

CREATING ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY FUTURES

A community futures tragedy

Presented

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Declaration of original authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for 'Masters by Research' at any other higher education institution. Parts of this thesis have been previously published by the author's employer as part of the author's involvement in the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project. Selected extracts of this thesis were used in the production of the publication, *Maroochy 2025: A visioning journey* (Gould & Daffara 2005). This three volume work (Volume 1: Philosophies and Background; Volume 2: Future Aspirations; Volume 3: Action Planning) was written for the purpose of documenting the Maroochy 2025 story. The researcher was the main author of volume 1, sections 2 and 3 and co-editor with Philip Daffara for volumes 2 and 3. To the best of the author's knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material written by other persons, other than text cited as being excerpted from the *Maroochy 2025: A visioning journey*.

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I think this thesis tells an important, yet sad, story. It is a story about the levels of foresight, leadership and passion that lives in our collective communities. It is a story about tragic missed opportunities by a local government to create real long term community transformations. It is a story of communities endeavouring to create their alternative futures through anticipatory democracy.

Publications and presentations related to this research

Book

Gould, S & Daffara, P 2005, *Maroochy 2025: A visioning journey*, eds, Maroochy Shire Council, Maroochydore, Queensland, Volumes 1-3.

Journal paper related to this research and published during the term of candidature

Gould, S 2005, 'Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning and Action: A case study of anticipatory action learning practices in use within Maroochy Shire, Queensland, Australia', *Journal of Futures Studies: Epistemology, Methods, Applied and Alternative Futures*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp.125–133.

Conference papers and presentations related to this research

Daffara, P & Gould, S 2007, 'Conceptualising, Techniques and Processes Of City Foresight: Maroochy 2025 community visioning', paper presented at the 1st International conference on city foresight in Asia Pacific, Faculty of Architecture, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 5-7 September.

Gould, S 2002, 'Regulatory Futures for Local Government', presentation to the Exploring the Smart State Vision Conference, Brisbane, Australia, 23 August.

Gould, S 2004, 'Applied action learning through community visioning', presentation to the Coastal Zone Asia Pacific conference, Brisbane, Queensland, 5–9 September,.

Gould, S & Moes, E 2004, 'Maroochy 2025 — The development of a community vision and the link to corporate planning', presentation to the Tides of Change 2004 Community Development & Planning Conference, Logan City, Brisbane, Australia, 27–29 October.

Gould, S & Howes, F 2005, 'Public participation and applied futures inaction within a sea change community', presentation to the IAP2 Asia Pacific Conference on Risks and Rewards in Public Participation, Sydney, Australia, 6–8 March.

Gould, S & Singh, I 2005, 'Maroochy 2025 community visioning and the learning inspired village leadership network: A partnered action-learning project to accredit village leaders', presentation to the United Nations International Conference on Engaging Communities, Brisbane, Australia, 14–17 August.

Gould, S 2005, 'Communities thrive through vision', in Proceedings of the Global Soul, Global Mind and Global Action — Futuring from Survival to Thrival Conference, Tamkang University, Taipei, Taiwan, 3–6 November.

Gould, S. 2006, 'Planning your own future — 'A model for future franchising relevance'', presentation to the Franchise Council of Australia State Conference, Brisbane Australia, 19 May.

Gould, S 2006. 'Futures Speak — conversations in applied futures', facilitated presentation to the Ausforesight Conference, Swinburn Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia, 21 October.

Gould, S 2007, 'Context, contrasts and contradictions: Maroochy 2025 Case Study', presentation to the National Public Relations Association: Local Government, Gold Coast, Australia, 23 March.

Futures studies applied: Facilitated workshops

Gould, S 2002, 'Transforming the future of general practice and practitioners'. Facilitation for the Redcliffe—Bribie—Caboolture Division of General Practice Conference, Brisbane, Australia.

Inayatullah, S & Gould, S 2002, 'Mapping City Futures, Globally and Locally', workshop conducted for Brisbane City Council's Holding Entity Board, Brisbane City Council, Australia, 15 August.

Inayatullah, S & Gould, S 2003, 'Futures orientated policy planning', workshop conducted for Strategic Planning & Policy Branch, Brisbane City Council, 12 February.

Gould, S 2003, 'Maroochy Shire Council and Futures Studies', presentation to Futures Orientated Policy Workshop, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane, Australia. 2 May.

Gould, S 2003, 'What is spirituality?', facilitation at the Ananda Mela Festival of Bliss, Stanthorp, Australia, 8 January.

