

Museum of Futures: The Future of Work

(250 words in total)

Background

The *Museum of Futures* is an experiential futures based work that consists of individual physical installations, online experiences and co-creation workshops. At its heart, the aim of the *Museum of Futures* is to encourage the democratisation of futures by engaging communities in collaborative foresight practices and bringing these objects to life so that these collaborative futures can be shared. Central to the *Museum of Futures* is addressing the following questions on an ongoing basis: How might we build foresight as a societal capacity? How can we enable a wider diversity of people to contribute to the shaping of futures?

Contribution

In the relatively new field of experiential futures, there is little scholarship that seeks to evaluate and analyse the ‘impact on thought and behaviour’ of experiential works. Therefore, it is the purpose of this research and evaluation to determine how experiential futures, and the transformative story-telling practises used, can be used to create a sense of agency in participants leading to behaviour change.

Significance

This project was funded and supported by the City of Sydney. The initial exhibition developed with the City of Sydney has toured to 10 of Sydney’s biggest offices including the International Towers Sydney at Barangaroo. It has been exhibited at Australia’s Festival of Innovation, Spark Festival’s 2050 Emergent in 2019. In 2020 the Museum of Futures was awarded the Oceania Special Award in the Next Generation Foresight Award.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Exhibition displayed at various locations around Sydney.

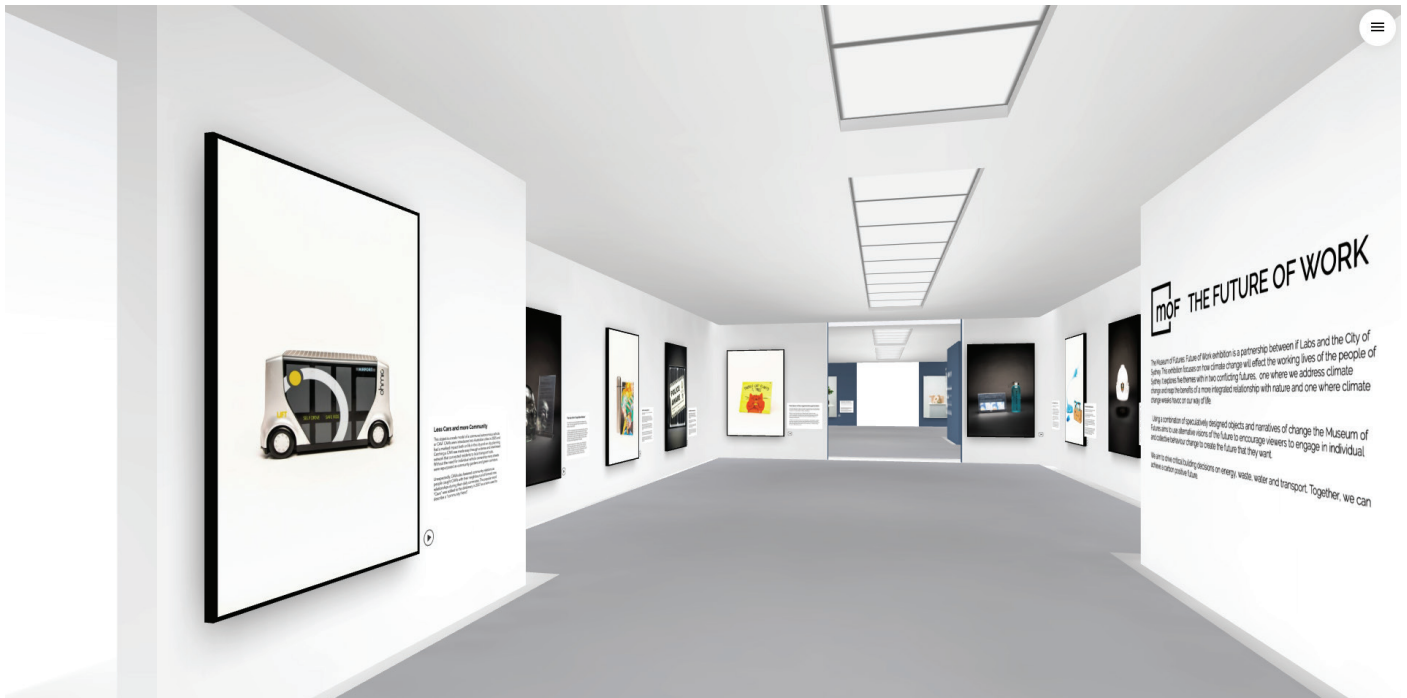
Top: SPARK festival's Emergent 2050 Festival

