Reflections on the Secondary Futures project

and implications for

futures governance

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Origins of Secondary Futures

Secondary Futures grew out of a need for a conversation about the future of schooling, perceived jointly by the education sector and the education officials and ministers, at the same time that the OECD was also encouraging and supporting discourse about the future of schooling.

The stars aligned.

Origins of Secondary Futures

This alignment created a unique opportunity to explore different ways for government to engage with citizens, using the future as the frame

Origins of Secondary Futures

'One challenge is for the Secondary Futures team to get across is that this is different from anything else ever attempted before'

Howard Fancy

Secretary for Education at the time Secondary Futures was established

image (c) Shevill Mathers

Origins of Secondary Futures

'Secondary Futures looks to the future possibilities in schooling – to harness the best of what we are doing now, explore new opportunities and put them into practice. It also models a new way of us, the sector and the government – engaging in policy debates in the future'

Trevor Mallard

Minister of Education at the time Secondary Futures was established

Design of Secondary Futures

Form follows function.

Secondary Futures was innovative in:

- Purpose
- Modality
- Form
- Authorising environment (permissions)

Purpose of Secondary Futures

Facilitate a broad-ranging discussion with New Zealanders about how secondary schooling can make more students more successful 20 years from now

Create a vision for secondary education to guide us for the future

Purpose of Secondary Futures

"The task . . . will not be to develop an all-encompassing strategy or a finite position themselves . . . but to *facilitate a process* that allows for *multiple contributions and inputs* from a *variety of sources* – learners, parents, teachers, planners, iwi, educators, community leaders and government. *Along the iterative path, a cumulative vision will emerge to provide a sense of direction and to illuminate a possible destination*." Guardians' Framework, February 2004.

Modality of Secondary Futures

- Iterative and open-ended, rather than aimed at delivering a specific product to a specific time-frame.

- Inclusive - 'bringing in the voices not traditionally heard in the debate shaping policy'

- **A focus on building futures literacy across varied diverse communities as an enabler of participation in the conversation**

- Relational and transformative rather than transactional

Form of Secondary Futures

- Guardians

- Touchstone Group

- Secretariat

Four Guardians lead the Secondary Futures project.

| Ian Taylor | Bernice Mene | Gillian Heald | Mason Durie |

Our Guardians meet regularly to oversee the integrity of the project, taking into account their compliance, strategic and trustee roles.

They also provide the public face of the project, meeting with key audiences at conferences, workshops, hui and prize-givings, and provide intellectual leadership for Secondary Futures' methodology.

Form of Secondary Futures

Guardians

- Four independent, trusted New Zealanders
- Tasked with overseeing the integrity of the project
- Enabling New Zealanders to see themselves as owning the project, rather than it being owned government

Form of Secondary Futures

Guardians

– oversaw the integrity of the project by:

- building trust and confidence in the process
- encouraging participation and debate
- protecting the integrity of the process as independent of both government and education bodies
- providing vision for the work
- creating a safe environment for robust debate

Form of Secondary Futures

Touchstone Group

Made up of representatives from key education stakeholders, the Touchstone Group was a forum to help the Guardians debate ideas and test issues. Members played an important role in making sure their own organisations and members were involved in contributing to the development of the future vision for secondary education.

Form of Secondary Futures

Touchstone Group

- Association of Colleges of Education in New Zealand
- Beginning teacher
- Federated Farmers of New Zealand
- Growth and Innovation Advisory Board
- Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand
- Māori secondary teacher
- New Zealand School Trustees' Association
- New Zealand Education Institute - Te Riu Roa
- New Zealand Parent Teacher Association
- New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee
- Pasifika secondary teacher
- Post Primary Teachers' Association
- Post Primary Teachers' Association Principals' Council
- Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand
- Student in teacher education
- Student representatives
- Te Akatea
- Te Rūnanga Nui o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori

Form of Secondary Futures

Secretariat

Small team of 4-5 FTEs to carry out the daily work of the project

Separate from the Ministry of Education but able to draw on its corporate resources (IT, Knowledge Services, HR etc)

Authorising Environment of Secondary Futures

Secondary Futures was given permissions to:

- engage widely across all sectors

- share information about the emerging vision including with politicians of ALL parties as the conversation was owned by all New Zealanders

- Be freed from customary reporting and accountability requirements

Authorising Environment of Secondary Futures

Secondary Futures was funded, but not driven by government

Government ceded control to create an richer place for debate

Changed the power balance – shift from consultation to conversation

About the participants' outcomes, not just government's

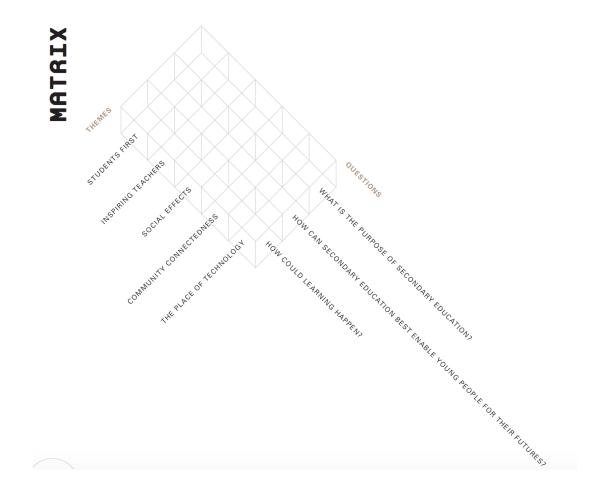# Authorising Environment of Secondary Futures

In the absence of reporting requirements, Secondary Futures demonstrated accountability by publishing activity reports and, as a vision for the future of schooling emerged, theme papers describing different elements of the emerging vision

Secondary Futures in practice

Defined a set of goals:

- creating space to contemplate the future
- providing tools to resource thinking about the future of education
- sharing trends for the future direction of New Zealand society
- sharing information about possibilities to make more students more successful
- eliciting people's preferences in relation to the future of the New Zealand education system
- supporting change by taking information out to others.

