Australia is an amazing country. Too often, however, important long-term issues have been ignored in favour of short-term gain.

The Australian Futures Project is committed to ending short-termism in Australia.
Just 50 years ago, 600 million people watched two men land on the moon. It was one of the most unifying moments in human history. People watched as we were able to outgrow our home planet with one small step.

Now, those same audiences and that same sense of wonder are much harder to find. Technology is seen as something to fear – replacing jobs, compromising security, undermining political processes.

But we are in an age of abundance of most things for most people: of food, energy, health, wealth, manufacturing, technology, and double espressos.

So why are we frightened of the future, why do we lack trust in our leaders, and why don’t we warmly embrace the electric car, social media titans and the robot? Is it that change is too rapid? Or, so unequal? Or, perhaps, that communications, technology, and social media have connected us all, but we are yet to update our filters of truth, fiction, and fairness?

It’s not just governments and politicians that we don’t trust. It’s much deeper than that. It’s also clear that Australians are struggling to trust banks, electricity companies, the NBN, aged care providers, and our churches and clergy. But the list doesn’t stop there: we don’t trust the internet, social media, or technology companies – especially the big ones that keep our data in their not-so-secret vaults.

At its heart, this public unease is a frustration with too much focus on the immediate at the expense of the long-term good.

Ralph and his terrific staff and team of great supporters have identified many of the issues that affect Australia and Australians and started work on some of the solutions. Because change is constant and rapid, we need to be forward-looking as a nation. But this is anything but easy. It’s hard enough solving for a complex problem when the context is familiar, but it’s a diabolical problem when the future is unknown.

In a country as diverse as Australia, perhaps the only way to mitigate these issues of change, distrust, and fear is for Australians to rally around a national identity (who are we? what are our values?) and to share a big-picture view of a desired destination (who do we want to become?). After all, without a plan, “any road will take you there” and “there” is rarely a good place.

This is far from an easy task. What is easy is criticism. But, in a wealthy and educated nation with a proud history of democracy and multiculturalism and an Aboriginal culture stretching back tens of thousands of years, there is no excuse for short-termism.

I hope you can join us on this difficult but extremely necessary quest. Many friends of the Australian Futures Project are lending their support. It’s the support of people like you that will make us all proud as a people.
NIGEL ANDRADE
Country Head and Global Lead Partner (Proposition & Customer Experience), AT Kearney

KATE CHANEY
Director, Innovation and Strategy, Anglicare WA

PROFESSOR JOHN DEWAR
Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University

ALAN OAKLEY
Former Editor, News Corp Australia and Fairfax Media

ALEX BURT
Co-Founder, The Landsmith Collection

LISA COTTON
CEO, Ideology Group

JONO GOURLAY
Head of Investment Advisory, Mutual Trust

RACHEL PECK
Principal, Peck Von Hartel Architects
Immersed in our mission to end short-termism in Australia, it’s difficult sometimes to notice progress - especially in a year of a federal election when so much of the national conversation is consumed by trivia, marginal seat calculations, and partisan attacks.

But progress is definitely being made.

When we started the Australian Futures Project, we were told that short-termism wasn’t a word. Six years later, as shown in the graph on page 10, there’s been a dramatic spike in discussion of short-termism in the media – by politicians, journalists, commentators, and business and community leaders. If acknowledgment that there’s a problem is the first step to a solution, then that’s a good sign. The next step is taking action.

With that firmly in mind, we continue to work from different ends of the problem – raising awareness about the problem, the consequences of inaction, and the solutions; encouraging and enabling individual action and accountability; and improving the underlying system of decision-making itself.

If you’d told me six years ago that a nimble start-up like the Australian Futures Project could garner almost 450 news articles in 12 months across the breadth of the Australian media landscape, I wouldn’t have believed you. But that’s exactly what we did with our The Future Fix series and The Perfect Candidate initiative. That points to our relevance and the positive role we are playing and can – and will – continue to play.

The last 12 months were the first full year under our refined strategy with a committed team and an expanded Advisory Board. We are focussed on three major areas (see pages 8 and 9), each building on our strengths and what we have learned since our inception.

While we continue to earn income through fees for the Parliamentary Leaders Program (which remains heavily subsidised by philanthropy) and a small amount of targeted consulting work to the federal government, our new strategy includes a deliberate consolidation of our funding mix to philanthropy and university partnerships.

I am very pleased that many of our major donors doubled their annual support during 2018-19 indicating faith in our new, focussed approach. We also received generous in-kind support from established and new partners. Thank you.

