

CREATING THE FUTURE

Welcoming * Sustaining * Enterprising

Creating a Community where we think, plan, dream and play

The Futures Foundation, an independent not-for-profit organisation, agreed to partner the Central Coast Child & Youth Strategy - the Jigsaw Project - in a futuring process for young people. We invited a group of about 20 young people to attend exploratory workshops, learn new ways of thinking about the future of the Coast, ask community leaders about their views of the future and from these interviews, their own thoughts, and other sources develop alternative scenarios for the future of the Central Coast. After exploring the alternative scenarios, they would consider what they wanted (not what might happen) and create a preferred vision for the Central Coast in 2020.

This is seen as a pilot program, its success leading to replication within local communities across the region. It was a unique opportunity for young people to learn, and teach, new skills. The facilitators were world experts in this area.

The process involved attending workshop one where the team discussed an overview of the whole project and worked with facilitators to learn basic futures concepts. The team then undertook the interviews using the survey agreed at the first workshop. The second workshop involved a report by the interviewees on their results and the development of 'alternative scenarios'. Workshop three developed a vision for the Central Coast focussed under three headings - Society, Environment and Economy - later developed into the key words of the vision statement: Welcoming, Sustaining, Enterprising. The final session involved reviewing work, endorsing the vision statement and making plans for the presentation of the vision to community leaders.

The students were attracted by the idea of a community (and a government) that would look at the future, taking opportunities to avoid negatives and maximising positives. Their vision is for a community that actively engages with the future.

Representatives were elected to present the findings and they identified two or three activities with a high probability of simple success and developed action plans for their achievements. They wanted to show that a vision is a beginning, not an end.

The students want a society that welcomes change and diversity; an environment that is conserved and nurtured; and an economy that reflects enterprising attitudes rather than simple job-seeking.

The full report is available on request.

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