

## **Road Testing a New Model at the Australian Foresight Institute**

**Richard A Slaughter**

### **Abstract**

This paper reports on the development of a new program of post-graduate studies in strategic foresight. It briefly describes how the program began and some of the ways it attempted to learn from other initiatives in order to develop what might be called a 'second generation' approach. A number of distinguishing features are briefly outlined, along with some of the early results. These include publications, research and work in the area of 'methodological renewal'. Finally, an attempt is made to summarise 'lessons learned' that can be applied more widely.

### **Introduction**

The Australian Foresight Institute (AFI) was established at the direction of the Vice Chancellor of Swinburne University of Technology (SUT) in mid-1999. The original idea had come from a member of Swinburne's International Advisory Board who had asked if the university had ever considered 'doing anything about Futures Studies'. The result was that a colleague who was at that time working as a consultant to the university, along with the present writer, were commissioned to write a feasibility study. The original conception suggested a 'think tank' model that would serve some of the university's organisational supporters - the so-called 'Swinburne 100' group. This idea, however, was not going to be achieved in a single step. So the feasibility study focused on how an institute for Futures Studies (FS) and applied foresight could be established. This would be based on developing brand new post-graduate courses, carrying out original research and eventually moving on to other tasks. At the time of writing, these early steps have been achieved and the expansion into new areas is under way. The rest of this paper outlines how the AFI has developed thus far.

### **Starting points**

The core purposes of the AFI are as follows.

1. To understand and help create social foresight in Australia.
2. To support the emergence of a new generation of foresight practitioners.
3. To develop and run successful, world class, courses.
4. To carry out original research with a special focus on methodological renewal in FS and applied foresight.
5. To be a global resource centre and exemplar for the above work.
6. To gain financial independence.

Beyond this the AFI was premised on two main assumptions. First, that there existed a significant untapped market for high quality post-graduate courses in advanced futures work. Second, that it was not necessary to 'start from scratch', as it were. Rather, any new program should seek to learn from what had gone before and to incorporate the knowledge so gained into its own operation. That is exactly what happened. Two sources, in particular, stand out: Australia's Commission for the Future (CFF) and other university departments teaching Futures Studies (FS).

Back in 1985 the Australian government established the CFF, but for a variety of reasons it was closed in 1996. A careful study of the CFF's 12-year experience suggested a

number of lessons, or ‘operational requisites’, that would need to be taken into account in later initiatives. <sup>1</sup> The main points are given below.

- Core purposes should be carefully defined and linked with the main institutional functions (as in a successful business).
- Funding issues should be tackled and a secure, diversified basis of financial support established as soon as possible.
- The knowledge gained from other foresight initiatives should be thoroughly understood and applied such that the learning curve can begin from a higher level and progress more rapidly.
- Quality control must be a central principle of the organisation. Second-rate futures work is worse than none at all because it provides spurious grounds for the dismissal of the whole enterprise.
- Employees should be fully qualified to carry out futures work. This will necessarily mean that a certain proportion of employees either have recent relevant experience of futures-related work or will undertake the necessary training as a condition of their employment contract.
- Robust methods should be used that integrate empirical, critical and ethical components.
- Particular attention must be paid to building up and sustaining the constituencies upon which such enterprises depend. In this regard, full and proper use should be made of all available media outlets to ensure that they are informed in good time of all initiatives, publications etc. Key figures in relevant areas should be consulted and valued.
- Institutions of Foresight (IOFs) should communicate with other equivalent organisations around the world to: share expertise, organise meetings, pool efforts in common projects and, over time, begin to ‘speak with one voice’ across cultures and national boundaries.
- Finally, IOFs would benefit from participating in, and supporting, research into the nature and effectiveness of futures research and applied foresight.

Progress in each of these areas would lead toward professional legitimation (within the world of FS) and social legitimation (in terms of being seen to be socially useful). The above was therefore distilled into a number of ‘lessons’ or ‘design principles’ for AFI, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of lessons derived from the CFF**

- Define core purposes
- Establish diversified funding base
- Use and apply knowledge gained elsewhere
- Ensure quality control and qualified employees
- Employ of a range of robust methods
- Build constituencies of support
- Ensure communication between centers
- Develop collaborative research
- Work toward social and professional legitimation