We’ve set ourselves clear, ambitious, measurable goals for each of our projects for the next three years. And our aim in 2019-20 is to secure pledges for $3 million to fund our work and impact between now and the end of 2022, the year of the next federal election. We’re on our way to those goals and to establishing our long-term financial viability.

I am proud of what our team of Chloë, Jessica, Paula, and Sean has achieved.

I hope you will join us and our committed supporters and partners on this crucial mission.
MEET
THE TEAM

PAULA STEYER
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

CHLOË SPACKMAN
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

JESSICA FULLER
PROGRAM MANAGER

SEAN DAY
DIGITAL CONSULTANT
OUR WORK

We envision an Australia where all parts of society demand and work constructively toward decisions and actions that balance the immediate and long-term needs of the country.
While others address the symptoms, our initiatives tackle the three root-causes of short-termism:

**The national conversation**  
Shifting our national conversation from short-term problems to long-term solutions with The Future Fix and The Perfect Candidate.

**Politics**  
Equipping Australia’s parliamentarians with the capabilities to solve Australia’s big issues with the Parliamentary Leaders Program.

**The decision-making system**  
Bringing Australia’s decision-making system into the 21st Century with our Federation 2.0 initiative.
Unless citizens, experts, and powerful people (including politicians, business and community leaders, and commentators) talk about the things that matter to the future of Australia, it will be very hard to make progress towards a future that a majority of Australians want. Unless the national conversation focuses on the big issues, vested interests will be able to hijack our collective future.

INSTANCES OF “SHORT-TERMISM” IN THE MEDIA

Based on a 12-month media analysis conducted by Streem realtime media monitoring.

We partnered with Streem to conduct a 12-month analysis on instances of “short-termism” reported in the media.

Our findings indicate that from June 2018 to May 2019, there were nearly 650 media stories mentioning short-termism, with coverage peaking during the Federal election campaign.

Of the 20 articles with the most views, six featured the Australian Futures Project.

AUSTRALIAN FUTURES PROJECT IN THE MEDIA

437 Total media engagements

317 Online articles

80 Print articles

40 TV, radio, and podcast engagements

2 Opinion pieces by Ralph Ashton in the national media

“If our leaders are incapable of leading, others must step up – in small and big ways, in our neighbourhoods and on the national stage, in our personal lives and in our professional positions. It’s time for civic courage.”

Ralph Ashton, Director, Australian Futures Project, Australia is behaving like a spoiled brat, The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald
Australia is behaving like a spoiled brat
Opinion, Ralph Ashton, The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald

Short-term thinking is creating long-term problems
Ralph Ashton, The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald

Poll reveals 76 per cent of voters picked a side before campaign began
Laura Tingle and James Elton, ABC News

After water approval for Adani, these are the at-risk Coalition seats concerned about climate change
Jackson Gothe-Snape, ABC News

Adani Mine, Climate create great divide
Ben Potter, Australian Financial Review

Data reveals health, cost-of-living the biggest election issues
Primrose Riordan and Richard Ferguson, The Australian

Exclusive: Poll reveals climate change key issue for more than half of voters
Fiona Willan, Nine News

What Australians want from the next PM
Phillip Coorey, Australian Financial Review
The **Australian Futures Project** partnered with **The Age** and **The Sydney Morning Herald** to take an in-depth look at short-termism in relation to the big issues for Australia. We wanted to know, what’s stopping action on the important long-term issues and explore where solutions lie.

**THE FUTURE FIX**

“**Powerful people who have painted themselves as powerless need to step up, and step into their power**”

Ralph Ashton, Director, Australian Futures Project, at the Skilling Up panel event for SMH Live
COVERAGE

SEVEN explainer articles examining short-termism in relation to the important issues for Australians, 250,000+ total article views. TWO sold out live panel events for The Age Live and SMH Live in Sydney and Melbourne. ONE opinion piece and ONE explainer video by Ralph Ashton on short-termism.

“Short-termism has become rampant. Political leaders can float a policy balloon at breakfast and it can be dead by lunchtime”

Tory McGuire, National Editor, The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald, on short-termism at the Feed the Masses panel event

“We created the system. We own the system. Together, each of us can shape it to serve us for the decades to come”

Ralph Ashton, Director, Australian Futures Project, opinion piece on solutions to short-termism in Australia
In a first for Australian politics, during the 2019 Federal Election campaign, the Australian Futures Project piloted The Perfect Candidate, Australia’s first ever digital candidate to help shift Australia’s national conversation from short-term problems to long-term solutions throughout the 2019 Federal Election.