Gould, S 2003, 'Exploring Futures Studies & Rotary', presentation to Rotary Club, Alexandra Headlands, Sunshine Coast, Queensland, 2 May.

Gould, S 2004, 'Applied Futures Studies: A journey from strategy to microvita', Futures Orientated Policy Workshop, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane, Australia.

Gould, S 2004, 'Futures Studies: From strategy to transformative change', presentation to Cooloola Institute of TAFE, Caloundra, Sunshine Coast, Australia.

Gould, S 2004, 'Futures planning: Scenarios for new farm community neighbourhood centre', paper prepared for New Farm Neighbourhood Centre, New Farm, Brisbane, June.

Gould, S 2005, 'Using futures methods for educational futures', facilitation to Queensland Department of Education, Brisbane, 9 March.

Gould, S 2005, 'Shared visions: Exploring the future for disability in Queensland', facilitated visioning workshops, Queensland Department of Communities, Gold Coast, 22–23 May.

Gould, S 2005, 'Visioning for local government', presentation to Goldburn-Mulawee City Council, Sydney, 6 June.

Gould, S 2005, 'Applied Futures studies: Maroochy 2025', presentation to Communications Faculty, Future University Hakodate, Japan, 6 November.

Gould, S 2005, 'Maroochy 2025: A Case Study in Needs Assessment', presentation for Faculty of Science, Health and Education, University of the Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast.

Gould, S 2006, 'Leadership for Learning Communities', facilitated short course for visiting New Zealand High School Principals, Faculty of Science, Health and Education, University of the Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast, 4 September.

Gould, S 2006, 'Economic Development Scenarios for Sunshine Coast', presentation to Sunshine Coast Region of Councils, Sunshine Coast, 18 September.

Gould, S 2007, 'Construction Futures', presentation to Watpac Constructions annual conference, Kooralbyn Valley, Beaudesert, Queensland, 27 August.

Gould, S. 2007, 'Child Safety Futures', facilitated workshop for Queensland Department of Child Safety, Caloundra, Queensland, 12 December.

Gould, S & Daffara, P 2007, 'Bold Futures' facilitated community visioning, Gold Coast City Council, Gold Coast, Queensland, November.

Abstract

The central intent of enquiry in this thesis is “*Can local governments empower their communities with the opportunity and capacity to create alternative futures?*”. Local governments in their role of managing issues and planning for the future have more recently embraced the concepts of community engagement and sustainable development. They have done so with a view to being inclusive and transparent in planning for a sustainable future. By undertaking such approaches, local governments are faced with a rise in community expectation for local government to implement results from the consultation. Community engagement is a cornerstone to empowering communities to be sustainable, however empowerment methods support the rise of other emerging forms of democracy. This can be seen as a direct challenge to our existing representative system of government, specifically in how politicians enact their office and processes for decision making. Local government planning and foresight aims to move power back to citizens and local bureaucracies. Consequently, this has given rise to a litany of emergent issues and concerns in some elected representatives as to the value of community engagement, planning and foresight practices for local bureaucracies. Furthermore, from a critical perspective, some local government efforts with foresight are seen as creating the one and only ‘official version’ of a community’s future rather than considering alternative views expressed by their communities. The question then becomes “who is advantaged and/or disadvantaged by such official versions of the future?”.

This research compares and contrasts the results of a community visioning case study called the [Maroochy 2025](#) Community Visioning project. This project was unique due in its extensive use of applied futures studies concepts and methods in real world contexts. Between 2002 and 2005, Maroochy Shire Council, a local government in Queensland, Australia, undertook a community visioning project to establish a community developed vision statement, six vision focus areas and an action plan. The driver for the visioning project was the recognition by the local council of the increasing effects of rapid population growth, urban sprawl and community concerns regarding a sustainable future. Based on a desire by the local bureaucracy to adopt strategies to manage uncertainties for Maroochy Shire’s future, the then Maroochy Shire Council sought to engage the community in a new dialogue in order to co-create a *preferred* image and vision for Maroochy Shire’s future. This research traces the development of the Maroochy 2025 strategy. It highlights the consequences, contradictions and

implications that arose from the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project. It further highlights the key issues and learnings that can arise from undertaking community engagement, planning and applied futures studies approaches.

The main findings of the thesis firstly present the key learnings from the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project. Secondly, they highlight the consequences and dangers for local government of a failed implementation. Thirdly, the findings challenge local government planning assumptions that community visioning and town planning could be one and the same. Nevertheless, this thesis also demonstrates the successes of using anticipatory democracy approaches and applied futures studies and the value of empowering a community with a sense of agency regarding their future. Finally, the findings demonstrate the benefits from community visioning and the use of futures studies methods, highlighting that when communities are engaged and empowered, they can become a key driver of social change, redefine the meaning of community and create new processes by which communities choose sustainable and alternative community futures.