The clarity of purpose arising from the above has helped the organisation to keep on track while dealing with multiple expectations, demands and pressures. The establishment of a wider funding base has proven to be a longer-term task that will be resolved as the work of the AFI diversifies and the number of staff increases. As will be

seen below, substantial progress has been made in research, publishing and consulting. As noted above, care has been taken from the beginning to scan other Institutions of Foresight (IOFs) and to draw appropriate lessons. Quality control, qualified employees and robust methods have all been stressed from the outset and help to ensure that the organisation is well founded and competent in its chosen areas of work. Finding appropriate constituencies of support has proved more difficult and is a focus of sustained attention. Similarly, while communication between foresight contexts and areas of collaborative research are time-, and energy-expensive, they are both regarded as vital. Social and professional legitimisation are clearly longer term goals. Both, however, are visibly occurring as AFI's work becomes better known and as the usefulness of applied foresight becomes ever more obvious in this and other organisational contexts.

Apart from the CFF possible lessons from a number of universities overseas offering FS were drawn. It was, and remains, vital to have the active support of the university's CEO, in this case the Vice Chancellor. In some environments, however, Futures programs did not have this support and were at times vulnerable to internal politics, including the whims of Deans and others. Another concern was that a focus on FS per se seemed unwise. Even now many people still do not understand what FS is all about. At AFI we therefore opted for a focus on 'strategic foresight'. This meant that the program could be distinguished from more academic approaches to futures enquiry and concentrate on practice, or implementation. It was determined that 'strategy' had become a generic requirement within most organisations, but that strategic planning was widely perceived to have become routinised and even boring. Adding 'foresight' to 'strategy' had a number of effects. It expanded the time frames normally employed. It brought in much richer conceptualisations. It introduced new methods and approaches. In summary, therefore, we suggested that 'foresight refreshes strategy' – and that has indeed been our experience.

An early focus on strategic foresight provided a firm basis to move on into the area of social foresight (see below). Finally it was determined that the AFI would not simply operate as an academic department. It would also have a board of Directors comprised of top-level futures and foresight practitioners. This has proven to be a highly successful move. The board has been, and continues to be, a source of great strength, support and highly valuable advice. In addition AFI has a patron in the form of the Hon. Barry R. Jones, the prime mover of the CFF and the only well-known Australian politician to have a deep understanding of a wide range of futures issues and approaches. These 'design features' of the AFI are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Design and orientation of the AFI**

- Post-graduate program
- Focus on strategic -, and social foresight (not FS per se)
- Emphasis on implementation (dialectic between theory, tools and practice)
- Role of board and patron (all powerful actors in their own right)
- Location within the university (reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor)

### **Taught courses**

The AFI course structure is given in the appendix. Currently it is a three-year course. Four modules, or subjects, are taken each year. Each unit is taught in what we call 'block mode' which simply means five full days, normally separated by a period of weeks (in year 1) or by a weekend (in years 2 and 3). We have found that this structure appeals

strongly to the 'mid-career professionals' who take these courses. This pattern means that classes take place in concentrated combinations of full days, rather than through an extended sequence of evening classes when, by definition, people have less energy. Overall there are 10 taught subjects plus a number of options, including self-study units in the second and third years. Initially we proposed to offer a professional doctorate in Year 4 but this will not be economically viable until the numbers wishing to take up this option are somewhat larger.

Some of the other distinguishing features of the AFI program are summarised in Table 3. All assignments are intended to be related to 'real world' uses – be they a powerpoint presentation, a plan of action, the scoping of a research project, a draft innovation strategy or anything else that takes insights and knowledge from the classroom and puts them into action. Similarly, the *Knowledge Base of Futures Studies* (KBFS) plays a prominent role in year 1 (the Graduate Certificate year).<sup>2</sup> A copy of this is provided to every student well in advance of the first class. Each then has sufficient time to make their own assessments of the material. When classes convene for the first time each individual's learning journey becomes a point of reference for the others. The result is a marvelously rich set of overlays and interpretations of these core materials. The KBFS has proved popular, I think, because it gives new students something substantial to engage with that is neither culture-bound nor simplistic in content or approach. It is international in scope; it represents a range of FS paradigms (not merely one or two); it contains and exemplifies the values of critique and critical practice, and it does not impose a false uniformity on this diverse field of enquiry and action. The CD-ROM is more convenient to carry and use than several heavy text books. Moreover the whole array of resources can be readily browsed without the complications of internet access (including virus 'infections') and varying download times. In late 2003 the KBFS is being revised for the third time so that it can continue to mirror developments in the field. (Note: It was further revised and expanded to five volumes in 2005.)

