

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

The Australian Context

Australia is a leader within the Asia Pacific region and has the potential to be both a technology and sustainability powerhouse on the global stage. Despite this, Australia has not yet leveraged this opportunity, facing widening inequality, climate disasters from bushfires to flooding, persistent reliance on fossil fuels and persistent erosions to our democracy, trust in institutions and social cohesion.

However, in recent years, the tides have begun to turn. Landmark developments such as the launch of [Australia's Wellbeing Framework](#); the establishment of the [Australian Parliamentary Group for Future Generations](#); Independent Senator David Pocock's introduction of the [Duty of Care Bill](#) to the Senate, which seeks to legislate a duty of care to young people and future generations about our climate; and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [asserting](#) that "If we don't act to shape the future, the future will shape us" are all signals of increased political will for change and an evolving Australian social contract, one where sustainability, inclusive prosperity and intergenerational fairness are at the forefront.

Australian Visions for 2100

During the Town Hall, participants shared insights into their vision for the future, as well as what they believed would help Australia achieve this. Visions included:

"Every Individual receives a good standard of living with a focus on upstream solutions while taking consideration and care of our impact on the land and the land's impact on our wellbeing."



"To collectively & collaboratively amplify every voice to share power to pursue common goals for a more just, equitable and sustainable future."

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

By 2100...

Participants also reflected on what would be required to achieve these visions, considering what would have been achieved and how Australians would work together.

What have we achieved?

- Australia becoming a Republic,
- Humane supply chains are the new 'standard',
- There is a shared fundamental understanding of what sustainable development is,
- People and planet are in balance, and value is placed on planetary health,
- The education system operates off a curriculum that is centered on sustainability,



- Australia has transitioned from exporting fossil fuels to exporting renewable energy,

- All elements of the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) have been implemented; Voice, Treaty & Truth,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have self-determination and are no longer systemically disadvantaged,
- Thinking 100 years into the future, when making decisions has become 'expected' and the standard practice,
- There is increased diversity of people working in politics, specifically with an increasing number of young people in leadership,
- Australia has reformed immigrant detention centers,
- There are established and accessible feedback loops within government for citizens to give input into shaping and improving the national vision for the future. They ensure that policies remain relevant and effective over time
- Trust is prioritised and understood to be an essential element of leadership,
- We are approaching both local and global challenges with a 'global citizen' mindset, bridging international and national efforts.

Local Action: Existing National Investments

Australian state and federal governments have been pursuing improvements to sustainability policy and intergenerational fairness measures

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

for several years. While these initiatives have had varying levels of tangible impact, initiatives such as the [Intergenerational Report](#), [The Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland](#), [ACT's Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment](#) and the [South Australian Foresight Unit](#).

How might we bring this to life?

- By extending the length of electoral terms and advancing funding reform to address challenges in the incentive structures of political leaders,
- Increasing civic acumen across society by investing in innovative approaches to civic education,
- Increased empowerment for local and regional governments to develop highly localised solutions that can overcome differences within Australia, such as differences between urban and rural experiences,
- Increasing the transparency of political advertising,
- Deliberative democracy approaches are integrated into how national decisions are made,
- Taking strong leadership to de-monopolise Australia's media landscape,
- Taking bold action to harness technology to drive inclusion, exploring ideas such as a universal basic income..

Local Action: Future Healthy Countdown 2030

In the absence of a comprehensively adopted national framework for holistic wellbeing, initiatives such as the Future Healthy Countdown 2030 have emerged to fill gaps and drive progress.

The Future Healthy Countdown 2030 is 'a comprehensive national framework for measuring progress on children and young people's health and wellbeing. It brings together evidence ([across seven key health and wellbeing domains](#)) to identify policy priorities, and track progress on how we are (or aren't) supporting future generations to thrive.

Every year until 2030, we'll highlight the health and wellbeing of children and young people and propose pathways to ensure an equitable future for all'

[Vic Health](#)



INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

Global Cooperation to Drive National Progress

The national priorities of Australians further highlights the need for an ambitious UN Summit of the Future. The reimagination of the United Nations and reinvestment in global cooperation stands as a potential lever for bringing forward to vision that Australians hold for 2100. By redoubling efforts towards sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda and platforming bold proposals for the future, the UN Summit of the Future stands as an inflection point for driving unity elevated global standards.