Secondary Futures Matrix

Achievements of Secondary Futures

- Developed new ways of working with integrity and iteration at their heart
- Created safe space for debate
- Created inclusive tools to resource thinking about the future
- Empowered individuals and communities
- Engaged widely across sectors, at all levels of the system
- Worked between gathering diverse inputs and robust analysis (iterative testing)
- Elicited a vision

Achievements of Secondary Futures

Core elements of the 20 year vision Secondary Futures gathered up between 2004 and 2009 are still relevant

Some of the 'imagined futures' have already come into being

It gave participants the confidence to start making future-informed changes in the parts of the system under their influence – not waiting for permission, or someone else to start

Parts of the emerging vision were used as inputs to legislative change and the context for the development of the New Zealand Curriculum

Secondary Futures: Students First

STUDENTS FIRST

The purpose of learning is to make sure all young people can fully participate and contribute to New Zealand society in the future.

Students are at the centre of learning systems.

There is an expectation of success for all students.

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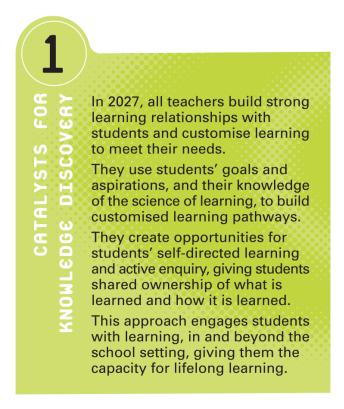
SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

If young people are to be successful, they will need the capacity:

- to learn and stay excited about learning as a way of living
- to participate in a future society, taking change in their stride
- to be part of the New Zealand tradition – respecting the past, creating the future
- to have a strong sense of self-worth and a strong sense of respect for others.

Secondary Futures: Inspiring Teachers

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CATALYSTS FOR KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY

In 2027, all teachers build strong learning relationships with students and customise learning to meet their needs.

They use students' goals and aspirations, and their knowledge of the science of learning, to build customised learning pathways.

They create opportunities for students' self-directed learning and active enquiry, giving students shared ownership of what is learned and how it is learned.

This approach engages students with learning, in and beyond the school setting, giving them the capacity for lifelong learning.

Secondary Futures: Social Effects

SOCIAL EFFECTS

Success for young people includes the ability to thrive without adult intervention. Social capabilities are central to this.

Without them:

- people cannot make full use of knowledge and skills
- individuals and communities cannot reach their full potential
- we may not be able to shape the society we want to live in.

The purpose of schooling is to give all young people the capabilities to participate in and contribute to society in the future.

SOCIAL EFFECTS
HOENGA AUAHA TAIOHI

Secondary Futures Community Connectedness

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LEARNING IS CENTRAL TO SOCIETY

What society needs from schooling is always considered alongside what schooling needs from society.

New Zealanders know learning is key to the success of their family, their workplace and their country.

All people, in all aspects of life, are keenly aware of how they are learning and how they help others learn.

Secondary Futures: The Place of Technology

Thinking about the *Place of Technology* in schooling means focusing on twin challenges:

- how technology is changing the world we live in
- how schooling must change so learning can equip students to be successful in that world.

www.thinktech.co.nz is a tool to help think about these challenges.

THE PLACE OF TECHNOLOGY

THE PLACE OF TECHNOLOGY
HOENGA AUAHA TAIOHI

Secondary Futures: Reflections

These elements were vital in the success of Secondary Futures:

– Explicit permissions
  - to work to different outcomes
  - to work in differently modalities
– A form that made it possible to use those permissions
  - Guardianship of the independence and integrity of the project
  - Resourcing participants to have the conversations they needed

Reflections in a futures governance context

- Form matters
- Practice and process matters (integrity of practice matters)
- Widely distributed futures capability matters – only way to truly democratise and create authorising environments for the hard decisions, because investing in the future may mean someone has to give up something today.

Reflections in a futures governance context

- Secondary Futures demonstrated the power than can be unleashed when government cedes its conventional modes and works in transformational ways that empower people through resourcing and distributed ownership.

- Empowering, transformative, future-framed approaches enable people to let go and move forward

Reflections in a futures governance context

- Secondary Futures came about because the stars aligned.

- In future we can't leave it to chance to create this kind of transformative space.

- To tackle the societal transitions facing us, we need to build this capacity intentionally into our governance systems

Further information

For further information about the Secondary Futures project, or to discuss any other aspect of futures work, contact Dr Stephanie Pride at StratEDGY Strategic Foresight

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