It follows from the above that the AFI program takes place in a broad disciplinary domain that goes beyond the limitations of what I have called the 'dominant American empirical tradition'. By this I mean the bulk of US work that foregrounds the external world and overlooks the inner worlds of people and cultures. Thus AFI began by exploring 'critical' approaches to futures tasks. It then moved on to an even broader canvas summed up by the term 'Integral Futures', of which more below. This does not mean, however, that we are pursuing any one approach or focus. Rather, a core feature of everything we do is to encourage students to move fluidly between multiple models, paradigms and frames of reference. It is our view that 'every model both reveals and conceals' aspects of reality at the same time. Hence we attempt not to privilege any single one. These features are summarised in Table 3.

### **Table 3: Design of course units**

- 10 taught subjects/units + projects & other options
- Assignments related to real world projects, products, processes
- Centrality of the KBFS as a frame of reference and a pedagogic tool
- Critical futures orientation leading to integral futures
- Overall, multiple models and frameworks

### **Practicalities**

As noted above, most AFI students already have first degrees. Some have MBA's, while some take the program in place of an MBA. Most are already experienced professionals.

The age range is from the late 20's to the late 50's. They come from corporations, higher education, government departments, consultancies and a variety of 'third sector' organisations. Some change careers, while others actually go into business as a result of having completed an AFI course. The fees are currently set at AUD\$1,700 per unit, which means that it costs about AUD\$7,000 per year, or about \$21,000 over three years for a Masters degree. Though clearly not cheap, this is still a good deal less than the sums charged in many universities for comparable post-graduate degrees. Class sizes are limited to 25 at present.

Since the disciplinary perspective(s) employed at AFI are still uncommon, some of its future staff may well begin as its students. Indeed, several have already been employed as interns. The latter assist with research tasks, publications, events, and support for the office of the President of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF), currently based at AFI. A student-run 'Critical Friends of Foresight' group began meeting in 2002 and provides a number of extra-curricula options, catering to both professional and social needs. A regular program of overseas visitors greatly enriches the program. Such visits provide valuable opportunities to subject our own views about AFI's progress to external 'reality checking'. It also provides students with direct access to leading practitioners.

#### **Table 4: Operational features**

- Most students are 'mid-career professionals'
- Classes are limited to 25
- Block mode teaching (5 x 4 days = 20/year)
- During first year each unit divided into 3 day + 2 day blocks
- Electives begin in year 2, including self study units
- Opportunities for students to serve as interns
- WFSF President's office
- Student run 'critical friends of foresight'
- Program of overseas visitors

#### **Research**

Research plays a central part in the overall program. It helps to ensure that the organisation is at the cutting edge of work in the field. The results flow into course development, staff profiles, publications and earning capacity. Among the areas already engaged are digital continuity (with the university library), futures in education and social entrepreneurship. Considerable efforts have also been devoted to work that seeks to support the further development and integration of the wider field. For example several international surveys have been carried out. One of these up-dated the earlier findings of the 'Prep 21' project by finding out what kinds of FS/Foresight programs are currently being taught in universities around the world.<sup>3</sup> Another looked into the history and development of the WFSF and brought together a series of overlapping accounts. Attempts are continuing to locate some of the personal and professional stories of individuals who have been, or are, associated with this organisation. A further survey task is to obtain profiles of research priorities and methods from various futures-related research bodies and institutes around the world. This process will enable conclusions to be drawn about the overall patterns of work currently being undertaken, as well as the distribution of the various methods employed. The point is to move towards greater overall coordination of effort and some measure of agreement about what are considered to be the most strategic approaches.

Currently the main ‘backbone’ of research work at AFI is a three year project called ‘Creating and Sustaining Social Foresight in Australia’. It is funded by a Melbourne-based philanthropic foundation and is investigating how social foresight may emerge through a series of distinct stages of development. <sup>4</sup> Briefly, the stages are as follows. First, we have taken a careful look at the uses of foresight in everyday life. <sup>5</sup> Second, we are exploring how young people can gain ‘futures fluency’ or ‘foresight literacy’ through exposure to appropriate educational work at various levels. The third stage involves a careful analysis of how futures methodologies are applied around the world, and by whom. The fourth, and final, stage will put forward a number of institutional and/or network designs to support an advanced foresight capacity at the national level. At the completion of the project we will know a great deal more about the prospects for creating social foresight here and, by extension, elsewhere.