Introduction and problem background

1.1 Thesis summary

Between 2002 and 2005, Maroochy Shire Council in Queensland, Australia, completed an applied futures studies based project, the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project. This project was unique for three key reasons. Firstly, it was the first long term community visioning project undertaken by a local government in Queensland. Secondly, the Maroochy 2025 project used an action learning framework to guide processes and methods. Finally, the project incorporated a diverse and comprehensive use of applied futures studies on a large scale. These elements make the Maroochy 2025 project one of the most extensive contemporary public consultation projects ever undertaken by a local government in Queensland. The researcher, who is presenting this thesis, was a key project leader and facilitator of Maroochy 2025 project from the start to finish. This thesis uses the Maroochy 2025 project as the context for researching and analysing the effects of using applied futures studies and action learning methods on those who participated in Maroochy 2025 project.

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of applied futures studies methods within a framework of action learning and through a local government community planning effort. This exploration will determine whether the approach shifts community attitudes to the future and contributes to increased community capacity to create alternative community futures. By recording, analysing and discussing the results from the Maroochy 2025 project, the study will highlight what the effects can be when local government empowers communities in the decision making process about their future.

The study aims to explore the affects of using applied futures studies methods to determine whether — through the use of such methods – communities can influence local government policy, planning and decision making processes and empower themselves. Specifically, this study will focus on the use of anticipatory action learning approaches within the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project (Maroochy 2025) and explore how such approaches shaped the project's results, and discuss the implications with regards to how applied futures studies methods can shift community attitudes towards the future. Therefore, this study aims to:

- Expand futures studies discourses;

- Challenge the implicit assumptions held by local government planners and politicians on the merits of community visioning processes;
- Discuss the effects from the application of anticipated action learning methods in community visioning;
- Measure the attitudinal effects from participation in applied futures studies processes and methods;
- Present research evidence as to the results of using futures studies methods; and
- Discuss the merits of using applied futures studies methods with community visioning approaches.

From a community perspective, this study will evaluate community attitudes and assumptions about their future and identify the attitudinal results and shifts in their thinking about the future from participation in the Maroochy 2025 project. From the researcher's perspective, the study will evaluate the effectiveness of the Maroochy 2025 project from three perspectives: personal observation; critical causal layered analysis; and results. Additionally, the researcher will discuss the consequences for local government from the Maroochy 2025 project in terms of sustainability, types of democracy, power, decision making and community engagement and local government planning perspectives.

This study aims to provide useful insights for local government planners, politicians, policy makers and communities in challenging their own assumptions about how to imagine and create visions for their communities. The study will provide alternative pathways for local government when considering the undertaking of community visioning and planning activities. These considerations may assist in stimulating further creative and innovative practices for local government and communities in their endeavours to co-create sustainable and alternative communities.

The central intent of enquiry in this thesis is based on the main hypothesis question: "*Can local governments empower their communities with the opportunity and capacity to create alternative futures?*". Additionally, the enquiry will use three sub research questions:

1. Does the use of applied futures studies shift community attitudes and increase the community's level of confidence to create alternative ways of learning, knowing and uses of the future?

2. Can local government politicians and planners improve community planning approaches to enhance the concept of anticipatory democracy?
3. Does foresight and community planning shift the power away from local politicians towards communities and planners?

To explore the thesis hypothesis, five thematic areas are identified for the purpose of exploring and contextualising the main research questions. These areas are:

- Sustainability and communities;
- Local government and sustainable communities;
- Types of democracy, power and decision making;
- Challenges for local government planners; and
- Community engagement approaches.

To assist in further contextualising the hypothesis question, this research is situated in the major case study called Maroochy 2025 community visioning and action planning. This case study is unique for two reasons: firstly, it was undertaken by a local government authority experiencing high growth; and secondly, it utilises applied futures studies methods in real world settings. This research attempts to explore whether the use of applied futures studies can facilitate the empowerment of communities to create alternative futures.

1.2 Introduction

This chapter initially situates the research from a broader perspective by presenting the key themes and challenges for sustainability and sustainable communities. Chapter 1 commences with an outline of the current responses by local governments to sustainability issues and the future sustainability of our communities. The session on 'Communities co-create their sustainable future', initiated through the United Nations at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002, will be discussed. The themes of sustainability, planning and public consultation will be covered in the context of key challenges for planners in terms of demographics and urban migration.

