matter – but because systems are ultimately made by and for people, the ‘soft stuff’ matters just as much. We emphasise the need for trust, strong relationships (especially across boundaries), vulnerability, and ‘protecting the heart’. And we have found that these messages resonate strongly with our clients.

An important role exists for the ‘innovation intermediary’, who brokers knowledge and networks. AFP plays that role, and we have come to appreciate its value, as have our clients.

Good ideas abound. Our highest-impact work centres not so much on generating and advancing ideas, but on empowering changemakers – many of whom do not occupy leadership roles – to bring those ideas to fruition in complex environments.

The challenge

We could have greater impact by doing more work. Strong demand for our services exists, but we need to develop our brand.

To extend our impact we also need to build out our team, but our intimate, adaptive, experimental model has created operational challenges that have hindered our ability to grow:

“Is the model scalable? Because I’d choose to work with the founders every time,”
— Susan Forbes, Australian Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
I have taken steps since starting this process that I would never have done without it, and even further developed a sense of responsibility, instead of just a want, for the industry’s success.

Participant, Actions for NSW Agriculture

This could quite possibly have been a seminal moment in my life and career. I think I will take an even more proactive approach than I have taken in the past and have gained even from the challenges.

Participant, Actions for NSW Agriculture

AFP gave me permission to test […] It was very good for me coming from the public service where the culture is to get things right before testing anything.

Participant, Beyond Flourish

These guys are just great at this stuff... can we just replicate them?

Corporate Sector Client
Explaining the Context: Thought Leadership

**Outputs**

- Anchor of 4 Boss/Optus ‘True Leaders Game Changers’ podcasts
- 12 white papers on discrete topics as diverse as affordable housing and food systems, and on system-level issues that investigate how the system works, where the levers for change lie, and how to activate them
- 2 national polls conducted
- 2,000 subscribers to the AFP newsletter and multiple appearances in media (print, radio, TV, blogs) and as speakers at public forums, conferences, etc.
- 2 major conventions: an Action Lab at Government House in Canberra in October 2013 with 25 leaders from various sectors to discuss how to improve Australia’s decision-making system (eventually leading to the our Parliamentary Leaders Program and contributing to 21st Century Service and eventually leading to the AFP’s My Big Idea and What’s the Future, Australia?); and a Roundtable at Parliament House in Canberra in November 2014 with 21 leaders from various sectors to identify actions to help government govern in the face of complexity (leading to the pilot of our 21st Century Service program).

**Outcomes**

- We have evidence that our thought leadership material has been used by government, non-government, and business organisations to trigger new approaches to complex challenges

**What we Learned**

**The great, the good**

Synthesis is important and simplicity is valued

Nobody has the whole view of the system

Creating a shared understanding of the challenge is a first step in collaboration

**The challenge**

It is hard to evaluate the impact of thought leadership because it’s difficult to know what the ripple effects are

While we have been lauded for the clarity we have brought, we have spread ourselves across multiple topics, making it hard to be known for one thing

We have not found an easy way to communicate coherence in working at both the system level (such as societal views on the state of play in Australia, and global megatrends) and specific topic level (such as early childhood, agriculture, and transport)
AFP matters because they’re the only organisation I know that plays their role - thinking independently about the strategy for Australia’s future, convening the right people, and working their magic from behind the issues to advance the cause.

Corporate Sector Client

I just read your Wayfinders Guide: it is insightful, beautifully written, almost poetic. The quote about everyone thinking you are naive almost made me cry. I shared it in our workplace as I hope it speaks to others as it did me.

Susannah Kable, NSW Department of Primary Industries

I just read the Wayfinders Guide and I have to say it’s the most accurate summary of skills required to make change I’ve read. It’s brilliant and should be taught in schools…I plan to make good use of it as a thought leadership resource when scaling our impact model.

Rod Holden, Managing Director, Natural Impact Group Pty Ltd

We are enjoying learning our way through your wonderful report, “Stakeholder Perspectives on Australia’s Affordable Housing System”... by the time we had only just read the Executive Summary, you had us...The work you are doing is remarkable.

On 17 October 2013, the Australian Futures Project invited twenty-five leading Australians from diverse backgrounds to Government House in Canberra for an Action Lab hosted by the Governor-General.

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 focused 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.