**Table 5: Research foci**

- Digital continuity (with library)
- International surveys of FS teaching and research
- Creating and sustaining social foresight
- Social entrepreneurship
- Foresight and philanthropy
- Methodological renewal in FS

A growing area of lively interest concerns the links between foresight and philanthropy. A number of scoping papers have been produced which strongly support the notion that these two domains share a broad nexus of common interests. Far from merely approaching philanthropic entities in the usual way to request funding, a more productive approach is to open out this area of mutually overlapping interests so that foresight practitioners and philanthropic interests can each benefit from the other. <sup>6</sup>

A further research interest is that of ‘methodological renewal’ but, since it is such a major topic, it is treated separately below.

**Methodological renewal**

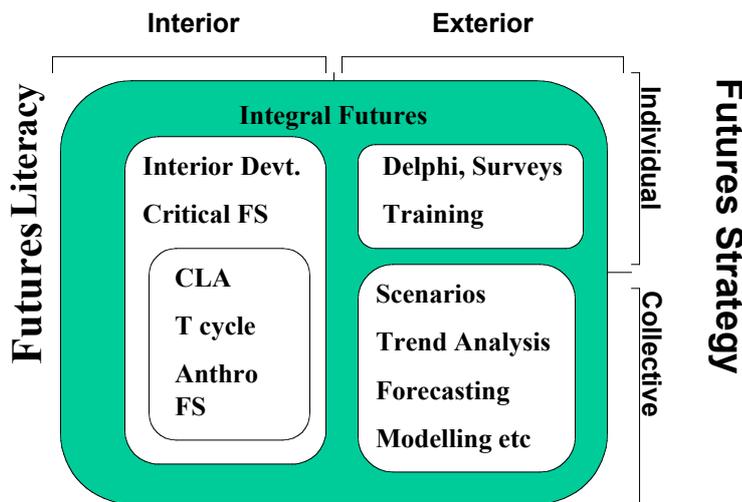
Perhaps the most significant of AFI’s research interests lies in another direction entirely. It is our view that a great deal of well-intentioned futures work around the world, including that carried out by a number of so-called ‘big name’ futurists and well-known organisations, is vitiated by superficial thinking, dated methods and redundant paradigms. If this is correct it means that there are huge gaps between the complex, embedded, nature of futures problems and the capacity of the human and methodological resources that have, thus far, been devoted to dealing with them. A critique of current approaches arises from this view. <sup>7</sup> Those who are the subjects of this critique sometimes resent this work (even though the focus is *always* on the work, ideas, methods, results etc, and not on individuals *per se*). Yet it is essential if disciplined futures enquiry and practice are to move forward. At present what I have termed ‘pop futurism’, futures work that is merely ‘problem oriented’ and one-sidedly ‘empirical’ approaches create major difficulties. They do so because they privilege certain limited approaches and ways of knowing that systematically exclude some of the most productive options for advanced and effective futures work.

It is for such reasons that AFI consciously adopted a range of paradigmatically sophisticated approaches and, in so doing, opened itself to the discerning use of a wide variety of tools, concepts and methods that emerge from what might be called ‘depth

understanding' of human and social contexts. Critical futures work is a step on the path toward greater capacity and depth (a step that is omitted from the practitioner's toolbox at enormous risk) that brought distinct new gains: depth, analytical clarity and huge potential for innovation. During 2002, however, AFI took the next step when it created the first course unit anywhere in the world on 'Integral Futures'.<sup>8</sup> It ran again in 2003. The latter was also the year that members of the AFI, with our colleague Andy Hines, offered a pre-conference seminar on this perspective at the WFS conference in San Francisco. As this is written (late 2003) the first futures book to incorporate an integral futures perspective is in press.

Figure 1 summarises some of our discoveries. We found that most, if not all, of the standard futures methodologies were, and are, grounded in attempts to come to grips with change processes in the *outer* world. As such the field had been heavily one-sided from its inception. Critical futures work originally developed as a dialectical response to this situation and drew attention to active processes of personal and social construction that had been widely overlooked. Tools and methods such as Causal Layered Analysis, the Transformative Cycle, Metascanning and Anthropological FS developed within this largely symbolic domain of human and social interiors. Finally Integral FS has provided a yet larger framework that offers new options across the board. Since these developments are elaborated elsewhere I will not enlarge upon them here.<sup>9</sup> There is one point, however, that should be emphasised. This view of the field helps to resolve a difficulty I'd been aware of for some time – the issue of superficiality in FS thinking and practice. It seemed to me that far too many have gone into some form of practice on the basis of inadequate theory and problematic, one-sided, methods. If, however, we see the attainment of 'futures literacy' as, in some senses, a prior task, then the links between understanding and practice become much clearer. Those who are currently teaching the next generation of Futures/Foresight practitioners can thereby begin to represent the field in ways that are more coherent, well-grounded and useful than hitherto.