The discussion will additionally focus on how types of democracy and the use of power by local governments define the official version of community futures. Furthermore, it considers how a process of community engagement can move power away from politicians and how alternative types of democracy are emerging through the use of such methods. Chapter 1 further presents a broad discussion on issues surrounding community engagement, specifically the more recent use of community engagement practices by local government. Considering the rise in community engagement activities by local government, it is appropriate to review how these activities can play a vital role in local government planning process.

To highlight and review potential consequences, contradictions or benefits of such alternative practices, Chapter 1 concludes with an outline of the research setting — a major case study called Maroochy 2025 in Maroochy Shire, Queensland, Australia. This case study provides the contextual background for examining whether applied futures studies as an alternate approach to community planning by local governments can support sustainability strategies and enable communities to be empowered with the opportunity and capacity to create alternative community futures.

Finally, the chapter situates the purpose and context for this research for the reader by outlining the research questions, objectives and significance of the research in the context of the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project. Brief outlines of the thesis chapters and of the study's limitations conclude the chapter.

1.3 Statement of problem

In this section, a number of key issues and concepts are discussed in order to introduce the reader to the line of argument in this research. The themes for this research are based on the concept of anticipatory democracy. According to Toffler (1978, p.7) the simplest definition of anticipatory democracy 'is a process for combining citizen participation with future consciousness... anticipatory democracy is, to put it another way, the fusion of freedom and futures'. The idea of people becoming involved in the politics of the/their future was a key focus area for the Maroochy 2025 project. This research will investigate the affects of applied futures studies in community planning via a case study undertaken by Maroochy Shire Council. This will be used as a means for exploring the value of community visioning approaches in developing foresight in both local government planners and communities. It will investigate whether

this approach has the means to shift the power to define futures away from the local politicians, namely the councillors, and towards citizens, local government bureaucrats and planners.

1.3.1 Sustainability and communities

Global communities are a composite of many and various worldviews, beliefs and visions for the future. The task of communities worldwide to reach consensus on a collective vision may be beyond the realm of possibility. Yet it seems that many local government worldviews are changing. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002 (United Nations 2002), and particularly in the session ‘Communities co-create their sustainable future’, sustainability was placed high on the agenda for local government worldwide. As a result, local government leaders together developed the ‘Local Action 21’¹ initiative. This document articulated local governments’ commitment and drive to take a global issue such as ‘sustainable development’ from an agenda level to actionable steps.

As a result of the summit, local governments around the globe have now formally recognised issues pertaining to the concept of sustainability as outlined by the ‘Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002’ (United Nations 2002). The reaffirmation of their commitment to the principles of sustainable development — including solidarity, transversality (integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions), participation of societies in decision making, and responsibility towards future generations and disadvantaged populations — suggests the need for local governments to find suitable models to achieve the desired outcome of ‘sustainable development’. The development of Local Action 21’s ‘Agenda 21’ outlines the process of integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of local development. Agenda 21 utilises four inter-connected principles for local government, as follows:

¹ Local Action 21 ‘was launched at the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development Local Government Session as a *motto* for the second decade of Local Agenda 21. **Local Action 21** is a *mandate* to local authorities worldwide to move from agenda to action and ensure an accelerated implementation of sustainable development. **Local Action 21** strengthens the Local Agenda 21 *movement* of local governments to create sustainable communities and cities while protecting global common goods’ (Local Action 21 Focal Point n.d.) (emphasis in original)

- Sustainable development;
- Effective democratic decentralisation;
- Good governance; and
- Co-operation and solidarity.

Considering that we live in an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world, the local and the global are intertwined, and local governments can no longer afford to be insular and inward-looking (Ross 2003). Managing social exclusion, legacies for future generations, and environmental decay are moral issues (Ross 2003). The ability to sustain our future communities is dependant upon what local government and stakeholders do today (Ross 2003). Initial strategies, as stated by the session on 'Communities co-create their sustainable future' (United Nations 2002), suggested that local governments need to:

- Aim for socially, culturally, and economically inclusive economies.
- Keep and attract populations relative to desired regional and local characteristics.
- Focus on social and environmental wellbeing.
- Seek inclusiveness (parties define the problems, directions and goals).
- Seek community agreement on general directions.
- Create integrated communities and regional development strategies.
- Implement community well-being initiatives.