To this point, a core element of the Australian Town Hall was exploring the **12 Global Proposals for Future Generations**. These proposals were formulated from the current version of the [Pact for the Future](#), drafted by member states through the intergovernmental process towards the [Summit of the Future](#). These proposals also align with the key recommendations from over 170 child, youth, and futures-focused organizations that have contributed to this process. Together, they aim to address these challenges head-on, ensuring that our global governance systems evolve to meet the needs of current and future generations.

Out of the 12 Global Proposals, those that garnered the most support from participants were:

1. Empowering Young People in International Cooperation. Particular focus was given to the need to ensure that young people are provided with the requisite skills and knowledge to meaningfully engage. Within this discussion, participants also highlighted the need to establish a dedicated voice for future generations within government. Participants also wanted to ensure that the opinions of young people are recognized and valued at a national level, beyond ‘youth policy’. It was indicated that providing practical and visible opportunities for substantive policy engagement for young people could help break down stereotypes and foster a culture of capability and empowerment. Paternalism was indicated to be a key barrier to the implementation of this proposal. Risks identified in implementation also included a failure to engage under-represented communities, youth advocacy being siloed into spaces without power, and a lack of accountability for applying the inputs of young people.



2. Urgent Climate Justice to Leave No One Behind. This proposal was particularly important to participants due to an awareness of Australia’s

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

relationship with others in the region and the 'hypocrisy' demonstrated by Australia's failure to enact climate policy that adequately aligns with the country's position in the region. Issues identified in relation to this proposal included the impact of lobbying and commercial interests driving decision-making and the short-term political costs of changing Australia's 'trajectory' beyond what many politicians are willing to take on. On a global scale, reference was made to the likely impacts of climate migration. Participants emphasized that transparency in the schedules of Parliamentarians - to show the volume of meetings with lobbyists - would be valuable. Great value was also seen in investments to reduce debt for Global South countries. Many participants emphasized the opportunity available to Australia to invest in sustainable practices, particularly due to the abundance of natural resources.

Local Action: The Duty of Care Campaign

The [Duty of Care Bill](#) builds on the incredible legal work undertaken by Anjali Sharma and other young people in the [Sharma v Minister for Environment case](#). The bill would require decision makers 'To consider the likely impact of decisions that could harm the climate on the health and wellbeing of current and future children as the paramount consideration'. Despite not yet being recommended for adoption, the Duty of Care Campaign has sparked national discussion of the duty owed by policy makers to future generations.

3. Improved Child Wellbeing. Participants were particularly passionate about investments in the early years to set strong foundations for long, healthy lives. Specific proposals included addressing the disparity between funding for private and public schools by shifting resources back to previous models and standards to ensure equitable education and advocating for continual investment in the workforce, particularly for early-year educators to ensure that they can prepare students for the future.

Other proposals that attracted the attention of the group included:

- New Agenda for Peace,
- Tackling Corruption and Improving Taxation, and
- A Special Envoy for Future Generations

Local Action: Wellbeing of Future Generations

Efforts are underway in Australia to see Dr Sophie Scamps MP introduce a private members bill into the federal parliament on the wellbeing of future generations. This public act of leadership, due to take place in November 2024, is a response to the [growing civil society movement for intergenerational fairness](#) and is intended to platform the interests of future generations in the national discussion ahead of the 2025 Australian federal election.

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

When asked why particular proposals were favoured compared to others, participants cited that those ideas that they felt had the best chance of driving *systemic* change and meaningfully *shifting power* felt most important and that they were trying to consider which could act as the ‘first dominos’ in the broader transformation process. This once again reinforces **the essential role of the UN in driving forward bold proposals that can serve as catalytic forces for change both globally and at a national level.**

Consistent themes in group discussion also included the need to:

- Navigate top-down versus bottom-up approaches to implementation, ensuring inclusivity of individual needs.
- Implement accountability measures to hold governments responsible for commitments to young people.
- Reorganising government to focus on solutions and opportunities, not just problems.

Some individuals raised additional points, including the need for Australia to:

- Balance targeted interventions with universal solutions to benefit both specific and general populations.
- Address risks related to over-reliance on local institutions and consider cultural and religious influences.

- Emphasis on building a resilient and resourceful population through emotional literacy and self-regulation to prevent social marginalisation and radicalisation.

What is Front of Mind for Australians?