**Figure 1: Literacy, Strategy and Methodologies in FS**



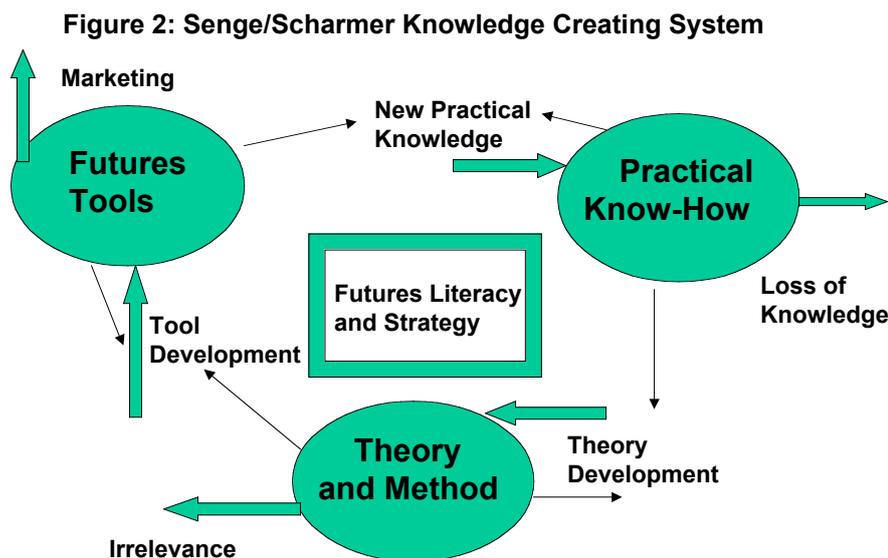
Copyright © Richard A. Slaughter, 2003

In short, what Figure 1 suggests is that *it is mastery of the inner individual and inner collective worlds – the very areas covered by critically based methods and approaches – that supports the attainment of futures literacy.* This, coupled with deep understanding

of, and competent practice in, the outer world contributes toward futures strategy, i.e. the ability to 'deliver the goods' in terms of real outcomes both for clients and the wider society in the public interest.

In this context, integral futures work is not simply an alternative to more limited and partial approaches. Rather, it is a way of bringing together work from many different streams and traditions of enquiry. It can do this because one of the guiding precepts of integral work generally is that 'everyone is right'. The corollary is that 'not all truths are equal' and this is where questions of inevitable ranking and professional judgments occur. The main point, however, is this. An integral futures approach allows us for the very first time to balance external phenomena with internal ones. That is, futures work that takes as its main focus the study of continuity and change in the external world can now be balanced by and with some very sophisticated frameworks for understanding the inner worlds of people and cultures.

The upshot is that futures tasks can now be approached more systematically than ever before. By embracing inner realities with outer ones the field itself, along with its developing array of methodological resources, can find not only a new and more credible balance between each, it can also enter a new stage of methodological innovation and development. The latter will see quite new methods emerging from the inner domains. Equally, the more traditional methods will gain a new lease of life as well. What has most centrally emerged in this perspective is that *it is depth within the practitioner that evokes depth and capability in whatever method is being used*. Foundational work around integral futures is currently in the early stages. Over time, however, it will have a range of beneficial effects that will help to transform practice.



*After Senge & Scharmer, 2001*

Another way of depicting some of these relationships has been provided by Senge and Scharmer.<sup>10</sup> They show how in any applied field there is a necessary process of constant renewal that takes place between different groups: those dealing with 'tools', 'practical know-how' and 'theory and method'. These are depicted in Figure 2. Here the thin arrows indicate mutually reinforcing flows of influence, while the thick arrows suggest

where development can stop at any stage. For example, those with practical know-how can easily lose touch with others who are developing new knowledge such that practice becomes routinised and repetitive with an eventual loss of knowledge and capacity. Equally, those involved in theorising can become dissociated from practitioners and from active tool development, resulting in loss of relevance. Finally tool developers can become preoccupied with narrowly developing and marketing their tools and lose touch with theorists and practitioners. It is not difficult to find examples of each within FS. Overall, Figure 2 suggests that futures literacy (deep understanding) and strategy (practical competence) require a healthy circulation of influence between these complementary forms of work.