Four themes emerged for further action:

- Vision, leadership, and storytelling
- Competent government – eventually leading to the AFP’s Parliamentary Leaders Program and contributing to 21st Century Service
- Active and connected citizen engagement – eventually leading to the AFP’s My Big Idea and What’s the Future, Australia?
- Connection and collaboration between sectors
Participants

- **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
Program Impact

In the Australian Futures Project’s conversations over 2013 and 2014 with senior serving and former public servants and politicians and their advisors, there was a common recognition that:

- We live in a rapidly changing and complex world
- Wicked problems abound
- Easy solutions are often mirages
- Governing for the common good in these conditions is not easy
- The public service therefore needs to be able to experiment, take considered risks, and occasionally fail on the way to success
- There is a perceived intolerance among the public and politicians for experimentation, risk-taking, and failure by the public service
- There is a perception that this intolerance flows through to senior public servants and on to all reaches of the public service
- This low appetite for experimentation hampers progress on the big societal issues of the day
- Something needs to be done about this

On 25 November 2014, the Australian Futures Project therefore convened 21 participants from all sectors (see below) in a two-hour roundtable co-hosted the Australian Futures Project and The Hon Andrew Leigh MP and The Hon Angus Taylor MP. The aim was to not only broaden perspectives and share experiences from different sectors and disciplines, but also to identify actions to help government govern in the face of complexity – which subgroups of participants could plausibly trial over the coming 6-12 months.

Through this roundtable, and further discussions with public servants, a need was identified to create the conditions for public servants to:

- Refine their ability to classify challenges so that they can apply the most appropriate tools and approaches
- Expand their toolkit to include tools and approaches best suited to solving complex societal challenges
- Build departmental networks and foster greater collaboration

The Australian Futures Project then worked with six federal government departments to co-design, develop, and test a suitable, fit-for-purpose, response. The pilot of 21st Century Service was a success, and various versions have been developed since (see above).
Participants

• Ralph Ashton
  Director, Australian Futures Project

• Subho Banerjee
  Deputy Secretary, Department of Industry (former Executive Director, Strategy and Delivery Division at Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet)

• Angus Campbell
  Lieutenant General, Australian Army (Commander, Operation Sovereign Borders)

• Kate Chaney
  Manager, Sustainability and Community Partnerships, Wesfarmers

• Andrew Charlton
  Wesfarmers (former senior economic adviser to the Prime Minister and Australia’s senior representative to the G20 Leaders Forum from 2008 to 2010)

• Stephanie Foster
  Deputy Commissioner, Australian Public Service Commission

• Matt Garbutt
  Executive Director, Policy, Business Council of Australia

• Annwyn Godwin
  Merit Protection Commissioner, Australian Public Service Commission

• Kerri Hartland
  Deputy Director-General, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

• Rob Heferen
  Executive Director, Revenue Group, Treasury

• Ryan Hubbard
  Co-Designer, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation

• Patrick Keyzer
  Chair of Law & Public Policy, La Trobe University

• Andrew Leigh
  Member of Parliament, Australian Labor Party

• Fiona McKenzie
  Policy Director, Australian Futures Project

• Justin Pik
  Neurosurgeon

• Patricia Scott
  Commissioner, Productivity Commission (former Secretary of three Federal Departments: Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy; Communications, Information Technology and the Arts; and Human Services)

• Angus Taylor
  Member of Parliament, Liberal Party of Australia

• Laura Tingle
  Political Editor, Australian Financial Review

• Jane Treadwell
  Former CEO, Australian Centre for Excellence in Public Sector Design

• Ivan Wheen
  Principal, Nanuk Asset Management

• Simone Wilkie
  Commander, Australian Defence College (former Assistant Commander, Joint Task Force 633 in Afghanistan 2011/12)

Case Study 2
On 30-31 August 2017 in London, 14 participants from around the world met to explore the question of ‘how might we approach transformational change for complex challenges in the future?’

The workshop was convened and co-facilitated by Fiona McKenzie and Megan Seneque. Participants included a mix of practitioners and academics in systems and design thinking, innovation, and the social and physical sciences. They represented a diversity of sectors, disciplines, and geographies.