Within Local Action 21, key principles were identified, including how to resolve the issue of creating sustainable communities, cities and countries. Similarly, in Australia, governments at all levels it seems are rediscovering the concept of 'community' (Tonn 1999). Terminologies such as community development, social capital, community capacity building and, more recently, community resilience, have extended the discussions around the question: "How do we create a sustainable community?" Tonn (1999, pp. 346) identified the following key elements as imperative in creating sustainable communities: learning; participation; empowerment; shared values; goals; and multi-dimensional coordination, which suggests that sustainability is not just the work of local governments, but is a shared project that will need to be embraced by the whole community.

However, community engagement approaches are inextricably linked to the issue of creating sustainable communities and the need for local governments to find suitable models to achieve the desired outcomes in 'sustainable development'. The principles of sustainable development according to the United Nations (2002), as noted above, include solidarity, transversality, integrated economic, social and environmental dimensions, participation of societies in decision making, and responsibility towards future generations and disadvantaged populations. These principals support and encourage an increasingly participatory approach to planning. As communities are facing a diversity of challenges to their way of life and future sustainability, local governments are facing an increasing rise in expectations from their communities to possess the knowledge and to take action and implement solutions (United Nations 2002).

Correspondingly, local governments are faced with increased pressure to find new ways to remain financially sustainable while being able to meet an increasing demand for services, given the global and local trends of shifting populations from the rural sectors to urban cities (Inayatullah 2008b).

One such response from local governments to these growing demands is their increasing shift towards longer term planning through community visioning and regional land use planning activities. To create the 'pull of the future' (in other words, a *preferred* image of a sustainable community) a logical step is using the collective input from the community in developing sustainable communities. This would include providing the opportunity for individual communities to articulate an image of what a sustainable community looks like. Local government is the level of governance that is closest to the people, thus having more influence than other levels in determining a sustainable community. It would therefore seem that, in order for local government to achieve sustainable communities, emphasis needs to be placed on building community capacity and community 'know-how'. To achieve this enhanced community, local government would need to be committed to prioritising, resourcing and allocating sufficient time towards the process, with the intention of involving and empowering the community in visioning. Longer term planning is now considered the core business for local government with the strategic intent focused on creating sustainable communities.

While some local government planners and policymakers are attempting to develop alternative processes to address governments' capacity to plan for and/or respond to

the long term future needs of our communities in a more futures orientated way, (Inayatullah & Gould 2002) it seems that, in general, local government planners and policymakers lack an understanding of how to use the future. Therefore, local governments are poised to reap the benefits, to interpret, to partner and to build capacities within local governments and communities to advance self efficacy and ownership by using today's vision of the future to meet and address tomorrow's needs and issues.

1.3.2 Local government and sustainable communities

In their role of representing communities, governments follow a set of legislation, policies and guidelines that are intended to delineate the interests and wellbeing of communities. In turn, instruments such as corporate, social, environmental, economic and town planning are used by governments to achieve community outcomes, thus affecting the future direction of all communities. Given the emergence of a highly technological world, rapid acceleration towards an un-sustainable society is heightening community concerns for the future. Therefore, more recently there has been a rise in efforts by local government councils to develop foresight capacity in their staff. As a result, the use of visioning is becoming an integral method for transforming local government planning and policymaking processes. This is evident in future orientated seminars conducted for local governments (for example, by Inayatullah and Gould (2002) for councils including Brisbane City, Caloundra City and Maroochy).

A key challenge recognised by local governments in Queensland today is how to best plan for the longer term community future whilst meeting the needs of the community today. Questions currently being asked by Queensland local government councils are focussed around finding the most suitable models that support the principles identified in Local Action 21. Yet, the question still remains unanswered as to which models can best achieve the desired short and long term aspirations of creating a 'sustainable community'.

According to Tonn, (1999, p. 344), the term sustainability has emerged as a key stated outcome within government discourses, yet there seems to be no universally accepted definition of the term sustainability within the local government context. There are a number of definitions to choose from, many of which seem to draw the concept into a sphere of concern for future generations. This implies that sustainability is future-oriented. However, sustainability is only one image of the future as the future can be

defined through various worldviews. For example, different worldviews may include continued growth, or status quo, or return to the simplified past (Dator 1979). These worldviews have just as much legitimacy within a community debate as does the 'preferred' or 'official' version of the future for a community.

Equally, therefore, maintaining a sustainable community could mean the adoption of alternative definitions rather than those defined by the United Nations. From an Australian perspective, the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National Agenda gives its definition of sustainability for the purpose of clarity for local government as:

Creating better communities is the fundamental purpose of local government. Commonwealth and state governments should recognise and support local government fully in its role in the planning and coordination, and where appropriate delivery, of community and health services at the local level. Local government recognises the need for efficient and effective provision of services which are flexible, culturally appropriate and equitable. It will foster strong community participation in service planning and implementation (Australian Local Government Association 2002, section 8.1 'People and Community').