### **Other activities**

After four years of operation AFI is clearly viable. Its courses have been developed, accredited and successfully delivered. Its work is beginning to be recognised around the world. Yet there is a danger in remaining within what could be seen as a familiar academic 'comfort zone'. Hence, rather than settling into familiar routines with minimal change, AFI is to continuing to reinvent itself and move on into new territory. Its publishing program began in 2003 with the launch of four monographs (see Appendix). The need for such a program was driven partly by the quality of work being produced by students and partly by the need to get 'ideas in progress' out into the wider world without 'flooding' the few available journals. Some publications will continue to be in the form of 'hard copy' books and booklets. Others will be electronic files (including pdf files) that can be accessed from a web site. Still others will be in the form of CD-ROMs, mainly for advanced post-graduate courses here and overseas. Another initiative currently under way is the translation of the first year Graduate Certificate program into an on-line course. Naturally there are pedagogic concerns about the latter. Yet, as elsewhere, steps are being taken to ensure that the quality of on-line supervision, coupled with a number of face-to-face meetings, may overcome these difficulties.

Two further initiatives are worthy of mention: the development and delivery of custom-designed, in-house, briefings, and participation in an international Masters program in FS. The former is already beginning to occur and it is clear that AFI will continue to evolve into a center for the high-quality professional development of people working in futures-, and foresight-related professions. On the other hand an international Masters program in FS is a long-standing dream shared by many of those involved in the field, but the financial and organisational challenges involved have yet to be resolved.

What has been learned this far? As noted, the course is viable and it is certainly popular with students. (See appendix.) We've learned that the internal power and financial relations within the host institution are critical to success, especially in the early years. Yet it is also vital to look outward and to develop new relationships, find new work and create new sources of income. The existence of the web makes it far easier than ever before for people to find out about AFI, for students to access resources remotely and for AFI to distribute the products of its work. We believe, too, that there are still significant, largely untapped, markets and further sources of 'latent demand'. These include work for government sources that will eventually be seen as making legitimate claims upon the public purse for foresight work in the public interest.

### **Table 6: Lessons learned**

- Focus on strategic foresight and implementation
- Balance internal relations with external ones

- Role of publications and research
- Centrality of methodological renewal and multiple frameworks
- Board of directors
- Web access
- Pursuit of new opportunities

### **International cooperation and implications**

Much is spoken about the need for cooperation, the value of networking and the search for strategic partnerships. Yet it is often forgotten that to successfully manage such relationships often takes more time and effort than busy people in hard-pressed institutions can provide. So one must be very careful not to take on more than can be successfully managed. That said the field is, in my judgement, 'waiting' for the next stage of international coordination and development. At present a lot of work takes place in isolation and its quality is varied. There is duplication of effort. There are resources in one place that could be used in many. And so on. Here are some brief 'ideas in progress' that we keep before us as we consider how AFI might contribute.

The question of quality control in futures work remains a vexed issue. Wendell Bell and myself, among others, have drawn attention to the need for a professional code of ethics and professional standards.<sup>11</sup> But, given the broad and diverse nature of the field, and the fact that no single organisation speaks for the whole, these issues are far from being resolved.

I have already mentioned the survey work that will seek to increase the level of co-ordination of research strategies internationally. Beyond this we are alert to options for the co-ordination of the work of research students, the sharing of resources (such as syllabi, summaries of key texts etc) and support for various kinds of overseas research tours, exchange programs, professorial visits and the like. It may be that a combination of the current KBFS and the new on-line Graduate Certificate will form one or more of a number of core modules for an international Masters in FS. A further issue, and a delicate one at that, is to consider how FS publications can be reconstituted to support discipline building *and* to return financial value to the domain. Changes in technology, copyright laws and the ethics of authors' rights are all involved here.

### **Conclusion**

On one level the AFI was set up as a result of the coming together of a number of contingent local factors. But on another level there is one dominant fact: FS has emerged from obscurity and is moving toward becoming the globally distributed meta-discipline that it has long aspired to be. That AFI emerged in one of Australia's smaller universities, one that of necessity has to be smart, innovative and quick to spot and develop opportunities, was unsurprising. The AFI did not, and does not, however, rely purely on local resources. It has attempted to learn from the experience of the CFF, positioning itself as a 'second generation' institution of foresight. It also sought to learn from older FS programs around the world. In so doing it is wary of becoming merely another academic department. It determined at the outset to take an applied approach that attempts to balance theory, tools and applications. It determined to have a professional board that was politically neutral and comprised of experienced people, including some of the best foresight practitioners available.