Participants shared a common commitment to achieving genuine systems transformation and, cumulatively, possessed a wealth of experience in empowering such change - and change makers - in complex contexts. With this spirit, the workshop involved two days of discussions that featured case studies of participant projects, reflections on lessons learnt, and insights into approaches for creating transformational change. Despite the diversity of their work, participants found they had common experiences of the joys and frustrations of systems change. They had all been through times of professional loneliness and impatience, times of the exhilaration witnessing a ‘window open’ or minds changed, and we all shared the sense that this work is vital if the future is going to be one of human and ecological wellbeing. The discussion was captured in the publication A wayfinder’s guide to systems transformation: 18 insights for catalysts and convenors.
Participants

- Dr Yannick Beaudoin
  Chief Scientist, GRID-Arendal

- Julie Birtles
  Founder, Beyond Excellence

- Paul Chatterton
  Founder and lead, WWF Landscape Finance Lab

- Sarah Gillinson
  Chief Executive, Innovation Unit

- Sandy Killick
  Managing Director, Focussed Facilitation

- Dr Adrienne Mannov
  Social Anthropologist, World Maritime University

- Dr Fiona McKenzie
  Co-Founder & Director of Strategy, Australian Futures Project

- Julie Munk
  Network & Project Manager, Social Innovation Exchange

- Alex Roberts
  Innovation Specialist, Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, OECD

- Valmae Rose
  Director, Future By Design Australia

- Megan Seneque
  International Development Advisor, Co-Facilitator, WE-Africa Lab

- Dr Andrea Siodmok
  Head of the Policy Lab; Deputy Director, (UK) Cabinet Office

- Dr Katherine Trebeck
  Global Research Policy Advisor, Oxfam

- Dieter Van den Broeck
  Landscape orchestrator and science/education, Commonland
AFP’s reach extends across the country, into many sectors, and includes everyday Australians and the leaders of the land. We have also developed deep expertise in how to unlock our collective ability to address the major issues affecting our future. Within the complexities of our ‘future-making system’ we see change happening at many levels, from – for example – the tenor of public discourse around innovation to the uptake of design thinking techniques inside a plethora of organisations. AFP has played a role in shaping these changes for five years.

We know we are having an impact on the system, but we cannot yet quantify the value of that impact nor gauge accurately how far-reaching our influence is.

We knew that it would be hard to have any kind of system-level impact in our early years, and to measure it if we did, so we set out to answer three questions:

**Do we understand the system?**

Yes – we have built a comprehensive and unique set of insights into how decisions about Australia’s future are (and are not) being made. Our expertise is recognised and valued.

**Do we know how AFP effects change in the system?**

Sometimes – we have solid data that points towards three key levers. First, participants and clients are learning new techniques, attitudes, and behaviours, and tell us that they are using them in their day to day work. Our understanding of how this happens over time is nascent, but we are testing hypotheses to deepen our understanding and enhance impact. Second, our thought leadership work is being read and used in places near to and far from home. Third, we inspire and support people to develop new relationships and new standalone initiatives – some of which will themselves go on to change the system. It is too soon to for us to have a comprehensive view of their reach.

**Do we know what happens as a result of the changes?**

Rarely – we have ad hoc evidence, and some compelling stories, about what happens after AFP ‘leaves the building’, but in our first five years we have not had the resources to develop sophisticated techniques to measure the ripple effect of our work over time.

**What we learned**

**The great, the good**

Our role is unique. No other organisation in Australia is addressing not just what a better future looks like, but how to get there.

We have learned that to change systems, you must first create the preconditions for success, namely: building an authorising environment, creating scaffolding, and convening the right stakeholders.

We are good at creating meaningful connections.

“Often in complex systems where there are lots of moving parts, where linear approaches to problem solving don’t work, you need people who are buzzing around being like the bees in between all the different flowers […] we effectively play a pollination role, where we’re taking information from one sector to another to enable progress.”

— Ralph Ashton, Executive Director

**The challenge**

Experimentation, risk-taking, and maintaining an agile approach was critical to us in our early years, as we developed and tested hypotheses about what the system comprised and how it worked. Because the work was fascinating, and because demand for our services grew fast, we may have lingered in the experimentation phase for longer than necessary.

Because we work with people, we need to know how those people work after their AFP experience. We need to build a strong alumni community so that we can continue to support our participants and clients, and better understand what impact AFP’s work has on them over time.
Their collaborative partnership model really worked: suddenly agencies stopped competing and started sharing resources and ideas.