As ratified through the National Agenda, the role for local governments has given rise to the 'community engagement framework' for community focussed and future orientated government activities. The National Agenda encourages local governments to create a 'whole of government' thinking towards community sustainability and agency. New endeavours with communities, regional partners and government agencies, based upon collaborative planning, decision making, and problem solving, see futures oriented government planning and policymaking processes developing as a major vehicle of change. Importantly this change may be considered as a major contributing influence towards creating sustainable communities (Australian Local Government Association 2002).

Within the Queensland local government planning context, the increased growth and migration of populations, especially into South East Queensland, has forced the Queensland State Government to respond to emerging sustainability issues. The State Government suggests that past government planning practices and systems may have failed to anticipate the future, let alone deliver long term mutual benefits for the whole community. The much talked about and predicted growth in population for South East

Queensland (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001) has motivated the Queensland government to respond.

Recent activities by the Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation have seen a dramatic increase in long term planning activities, especially under the auspices of the *South East Queensland Regional Plan (2006)*. However the *South East Queensland Regional Plan* adopts what is mainly a land use planning perspective and therefore relies on land use legislation as a regulatory response to the creation of sustainable communities. It will be the task of the local councils through their planning schemes to enforce this approach to sustainability. The *South East Queensland Regional Plan* initiative does not necessarily consider the community's social, spiritual and cultural aspirations in the sustainability discourse.

Another regulatory response by the Queensland Government to the creation of sustainable communities has been the introduction of the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* (IPA). The Queensland Government has advanced its focus in planning and assessment regimes and these approaches indicate clear attempts to develop integrated holistic planning practices.

According to the Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, the main aim of the Department is to address the priorities associated with sustainable development from a social, economic and environmental perspective. In response to the introduction of IPA, local councils are aligning their planning schemes to reflect the legislative requirements of the Act. A key driver behind IPA was the recognition that local government planning schemes needed to include the environmental and community wellbeing dimensions in planning decisions, yet IPA still fails to include community aspirations or visions as part of the planning process. The results from the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No.1 (2003) highlighted the community's frustrations with local government planning practices; respondents felt that their local government seemed to favour planning decisions remaining in the domain of the experts and elected councillors and that it is these key stakeholders who are designing, controlling and creating the communities future. It is important to note that no matter who does the planning, be it communities, governments or industries, planning for the future tends to be problematic in itself and requires a holistic approach and input from many perspectives in the community, recognising that all individuals have a legitimate voice about what happens in their future.

1.3.2.1 Sustainability issues for the Sunshine Coast

Currently, in South East Queensland there is rapid population growth. Growth brings sustainability issues and development activity; related policies such as the *South East Queensland Plan (2026)* are responding. The Sunshine Coast is a coastal region located in the northern part of South East Queensland and faces similar sustainability issues to other coastal communities in Australia. According to the report on 'Population Trends and Prospects for Queensland' (Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport & Recreation 2001), the Sunshine Coast will continue to experience population growth from the 'sea change' effect of urban migration and economic growth through property and industry development activities. Maroochy Shire, which was the largest shire within the Sunshine Coast (pre amalgamations in 2008) is likely to bear the brunt of these population and development changes. Based upon feedback from Maroochy Shire Councils' annual community satisfaction surveys (see Maroochy Shire Council 2003a), the Maroochy communities seem to have been faced with many less than adequately planned changes. Therefore it can be concluded that the time has never been more crucial for the local government council to apply new thinking around sustainability for Maroochy Shire if it wants to plan for a sustainable future. (Sundstrom 2003, p. 1).

1.3.3 Types of democracy, power and decision making

In order to situate the context and debate surrounding approaches to sustainability and creating sustainable communities by local government, this research will use three key concepts: democracy, power and decision making processes. The concept of democracy is widely used in reference to a type of political system; it is equally widely used in 'political speak'. There are many meanings associated with the use of the word democracy; however for the purpose of this thesis, given that it is situated in foresight perspectives, it seems appropriate to refer to the definition of democracy from a futurist's. Dator (2006, p. 63) states that:

Democracy is a form and process of governance that allows each person affected by the actions of an entity, a continuous and equal opportunity to influence actions of that entity.

This definition could be equally extended to all forms of organising human systems and processes that have the capacity to influence people's decision making processes for

better quality futures. The opposite of this understanding of democracy would be a process in which citizens are denied equal opportunity to influence those actions of decision makers that affect or disadvantage the citizen's future, as implied by past feudal or dictatorial political systems of repression.