The decision to operate out of multiple paradigms, and to explore an integral approach has provided AFI with many advantages. We are now in a position to demonstrate some

of the most powerful applied futures/foresight capabilities anywhere. This includes access to an international network of advanced practitioners. (Nor is it by accident that a forthcoming professional development forum for all those working in futures/foresight-related professions in Australia will mean that this claim is subjected to professional scrutiny and evaluation.) We can therefore proceed in full confidence with disciplinary development and methodological renewal. We can offer students and other clients the chance to participate in some truly innovative work. Equally, our focus on social foresight – something that obviously does not exist at the present time – helps to lift our eyes from the nitty-gritty of daily organisational life and lends the enterprise a high-order social purpose.

As such the outlook for AFI, and the high quality, hands-on, approach that it offers, looks bright. The value of the exercise, however, is wider still. The lessons learned from ‘road testing a new model’ at the AFI can now be taken up with confidence, tested again and applied elsewhere.

## **Appendices**

### **1. AFI course structure**

#### **Stage 1: Foundations of Strategic Foresight (Graduate Certificate)**

HSF 601 Introduction to the Knowledge Base of Futures Studies and Foresight.  
 HSF 612 Foresight Methodologies 1.  
 HSF 622 Implementing Foresight.  
 HSF 631 Dimensions of Global Change.

#### **Stage 2: Development of Strategic Foresight (Graduate Diploma)**

HSF 721 Outlook for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.  
 HSF 712 Foresight Methodologies 2.  
 HSF 731 Integral Futures Frameworks.  
 HSF 741 Digital Continuity, Privacy and Risk.  
 HSF 751 Specialist topic or intervention project 1.  
 HSF 761 Specialist topic or intervention project 2.

#### **Stage 3: Applications of Strategic Foresight (Master of Science)**

HSF 812 Advanced Professional Practice.  
 HSF 831 The Triple Bottom Line and Sustainable Development.  
 HSF 813 Specialist topic or intervention project 1.  
 HED 815 Specialist topic or intervention project 2.

### **2. Student feedback**

The following comments are taken from 2003 Masters evaluations

*Please provide a brief general comment or two about your overall experience at AFI*

My experience has been very rewarding, particularly the opportunity for self discovery afforded by the facilitative educational approach. Insight. Personal development. Expanded toolkit. Orienting framework. Overall very positive, stimulating and challenging. Exposure to such breadth and depth within a field and across fields has

opened a whole new dimension for understanding the future and developing new thinking frameworks. I am very appreciative of the opportunity to have attended this course. It has provided a space, a forum and close community where I/we could re-assess our values, our positions and perspectives on the possibilities within the foresight/futures domain. For myself I've re-focussed effort on researching the aspects of individual and group consciousness within the context of time, reflections to and from the present. Genuinely leading-edge theories and methodologies, unlike my other post graduate experiences. Awakening. Cutting edge. Great exposure to a broad range of concepts. A mind stretching and broadening experience.

*In what ways has the course changed your views of, attitudes to, the future?*

I think the program is valuable in challenging many of my assumptions about the future, appreciating and respecting (but criticising) multiple perspectives, and formulating our own visions. The integral framework and CLA have truly deepened and broadened my outlook. There is hope. It has provided me with a much broader perspective, appreciation of diverse perspectives and the need for foresight thinking systems in developing better futures. The course has changed my focus to a greater awareness of deep design and the need for creative input to civilisational change. Deep thought, deep design, informed and critically self reflective, but with action being urgently necessary. Made me realise how much is out there to be considered! Made me realise how much I can influence my own future and play a role in influencing organisational thinking about the future. There remains much to do. Most people in community do not have futures understanding nor means to obtain it. Broadened my approach from a largely rational view of the world and its future.

*How has the course changed your ways of thinking and operating?*

More holistic. It has certainly changed the way I see the world. Spiral and integral have helped me understand the multiple value systems in operation and the importance of pre-conscious and post-conscious. New integral and second tier way of thinking. Significantly, as above. Broadened my awareness and thinking. Made me far more aware of the need for reflexivity, alternative possibilities etc. More tolerant and broad-minded. Provided me with a variety of tools and methodologies that can be applied in any field of work/life. Conscious of taking an integral approach.