Susan Forbes, Australian Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

AFP are master connectors - they see the big issues, simplify them, bring people together, make it do-able.

Janna McCann, Head of BizLab, Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

It has been extraordinary how widespread the concern is about these issues to do with decision-making for Australia’s future, and just how much support and interest the AFP’s initiatives garner.

John Dewar, AFP Advisory Board Member and Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University (AFP Foundation Partner)

Slowly but surely, AFP is spreading the gospel among the leadership of government, corporates, the non-profit sector, that we have to take a long-term, bipartisan approach to the big issues that ordinary people actually care about.

Alan Oakley, News Corp Australia

Understanding exactly how we’re contributing to and/or influencing culture change in the APS requires us to identify mechanisms for collecting qualitative and longitudinal data, both in terms of tracking and understanding the participants’ experiences, but also to evaluate discernible shifts in the overall decision-making system in government when addressing complex problems.

Chloë Spackman, Director of Programs
The AFP is relevant – we have identified a clear need, and not only our programs but also the AFP itself have been designed after wide-ranging consultations with our stakeholders. According to our uniformly outstanding participant and client surveys and based on how often our team’s views are sought by the media, we are effective. The growth of our fee-for-service offerings indicates that we are efficient and provide value for money. However, long-term sustainability remains challenging, and we have revisited our focus and business model as we strategise for the next five years. Other lessons that will inform future work are outlined below.

Organisation design

The great, the good

Independence matters. We made a clear decision not to accept government funding. That independence has served us well – our network deeply values it.

The challenge

Getting the balance right between being agile and having breadth of experience, versus being focussed and building depth of expertise, is hard. Because we do so much, our supporters sometimes struggle to know what we are trying to achieve.

Narrative matters. We have done a lot – and it has not always been easy to explain it all to our supporters or even to ourselves. We need to sharpen our story.

Given the variety of our work, we have found it challenging to craft an AFP-wide theory of change. Concentrating our resources over the next five years on the highest-impact activities will help us in this endeavour.

Program design

The great, the good

Co-design with your market is critical. We have invested deeply in understanding our stakeholders’ needs and that investment has paid off every time.

Flexibility is critical. Our stakeholders greatly value our bespoke approach – starting with careful listening, and then developing approaches that work for them.

The challenge

We have not measured how much other factors are contributing to the changes that we see in the system and at a program level. In future we can be more intentional about asking what AFP’s unique contribution is, whether some changes would have happened without us, and what role other factors are playing in determining outcomes.

We have not systematically asked whether our programs have created any negative outcomes. For example, when a participant takes innovative techniques back into a traditional or even hostile workplace, do their attempts to effect change come at a cost?

Opportunities exist for us to assess the impact of our work on audiences other than our direct participants and clients. For example, did the partner organisations of the My Big Idea finalists feel a sense of engagement and ownership? What have our judging panels, which typically comprise influential members, learned? Do the staff of parliamentarians in the Parliamentary Leaders Program glean indirect benefit from the program, and if so does that lead to behaviour change?
The question I constantly ask myself is, ‘Are we doing the right things to have the biggest impact given our particular skills, assets, and funding?’ Another persistent concern is whether there’s an easier way to get to the big impact. After five years, we are ready to make decisions (in some cases, hard decisions) to get the balance right between asking the system and telling the system; between humility and confidence; between breadth and depth. Over the next five years, we will tend to the latter of each of those pairs: telling, confidence, and depth. I am excited about what our lean, talented, and courageous team will achieve in our next phase.

Ralph Ashton, Executive Director

While I feel that I’m clear on what we’ve been trying to achieve, it is difficult to communicate systemic approaches and complexity easily. I feel that we’ve missed opportunities because of our communication challenge, and because we are a small team running really fast.

Fiona McKenzie, Director of Strategy

AFP is a really good idea that has attracted a lot of support and quite a lot of money -- beyond that, it’s not clear how they themselves are measuring their success, so it’s hard to nail down what overall impact they’re having.

John Dewar, AFP Advisory Board Member and Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University (AFP Foundation Partner)

To survive successfully, they have to get clearer about their identity. They’re amazing - but I have difficulty explaining what they actually do.

Emma Harrison, Gourlay Charitable Trust

They need a bigger profile to be able to speak with even more strength and influence. Now is the time -- to cut through the noise you need a loud voice.