Each political system across the globe could be mapped somewhere on the democracy continuum. Although a moot point when considering the above definition, it seems there is little evidence to suggest that our current global political systems enable communities an equal opportunity to be empowered with decisions that truly affect their future. Even the United States of America and Australia, countries held up as models of democracy, would find it difficult to be recognised by their own people as a living model of such a definition. Ironically, it is the very design and creation of our current democratic systems that makes it so un-democratic for people to have equal opportunity to participate and as such prevents such a definition becoming actualised (Dator 2006). Furthermore, as long as our current forms of democracy are support systems for personal power, democracy will remain benign (Dator 2006). Notwithstanding, the definition stated by Dator could equally be applied as a possible future vision for political systems to aspire towards.

However, it is important to note that democracy does not only apply to formal systems and processes of government; there are many other entities engaged in democratic processes and, accordingly, many opportunities for a polity to be democratic. As such, numerous community and private polities endeavour to operate under the definition of democracy (Dator 2006). It is important to note that many communities and businesses do actively endeavour to be involved in decisions that directly affect them, and as a result new types of democracy are emerging in our societies. For example there is e-democracy which is a process whereby citizens exercise choice on community options through the use of web-based voting. Another form, according to Zubizarreta (2003), is 'deepening democracy' which is participatory and intended to awaken our spiritual awareness of connectedness within our communities. The main tools used in the deepening democracy process are those of deep listening and facilitated group processes intended to work on co-creating our common future.

The idea of consensus democracy, according to the Civic Practices Network (2008), reformulates how local democracy operates in the twenty-first century. The basic principles of consensus democracy recognize the need for new institutional practices

that allow all citizens to have access to direct control of the decision making process. The Civic Practices Network (2008) states that the concept of deliberative or active democracy rests on: the core notion of citizens themselves — and their representatives — deliberating about public problems and solutions under conditions that are conducive to reasoned reflection and refined public judgment; a mutual willingness to understand the values, perspectives, and interests of others; and the possibility of reframing interests and perspectives in light of a joint search for common interests and mutually acceptable solutions. Finally, the prime emergent form of democracy, the form of democracy used in the Maroochy 2025 project, is that of anticipatory democracy. Again, the simplest definition of anticipatory democracy, according to Toffler (1978, p. 7), is:

A process for combining citizen participation with future consciousness... anticipatory democracy is, to put it another way, the fusion of freedom and futures.

The main process used in Maroochy 2025 project for combining citizen's participation with a future consciousness was community visioning.

All these emergent forms of democracy are alternative attempts to return the power of decision to the hands of the community, instead of relying on the main form of democracy, representative democracy. For the purpose of this research, a definition of representative democracy within the local government context is provided in the next section.

1.3.3.1 Local government and representative democracy

In the case of local government, representative democracy is the main source of power for local government elected councillors. This power enables local government councillors to perform the duties of office. The duties of office as defined by the Australian Local Government Association National Agenda (1997) are:

Local governments are elected to represent their local communities; to be the responsible and accountable sphere of democratic governance; to be a focus for community identity and civic spirit; to provide appropriate services to meet community needs in an efficient and effective manner; and to facilitate and coordinate local efforts and resources in pursuit of community goals.

However, in many communities across Queensland there has been growing concern and criticism from communities about the way local governments are planning their future, specifically, the lack of clarity, purpose and role of the community in the decision making process (Daffara & Gould 2007). This increasing level of concern has risen to scepticism which has continually been fuelled by suggestions that public consultations are merely token exercises by local governments trying to be seen to be inclusive and participatory in their decision making processes (Daffara & Gould 2007). Furthermore, there has been a litany of anecdotal and survey evidence, communicated to the researcher through the Maroochy 2025 project participants, that community members believe their contributions will not make a difference anyway; that data collected would not be used. This belief stems in part from an assumption that decisions have already been made by the government, be it state or local.

The significant problem with representative democracy, according to Ife (2002, p. 128), is that:

Representative democracy involves an effective transfer of power to elite (those elected) and a consequent disempowerment of 'the people' in whose interest democracy is supposed to work. It thus reinforces pluralist and elitist forms of politics, which are far from the empowerment ideal.

In order to reverse this trend, a move towards a more participatory and anticipatory model of democracy would constitute a significant step by local government in their efforts in creating alternative community futures that are neither disempowering nor reinforce pluralist and elitist forms of politics. The more that local government moves from an often inherently conflict-based, representative and regulatory approach to democracy to a cooperative, partnership and foresight based approach to planning, the greater will be the opportunity to develop a common ethos. Higher levels of trust would develop and capacities for creating a preferred and alternative future that is a 'real world' reflection of alternative community futures would form. The benefits to local government of taking an anticipatory democracy approach would include the possibility of increasing constituency, a sense of community ownership and support for collective and representative community futures.