Bottom: Launch of exhibition tour around City of Sydney - Better Building Cup locations



IMAGES OF EXHIBITION

Image of Virtual Gallery below. Virtual gallery can be visited at www.museumoffutures.com



IMAGES OF WORK

Details of each artwork.



Illustrations by Rocco Fazzari

Australia's second gold rush



These objects harken back to a landmark renewables marketing campaign of 2023.

In 2020, people and companies started to demand that the Australian Government take decisive action to support the solar panel industry. Subsequently, the government introduced a raft of legislation including subsidies and grants to industries developing advanced solar panel technology.

Within a few short years, Australia became the world's leading solar farming nation and the largest solar power exporter, thanks to the abundance of space and sunshine and Australian-owned technology that used hydrogen to store captured solar energy for transport.

The economic boom was dubbed Australia's "second Gold Rush" – but this time the resource was infinite and Australia became not only a global superpower, but one of the richest nations on Earth.

On an interesting side note, the Australian craft brewing industry leveraged this iconic campaign to market Australian beer internationally. To the tag line "we bottle sunshine" was added "we also bottle beer".



Thanks to Markus Lambert at LG Electronics

The prohibition of renewable energy



This object is an example of an impounded solar panel from 2028. In 2020, as traditional energy companies failed, the Australian Government was forced to buy back the national power grids and operate a state-controlled energy utility to avoid rolling blackouts.

Producing power through solar panels or wind turbines was outlawed. But as electricity prices soared many Australian turned to alternative fuel sources.

In 2031, a kerosene lamp caused a devastating fire that spread through an underground community, leading to the collapse of an above-ground residential tower.

In 2038, after years of community pressure, the government was forced to admit its failure to embrace renewable energy came at an economic and environmental cost. Many politicians who had actively rallied against climate action were charged with crimes against humanity.

The dawn of the regenerative generation



Doodle Cat Plants a Tree was written by Kat Patrick and illustrated by Lauren Farrell in 2022 as part of a national push to educate the country on the benefits of carbon offsetting.

When it was included in the "Baby Bundle" given to new mothers, *Doodle Cat Plants a Tree* quickly became a nationally-iconic publication. Doodle Cat's charming pragmatism around such a crucial environmental issue had a profound effect on Australia and beyond.

Children and their parents were inspired to campaign for carbon neutrality and wild corridors were established around Australia. With only limited camping permitted, many endangered species were brought back from the brink of extinction – the first being the iconic Australian koala.

The birth of Living Buildings



The object in front of you is a trophy awarded to Australia's first living building in 2021.

This building was the first to create more energy than it used and was part of a broader movement driven by the national CitySwitch program. Building owners came to realise that buildings could function like a forest generating clean water, food and renewable energy while also supporting healthy places for people.

In 2030, advances in synthetic photosynthesis led to the creation of huge food gardens in the heart of many city buildings. This is where the phrase "low hanging fruit meetings" originated.





Sculpture by Elmar Kert

From waste to valuable resources



These objects tell the story of an Australian optical company that made eye-glasses from recycled milk bottle tops.

In 2023, Australia began investing in technology and infrastructure that turned waste materials into new products close to where they had accumulated.