Alan Oakley, News Corp Australia

They’re too much under the radar. They shouldn’t be shy - they should stand up and shout a little bit louder.

Janna McCann, Head of BizLab, Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

It is possible we have been working across too many challenge areas, but we have embedded evaluation and experimentation into all of our processes internally and externally, even if when it’s on-the-go. It is central to our way of working that we keep feedback loops open: this helps to ensure we are a learning organisation.

Chloë Spackman, Director of Programs
THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania
As we evaluated our impact over our first five years, we realised that we could more powerfully reach our goals if we created two stand-alone endeavours. We are proud that from the foundations of AFP, we will be launching the next phase of AFP and that our Director of Strategy, Dr Fiona McKenzie, is launching her own initiative, Orange Compass.

AFP’s strategy for the next five years builds on our track record, addresses the lessons from our first five years, and leverages our strengths. We are tightening our focus. We are establishing a clear evaluation framework. And we are strengthening our governance, succession, and financial sustainability.

**Orange Compass**

Dr Fiona McKenzie is establishing Orange Compass. Its mission is to support change makers from across government, business, and community on their journey to transform systems and build better futures. The Orange Compass team will employ their deep experience and expertise to create bespoke solutions that help change makers navigate complex systems, identify leverage points, create the conditions for collaboration, hold the space for dialogue, and to go beyond innovation to sustained transformation. AFP and Orange Compass will maintain a close partnership and collaborate where appropriate.
The world never stops changing.

Democracies that adapt flourish. Those that don’t wither.

But Australia is trapped in short-termism and failing to seize the opportunities and address the challenges that will ensure a flourishing future.

Until short-termism is fixed, we can’t create the future Australians actually want. We won’t have meaningful tax reform, address Indigenous disadvantage, or prepare for our ageing population. We won’t have affordable housing, affordable childcare, or the skills for the jobs of the future. We won’t address climate change and the energy crisis, increase our engagement with Asia, or achieve equality for women. We won’t build adequate infrastructure, address the mental health crisis, or kick-start our stagnant productivity. The list goes on.

But we are optimists. We deeply believe Australia has the determination and know-how to address these issues. We know powerful levers exist to fix short-termism. We know there is widespread hunger to act.
Our Role

To fix short-termism, Australian democracy needs three things:

1. **Vision**: Politicians who offer relevant and compelling visions for the future of the nation

2. **Capability**: Governments that solve Australia’s big challenges

3. **Accountability**: A simple way for the public to hold government leaders (politicians and public servants) to account for the future they are creating on behalf of all Australians

It is the job of politicians to offer the vision. The Australian Futures Project therefore focusses on capability and accountability. We do this by finding and building catalytic initiatives that:

- **Equip governments (politicians and public servants)** to solve Australia’s big challenges
- **Empower Australians to hold government to account for creating the future Australians want**

This is not a dream. We have a strong track record. In our first five years, we created two catalytic institutions to equip governments: our unique Parliamentary Leaders Program and our 21st Century Service courses and services for the public service. We also created three avenues for the public to articulate what they want for the future: the National Values Survey, My Big Idea, and What’s the Future, Australia. We secured $4 million and in-kind support to enable this impact.
Is this audacious journey for you?

We’re on an audacious, mission-focused journey. We commit to being big-picture, catalytic, bold, agile, constructive, and honest. If we are to create the future Australians want, there is no room for cynicism or waiting. And every bold journey begins with a single courageous step. It is not for everyone.

We’re now raising $10 million for our next five years to create even more catalytic changes to Australia’s democracy to fix short-termism.

Will you join us as we fix short-termism in Australia?
THANK YOU

Darwin, Northern Territory
Thank You

SUPPORTERS
Foundation Academic Partner
La Trobe University
Catalytic Philanthropists
Gourlay Charitable Trust
Mathew Stubbs
Reef Shark Foundation
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Foundation for Young Australians
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Foundation for Young Australians
Google AdGrants
International Screen Academy
La Trobe Business School
La Trobe University
Macquarie Group
News Corp Australia
Pollenizer
Seven Network
University of New South Wales
University of Technology Sydney
Virgin Australia
Wink Models

What’s the Future, Australia? Partners
Agency
AT Kearney
Australian Council of Social Service
Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
Business Council of Australia
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Foundation for Young Australians
La Trobe University
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