Based on Roy Morgan data from over 125,000 real people, The Perfect Candidate embodies the true concerns of people in Australia. Users were able to chat online with The Perfect Candidate and discover how their concerns, and the concerns of the nation, compared to the priorities of political parties.

**COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Voter data reveals ‘perfect’ Aus candidate**
  The Canberra Times

- **Voter survey: Young and female do not trust leaders, but seniors still believe**
  Samantha Maiden, The New Daily

- **Australians want cheaper bills not lower taxes**
  Jessica Irvine, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age

- **Innovation of the day - The Perfect Candidate**
  Trend Watching

- **Ralph Ashton on Voter Disengagement and The Perfect Candidate**
  Laura Tingle, 7.30, ABC TV

- **Exclusive: Even baby boomers think baby boomers get the best deal from government**
  Velvet Winter, The Feed SBS

- **Meet the perfect election candidate**
  Malcolm Farr, News.com.au

- **Australian Futures Project launches ‘The Perfect Candidate’ via Isobar + Cox Inall Change**
  Campaign Brief
TOP TEN CONCERNS OF AUSTRALIANS

1. Reducing the cost of living
2. Improving hospitals and health services
3. Open and honest government
4. Global warming and climate change
5. Managing the economy
6. Improving education
7. Reducing crime and maintaining law and order
8. Reducing unemployment
9. Managing immigration and population growth
10. Reducing the taxes you and your family pay

Based on research by Roy Morgan for theperfectcandidate.org.au

Total pieces of media coverage across all media: 385
Online conversations with The Perfect Candidate: 7000
Users ranked their own concerns against those of the political parties: 3000
Total audience reached through all media: 84M
PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS PROGRAM

Delivered in partnership with Corporate Evolution and patronised by the President of the Liberal Party of Australia, the Hon Nick Greiner AC and the President of the Australian Labor Party, the Hon Wayne Swan MP. The Parliamentary Leaders Program is Australia’s only program dedicated to transforming the capabilities of the nation’s politicians. The program is made possible with support from La Trobe University, The University of Western Australia, and Jibb Foundation.

ALUMNI SUPPORT

Independent parliamentarian, Ruth Forrest MLC, spoke in Parliament to the Tasmanian Legislative Council about Australian Future’s Project work and the “extremely beneficial” Parliamentary Leaders Program she took part in. She linked participation in the course to a critical need for MP’s to “work to rebuild trust and respect through honesty, integrity and a willingness to listen and learn”.

Ruth also hosted an event in her home with interested Tasmanians from media, government and academia to discuss the challenges around short-termism and how they manifest in a Tasmanian context.

Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly, the Hon Jonathan O’Dea MP, endorsed the program in NSW Parliament and hosted an information session at NSW Parliament to connect Australian Futures Project with fellow parliamentarians to generate interest in our 2019 State program.

Watch Jonathan discuss the Parliamentary Leaders Program and rebuilding trust below.
In 2019, we are relaunching the program with the ambitious goal of counting one-third of all sitting parliamentarians across all Australian jurisdictions as alumni by 2021. This will equip Parliamentarians with the capability to solve Australia's big issues and to fix the political system itself.

$100,000 SCHOLARSHIP
To ensure any motivated and visionary parliamentarian can access the program, in 2019, we proudly launched $100,000 worth of supported places.

NEXT PROGRAM

State Program
6-8 November 2019
Sydney

Download the course brochure here.
In 2018, Australian Futures Project delivered its most successful Parliamentary Leaders Program yet. Ten Western Australian parliamentarians (our largest cohort to date) gathered in Perth for two and a half days of intensive learning, discussion and development. This course was hosted with two new partners, The University of Western Australia and Corporate Evolution, a world leader in values-based culture and leadership consulting.

We successfully tested a new approach to firstly, securing registrations, and secondly, course content with facilitator Malcolm Doig of Corporate Evolution, cementing this as our ongoing approach for future courses. The University of Western Australia has been secured to host another on-campus program in the coming 12 months.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE PROGRAM 2018

GUEST SPEAKERS

The Hon Fred Chaney AO

Professor Dawn Freshwater
Vice-Chancellor, The University of Western Australia and former Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and registrar, UWA. Recipient of the Fellowship of the Royal College of Nursing, panel member for the Higher Education Funding Council for England 2014 Research Excellence Framework.