By 2027, the concept of waste had completely changed. Local transport hubs housed not only micro-factories but also local 'libraries of things' – places that encouraged people to eschew traditional ownership and instead borrow items for only as long as they were needed.

These two approaches dramatically reduced the need for landfill (an archaic term used for an area of space where people at the time disposed of valuable plastics). In 2028 a concerted campaign using specialist robots cleared 90% of Australia's landfill, repurposing the areas for green space.



Logo design by Rocco Fazzari

The creation of Australia's Space Waste Agency



This is an item of protective headwear used by the first Australian Space Waste Agency in 2035. After China stopped accepting Australia's recycling waste in 2017, and reports surfaced that recycling material was being dumped into landfill, people became sceptical and eventually stopped sorting waste altogether.

By 2035 waste management had reached a crisis point and governments were forced to follow the lead of United States and shoot waste pods into space.

In 2037, a malfunctioning waste cannon meant that pods did not reach an orbiting altitude and instead fell to earth, landing in Perth, Western Australia.

This event was known as the "Waste Shower of 2037" and involved more than 300 fatalities and \$15 million of property damage. The Waste Shower was also also blamed for Western Australia's decision to secede in 2038.

Less cars and more community



This object is a scale model of a communal autonomous vehicle, or CAVI. CAVIs were introduced into Australian cities in 2025 and immediately influenced life in the city and city planning.

Catching a CAVI was made easy through a dense and interlinked network connecting residents to local transport hubs. Without the need for individual vehicle ownership many streets have since been repurposed into community gardens and green corridors.

Unexpectedly, CAVIs also fostered community relationships as people caught CAVIs with their neighbours and formed new connections during their daily commutes. The slang term "Cavo" was added to the dictionary in 2037 to describe a "community friend".



Water: Too abundant and too scarce



These objects paint a picture of life in Australia in 2040, where water was both too abundant and too scarce.

The first object is an excerpt from an article outlining flood predictions in Australian cities. As the planet's temperature rose, so did the water temperature of oceans. Polar ice caps melted and sea levels rose dramatically. Most coastal cities in Australia were affected and many residents were forced to relocate inland, away from unpredictable oceans, but within more inhospitable landscapes.

The second object is an example of the daily allocation of clean water given to workers in 2043. While city coastlines flooded, increased temperatures and deforestation caused extreme drought throughout the country.

The Australian Government tried to buy back previously sold water rights, but large industry groups refused to cooperate – a decision upheld in the courts. By 2048, desalination technology had evolved, but the water crisis had decimated many Australian communities, and it is estimated that the population of Australia was halved.



The rise of the "Carpe Diem Worker"



This model of a human head illustrates the installation of the "Series 1 City Chip". Beside the head is an excerpt from the City Worker Contract (2035).

In 2035, municipal waste removal services broke down and many businesses started burning their own waste. As the Air Quality Index of Australian cities reached dangerous levels, the City Chip was introduced to measure each worker's exposure to harmful pollutants. The excerpt from the City Worker Contract outlines the risks and limited legal liability of employers.

Despite the initial outcry from workers, mass unemployment meant many people had no choice but to work under these conditions. This led to the rise of the "Carpe Diem Worker": a subculture of employees who proudly proclaimed they would "live large and die young". The Series 1 City Chip was discontinued in 2037 after it was found to cause cancer.



Our air quality up in smoke



These two objects – a toddler-sized anti-pollution mask and a bottle of Australian air – both hail from the early 2020s. At the time, Australian air was considered among the cleanest in the world and was bottled and exported to countries like India and China that faced air quality that was hazardous to humans.

Australia's air industry was short-lived. By 2025, Australia's air was no longer deemed clean enough for export. By 2027 anti-pollution masks were a fixture of everyday Australian life. Widespread burning of plastic waste caused air pollution to reach dangerous levels.

From 2028 Australia was no longer able to host the Ashes, and our reputation as a sporting nation began its steady decline, along with our health. The last Australian Olympic medal was won for rhythmic gymnastics in 2024.