Throughout an Intergenerational Town Hall hosted in Melbourne, Australia on May 20th, 2024, a few key themes came up consistently:

In order to reshape our future, we must be willing to make sacrifices today. During the Town Hall, discussions of whether investments in the future require sacrifice today were a focal point. While the case was made by several participants and speakers that this was a false binary, with many innovations for the future also serving the interests of the present day, several participants supported the idea that investing in our future will *in fact* require us to make sacrifices, alter behaviour and reimagine our approaches, and that ‘needs to be ok’. Participants did not want to ‘shy away’ from the realities that the way we currently live ‘must change’ and felt that driving a culture shift around resistance to this idea was a key ingredient to progress.

In Australia’s political landscape, policy innovation is both required and achievable.

Many participants reflected on how short-term thinking impacts Australian policy, from housing to the media industry and climate change, with

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

political leaders prioritising the imperative of 3-4 year electoral cycles over truly innovative and impactful policy that serves both current and future generations. Despite this, Australia also has everything it needs across its natural environment and national institutions to be a sustainability and policy innovation powerhouse.

‘I hate the word co-design’: several speakers and participants resonated with the notion that co-design is an over-used and under-practiced concept. Reference was made to the prevalence of performative ‘co-design’ and how often ‘the decisions are already made when young people are engaged’. The strong sense of resonance for this message led to an ongoing discussion of what ‘meaningful youth engagement’ truly is and how it can be practised, although many of these discussions were met with concerns of policy, resource and logistical limitations.



We must share power across generations to reimagine our world and engage young people across all policy design, not just ‘youth issues’. Intergenerational collaboration must go beyond engagement and must include intergenerational

power sharing. Participants in the Town Hall felt that power-sharing would also lead to an increased sense of shared responsibility. There was also encouragement for older generations to see the *value* in youth participation and for young people to assert their rights and call out unsafe or inappropriate practices.

Local Action: Raise Our Voice Australia

ROVA, a youth-led organisation runs the ‘[Raise Our Voice in Parliament](#)’ initiative each year, welcoming submissions from young people aged 25 or under in response to the prompt: ‘what do you want your community to look like in the next 10 years?’. Selections from these submissions are then read in parliament by local MPs, amplifying the voice and vision of young Australians.

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100



International leadership makes us all braver.

Throughout the day, countless international examples were used to instill confidence in the potential of reimagining the way we govern and lead. It was evident that being able to observe the successful application of innovative ideas in other jurisdictions was of great benefit. This should not only inform future strategy for messaging on innovative policy proposals but is also a motivating factor for national leadership as it can not only serve the originating country but also the global community by encouraging others to follow suit.

Wellbeing and welfare must be valued the same as monetary wealth. Participants consistently returned to the imperative to update how we value progress, well-being and wealth. There was great support for finding ways to meaningfully ‘value’ all investments that support innovation, holistic wellbeing and future prosperity.

Australia has a responsibility as a ‘privileged nation’. Participants acknowledged that Australia is in a position to influence sustainable development at a regional and international level. Particularly in the context of the uneven distribution of global wealth and Australia’s colonial history, participants believed that Australia had a responsibility to be part of reshaping global power dynamics. Participants highlighted that ‘as a stable and prosperous nation, Australia has the potential to lead by example’. This message was paired with an acknowledgment that addressing global issues requires ‘grappling with uncomfortable truths and legacies of past injustices’, including ‘the dismantling of social, economic and political systems of inequality’, and that building intergenerational and inter-cultural empathy is key to building a better future.

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100



Imagination is key to unlocking the potential of our future. “We need to reinvent the way we view the world... the climate issue isn’t a technical issue, it’s a social issue. We need to change the way we think.” To craft a new and exciting vision for the future, we must harness imagination, empathy and creativity. Other participants also encouraged a ‘poetic vision for the future’, by developing a vision defined by forgiveness, healing, and love to create a ‘caring vision for 2100’.

Local Action: The Museum of Futures

[Museum of Futures](#) recently exhibited ‘[Our Shared Futures](#)’ at NSW Parliament in June 2023. By harnessing the emotive power of art, the Museum of Futures seeks to invite participants to question how well we imagine our futures and ‘expand the imagination infrastructure of what we believe is possible’.

A Highly functional government is a two-way street. Discussions indicated that participants felt

that the requirements of a robust democracy were often overlooked and that, for the dynamic to work, we should both ask ‘what can I do for my government?’ and ‘what can my government do for me?’.