The Hon Dr Elizabeth Constable

The Hon John Day
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE PROGRAM 2018 PARTICIPANTS

Of participants said the program improved their ability to govern, and felt they made an improvement across all of the following skills:

- Understanding their leadership and influence in order to improve their effectiveness
- Capacity to try new things
- Power to drive change
- Awareness of how they influence
- Relationships with Parliamentarians from other parties

“The course provided many unexpected benefits and provided opportunities to form cross-party relationships unattached to policy or politics”
Diane Evers, Greens

“... a unique approach to leadership in complex situations and takes a different approach to “traditional” leadership programs. I have gained immensely and look forward to making a much more effective contribution to Australia in the future”
Colin de Grussa, Nationals

“I found the program truly transformational. It was so much more than I expected and I’m very confident that I will be able to apply my learning in my career and life”
Lisa O’Malley, ALP

Of participants said the program improved their ability to govern, and felt they made an improvement across all of the following skills:

- Understanding their leadership and influence in order to improve their effectiveness
- Capacity to try new things
- Power to drive change
- Awareness of how they influence
- Relationships with Parliamentarians from other parties

100%
FEDERATION

2.0

Upgrading Australia's decision-making system for the 21st Century.

It's been 120 years since Federation. The world has changed dramatically and Australia's system for making important decisions has not kept up.

Federation 2.0 is an new initiative in the works at the Australian Futures Project, aiming to install one long-term catalytic reform to Australia's decision-making system, regardless of how impossible they might at first appear.

Throughout the past six months, we have partnered with the Hallmark Program at La Trobe University to conduct background research and analysis in order to further define the scope of this ambitious project. Stay tuned for announcements coming soon.

Initiative loading.
More information coming soon.
“Wasting the Future?” was a unique initiative catalysed by two supporters, The Gourlay Charitable Trust and Salt Impact, who were both inspired to action after watching ABC TV’s War on Waste.

The Australian Futures Project ran the initiative, drawing on experts and practitioners in the waste system, to identify if and how it would be possible to intervene in order to address the challenge that “Australia needs to significantly reduce waste volumes in order to improve our environmental, social and economic wellbeing”.

Based on a design thinking framework, the project was conducted in four stages over 2018 and early 2019. The role of the Australian Futures Project is now finished, and participants in the project are taking the next steps.

1. **EMPATHISE AND DEFINE**

   The Australian Futures Project released the “Wasting the Future?” report, summarising literature and stakeholder interviews in order to create a common understanding of the landscape of Australia’s waste system. Food waste was identified as the lever this project would focus on.

   Read the full report here.

2. **IDEATE**

   In August of 2018, the Australian Futures Project convened a workshop of key food waste experts and practitioners in Adelaide. Participants undertook a facilitated process to brainstorm and prioritise a short-list of potential solutions to the challenge statement.

   Read the workshop report summary here.

3. **PROTOTYPE AND TEST**

   Throughout December and January, the Australian Futures Project coached a group of four workshop attendees from four States / Territories to further develop their food waste solution identified in Stage 2, and then pitch the updated concept to funders. The group was successful in securing $10,000 in seed funding to pursue its solution, “Fighting food waste by changing hearts and minds”.

4. **IMPLEMENT**

   The team from Stage 3 are now working to pilot and implement their solution.
THE NUMBERS

INCOME

Source
- Multi-Year Donors: 53%
- La Trobe University: 28%
- Donors: 11%
- Earned Income: 8%

EXPENSES

Project
- The Perfect Candidate: 22%
- The Future Fix: 2%
- Parliamentary Leaders Program: 9%
- Federation 2.0: 15%
- Other / Legacy: 16%

Category
- Team: 13%
- Consultants / Partners: 5%
- Travel: 16%
- Other: 66%
OUR 2018-19 SUPPORTERS

FOUNDING ACADEMIC PARTNER
La Trobe University

MULTI-YEAR SUPPORTERS
Gourlay Charitable Trust
David Koczkar and Prue Sheed
Charles and Olivia Lanchester
William Manos
Reef Shark Foundation
Enrico Rizzon and Rita Kimmerle
Salt Impact
Schudmak Family Foundation
Snow Foundation
Matthew Stubbs
Wheen Family Foundation
Angus and Emma White
Wolf Foundation
Wright-Burt Foundation

SUPPORTERS
Anonymous
Nick Fairfax
Jibb Foundation
James and Kath Murray

IN-KIND SUPPORTERS
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Corporate Evolution
Cox Inall Change
Isobar
Roy Morgan