

Planning Initiatives in New Zealand

Background and context

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Timeline – Government planning in NZ

- 1960 – Industrial Development Conference
- 1961 – Monetary and Economic Council
- 1968 – National Development Council
 - ‘Indicative planning’ = production targets
- 1977 – New Zealand Planning Council
 - ‘Medium term’ (3 to 10 years)
- 1977 – Commission for the Future
 - ‘Long-range’ (10-30 years)
- 1997 – Foresight Project
 - Medium-term trends and sectoral outcomes

Commission for the Future 1977-1981

- The first concerted exploration of alternative futures by a New Zealand governmental institution

Legislated Purposes

- To study the possibilities for the long-term economic and social development of New Zealand
- To make information on these possibilities available to all members of Parliament, and to publish such information for wider dissemination
- To promote discussion on those possibilities and information relating to them
- To report to the Minister on those possibilities

Specific Focus

- Give special attention to the long-term implications for New Zealand of new or prospective developments in science and technology
- Have regard to prospective trends, policies, and events in New Zealand and overseas which could have important consequences for the country's future

The CFF's most significant project

“The Commission is now developing a set of four alternative contexts within which New Zealand could develop. Believing that the best future for New Zealand will result from the expressed desires of well informed New Zealanders, the CFF will present the contexts as an analytical goal. The contexts can be used to help people clarify their opinions, values and aspirations and to match them with resources and forecasts to allow consistent sets of decisions to emerge.”

The CFF's three scenarios (constructed on the basis of comments)

- **A high-growth industrialised New Zealand:** 'The goal of the nation is economic success . . . New Zealand's economy becomes less and less agricultural and more industrial.'
- **A self-reliant, self-sustainable New Zealand:** 'Non-material goals like environmental conservation and community participation as well as material well-being are considered important . . . The emphasis is on small-scale high value enterprises.'
- **A self-sufficient, small community based New Zealand:** 'The consumer society is rejected, individual goals become the maximum personal satisfaction with the minimum personal consumption of resources . . . The few industries that exist are small in scale. They produce for the New Zealand market only.'

Public reception to CFF

“Many decision-makers, including members of parliament, have expected to be presented with more ‘factual’ material such as long-term extrapolations of current trends and quantitative predictions. While futures thinking must be based on the best information available at the time, it is these very ‘future facts’ which are most often proved to be in error.”

Margaret Hunn, 1981

The Question

- Does scenario development provide a useful or viable model for action on the limited warming goal?
- Or is the situation too specific and too late for scenarios?

National Development Council

- National conferences of representatives of industry, government departments, universities
- Agreed growth targets by sector, based on computer modelling

Experimenting with the Future

- Voluntary sectoral-based pilot projects
- Emissions target is already fixed
- Achievement actions are developed
- Results publicised
- Actions adjusted in ongoing cycle

A Lone Voice

“We may have to take account of evidence that argues not only for limitations to growth but provides the rationale for a policy of restricting demand.”

John Roberts, 1973