*Have any other specific benefits emerged for you?*

I can see how foresight links into responsible social activism, particularly global governance issues surrounding global environment and economy. Also the importance of personal development and my own maturation process... working on the streams and lines of development. New development paths. New problem finding methods. Potential new career, work ventures. The need for the development (over time) of grounded understanding of key foresight areas and methodologies. Within that the development of competence and professionalism. Networking. Contacts and networking. The network and interaction with other students has been a great benefit which I hope will continue.

### **3. 2003 Monograph series abstracts**

#### **1. Foresight in everyday life - Peter Hayward**

The ability to use foresight in order to make wise or prudential choices is one of the

most powerful capabilities of individuals. Theories of how this capability, however, arises in individuals appear to have been largely ignored. The monograph contributes to our understanding of the human capacities involved in foresight and it provides a foundation upon which the development of an applied foresight capability can be considered.

## **2. From critique to cultural recovery: critical futures studies and Casual Layered Analysis - Jose Ramos**

Critical futures studies is not about the careers of a few scholars; rather it is about projects that transcend the narrow boundaries of the self. This biographical monograph examines the life and work of Richard Slaughter and Sohail Inayatullah. It highlights and explores the innovative ideas and methods these individuals developed. The background and core arguments of many of the thinkers that influenced Slaughter and Inayatullah are unearthed and characterised.

## **3. Wider and Deeper: Review and critique of science and technology foresight exercises in the 1990s - Andrew Wynberg**

National science and technology foresight (S&TF) exercises have been used in many developed countries since the 1970s. This monograph presents an overview of the objectives and methodologies of science and technology foresight exercises in the 1990s. The concepts of S&TF are compared with some of the concepts and paradigms of futures studies, and suggestions are made to incorporate some concepts of futures studies into science and technology foresight work. Options are examined for incorporating some of the 'wider and deeper' concepts and methodologies of futures studies into science and technology foresight (S&TF) work.

## **4. Reframing Environmental Scanning - Joseph Voros (ed)**

Environmental scanning is often conceived as a rational, analytical, programmed activity. The collected papers in this monograph challenge this notion by illustrating that the interior consciousness of the scanner is as important as the material being scanned. In order to gain the maximum benefit from environmental scanning one needs to ensure that the filters one uses whilst scanning are acknowledged and weighed. Professor Chun Wei Choo introduces the reader to best practice in environmental scanning and situates it amongst a variety of similar intelligence gathering activities. Professor Richard Slaughter argues for a much wider scope of viewing than is commonly practiced, as well as an understanding of the deeper layers of meaning and insight that is found 'below the surface'. Building upon Slaughter's idea, Joseph Voros suggests that one also needs to understand the 'mindspace' of the scanner doing the viewing and take conscious steps to open it up. That is to find models of human consciousness and use them to understand what filtering may be going on in a scanner's mind.

## **Notes and references**

1. Slaughter, R. Australia's Commission for the Future: Learning from a Social Innovation, in *Futures for the Third Millennium*, Prospect, Sydney, 1999: 165-180. An earlier version was published as Lessons from the Australian Commission for the Future: 1986-98, *Futures* 31, 1999, 91-99.
2. Slaughter, R. & Inayatullah, S. (eds) *The Knowledge Base of Futures, Studies*, Vols 1-4 CD-ROM, Brisbane: Foresight International, 2000.
3. AFI/Ramos, J. *International Survey of Futures Courses*. Accessed via:
4. Slaughter, R. Futures Studies: From Individual to Social Capacity, *Futures*,
5. Hayward, P. *Foresight in Everyday Life*, AFI Monograph 1, 2003.

6. Tracey, D. *Giving it Away – In Praise of Philanthropy*, Scott Publications, Melbourne, 2003.
7. Slaughter, R. *Futures Beyond Dystopia – Creating Social Foresight*, Part 2: The Case Against Hegemony, Routledge Falmer, London, 2004: 49-81.
8. This course was designed and facilitated by Joseph Voros and Peter Hayward.
9. Slaughter, R. op cit 2004, Part 4: Futures Studies and the Integral Agenda.
10. Senge, P. & Sharrow, O. Community Action Research, in Reason, P and Bradbury, H. (eds), *Handbook of Action Research*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage, 2001.
11. Bell, W. Professional Ethics for Futurists, *Futures Research Quarterly* 1993; Spring: 1-18. Also Slaughter, R. Professional Standards in Futures Work, *Futures* 31; 1999: 853-851.

### **Note**

This paper was first published in *Futures*, vol 36 No 8, October 2004, 837-852.