We can’t forge our future before we reconcile with our past. Australia, like many Global North countries, carries with it a history of colonial violence, the impacts of which remain unaddressed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. This was identified as a key barrier to forming a compelling Australian identity or a unifying vision for the future. An opportunity was also identified by participants, speakers and the artists who presented during the Town Hall, to meaningfully partner with Indigenous Australians and learn from the wisdom and leadership that sustained them as the [longest-living culture in the world](#).

‘All indigenous cultures have a version of ‘Everywhen’. For us, all times are inseparable; no time is ever over; and all times are unfinished. ‘Everywhen’ stretches between the ancient and the future – we experience it in the now.

In my ancestral language, Gathang, wanyimbuwanyimbu means ‘always’. This word is like a ripple in time, repeating itself and flowing outward. The ‘always’ - the past, present and future - is one, vibrating and occurring simultaneously.’

Nicole Smede, Multi-disciplinary artist & composer

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

We have an opportunity to reframe the interconnectivity of individual and global actions. Historically, the focus on the interplay between personal interactions and larger systemic changes has been unfairly harnessed to minimise the role of large organisations.

However, it was identified that decentring the role of the individual can make us feel even more removed and disengaged from the issues that will impact our future most and that there is an opportunity to bring the ‘personal’ back into our future.

The Conversation Continues...

The movement to act now to protect the interests of future generations is building momentum in Australia. Parliamentarians, advocates, academics, and community leaders are increasingly championing innovative policy solutions to bring these visions to life. This Town Hall provided an opportunity for agents of change across sectors to connect, collaborate, and amplify their insights into the Australian policy landscape and the international process to define a [Road to 2100](#). The discussion does not end here, with Australian champions pushing for local innovations, and the insights from this dialogue being carried towards the [UN Summit of the Future](#) and beyond!

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100



INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

Feedback

It's rare for so many bright, passionate, and talented young minds to have the opportunity to come together in one room to collaborate in a space where not just dialogue, but meaningful action can occur...Personally, I could not have been more thankful for how thoughtful and rich the entire day's program was. For an entire day of my time, I found it to have been incredibly well used.

Clare Beaton, UN Youth, Australia

'I feel Inspired by a committed group of young people who have tangible solutions, confidence, and fantastic ideas'

Town Hall Participant

'Energetic, inspiring, practical, solutions-focussed. Really well facilitated and resourced - brilliant idea having a comms person there, a photographer & visual documenter. I met some incredible people whose ideas have stuck with me. I look forward to seeing how the next Town Halls go & following the work of the UN Summit. Well done!'

Town Hall Participant

'It was fantastic to be in such a diverse room of people willing to share their opinions and thoughts with such honesty and trust. I really appreciated the opportunity to gain new perspectives on issues I thought I was familiar with by speaking with those that are approaching the same or a similar problem from a different angle. It was an encouraging day, and I left feeling motivated to take further action.'

Town Hall Participant

INTERGENERATIONAL TOWN HALLS

National Visions for 2100

Speakers & Presenters

Liana Buchannan, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People | **Gavin Choong**, UN Youth Representative for Australia | **Dr Jordan Cory**, Medical Doctor, Board Director, Indigenous Advocate, Health & Prosperity Expert | **Nathaniel Diong**, CEO, Future Minds Network | **Dr Peter Ellyard**, Futurist & Author | **Dr Cressida Gaukroger**, Lead, Wellbeing Government Initiative, Center for Policy Development | **Jamal Hakim CPA GAICD**, Councillor, City of Melbourne | **Daisy Jeffrey**, Duty of Care Campaigner, Author and Advocate | **Susanne Legena**, CEO, Plan International Australia | **Ahmad Nisar**, Fellowship Facilitator, Orygen | **Jahkarli Felicitas Romanis**, Emerging Artist & Researcher | **Nicole Smede**, Multi-disciplinary artist & composer | **Thomas Walker**, CEO, Think Forward



‘I know that I am capable of pouring love like lavender oil into your cupped palms there is forgiveness like honey pooled in the chambers of our hearts you are the thing I am most grateful for all bodies know how to heal themselves given enough time all demons carry a map of heaven and their scars beneath the skin of every history of trauma there is a love poem waiting deep below’

Excerpt from “Poetry Unbound” ep 7: Poems as Teachers featuring Kai Cheng Thom, shared by Susanne Legena, CEO, Plan International Australia during the event