Therefore local governments have much to gain in the use of tools that support a more participatory and anticipatory model of democracy. Strategic foresight and the application of integrating futures studies into local government planning are such tools.

Strategic foresight, which is discussed in detail in the literature review (Chapter 2) can be used in two main ways:

1. For strategic purposes within Council bureaucracy to make wiser planning decisions about long term futures; and
2. To enhance the capacity of the bureaucracy.

This approach can further empower the community by providing a greater opportunity to disperse decision making power to the community while bureaucracy can control the planning and visioning discourse.

1.3.4 Challenges for local government planners

One of the central themes being explored in the research question is based on the premise that the assumptions of the planner within planning processes are rarely challenged and their visions of the future are merely a reinscribed colonised past (Inayatullah 2004, p. 56). This past then becomes an official 'business as usual' future. Therefore planners are by default being legitimised as the appropriate and sanctioned authority to make planning decisions that affect the whole community. Consequently the community's ability or opportunity to have access to and equity in the planning process is neither seen as appropriate nor needed. This places a burden of community hope on the planners: are their assumptions appropriate? The role of any expert planner can be fraught with risk when considering only a few worldviews. In the role of expert, it is possible to lose the opportunity to tap into the collective community wisdom, insight, intellect or ways of knowing on planning issues.

Thus there are several challenges facing the current local government planner. Firstly, according to Inayatullah (2004, p. 56), 'the worldview of the planner is in itself problematic. This is because it assumes that the current knowledge held by the planners is sufficient enough to achieve a reasonable planning outcome' and that the 'planners assessment of issues and provision of solutions will suffice in meeting the future needs of the community'. Indeed, current planning systems and processes usually appear not to include opportunities for planners' assumptions to be challenged; this is problematic. As the researcher's observations and conversations with local government planners indicate, many local government planners appear not to understand the reasons for the high levels of tension and resistance in communities when it comes to implementing their strategic and land use plans. The problem arises

in part from local government's reliance on planners' current knowledge and practices — and even methods used to deconstruct the facts, social causes, or worldviews — which are underpinned by the planner's and the authorities' assumptions about the future. What remains a paradox then for planners and the community is the nature of what is real, as argued by Inayatullah (2004, p. 55) who states:

Planning efforts involve an epistemological assumption of the real. For planners and futurists, this entails various assumptions of the nature of time. For one, whether time is a social construction or if it exists independently of our knowing of it, and whether one is concerned with measurable quantified time, seasonal time, mythic time or visionary time. In addition to the basic assumption of time, planning involves assumptions of the economics, in terms of allocation of meaning, goods and resources; assumptions of the political, in terms of what of the range of possible allocations should be nominated as legitimate; and ideological-cultural assumptions in terms of relative roles of actors, structures and values in various planning processes. Finally, there are assumptions of language, whether language simply describes the real — language is transparent — or whether language participates in the social construction of the real — grammar as complicit in the real.

By not creating opportunities to examine implicit assumptions held by both planner and their community explicitly, existing assumptions of what is real now and what is real about the future will continue to be unwittingly reinscribed from the past and present, into the future. To highlight the importance of challenging the planner's assumptions, Inayatullah (2004, p. 56) argues:

These assumptions are critical because depending on the assumptions of the real, the way one articulates one's goals and objectives and the content of this articulation, the planning process dramatically shifts.

Thus, if they are to avoid this effect, local government planners will need to create new epistemologies in planning and new ways of knowing. By developing processes that challenge the planner's assumptions, new memes and alternative pathways in planning approaches emerge so that alternative futures can be imagined. By reframing our understanding of the issues that are shaping the future, we may begin the creation of different or alternative futures.

Another challenge for planners is to overcome their own resistance to stepping outside the established planning frameworks and decision making processes that are

supported and driven by legislation. From the researcher's observations and conversations with local government planners, it is clear that there is a habitual pattern of behaviour by local government planners that see community planning and/or development as being an arbitrary process, one that is therefore not to be tinkered with, or challenged. The reader may then ask: "Are the planners themselves complicit in maintaining the status quo?", or could it be argued that planning decisions and outcomes in local government are indicative of the self-interest of council planners, councillors and management. An example of this is the Logan 2026 City Directions' project (Logan City Council 2006) which is almost entirely focused on the needs of the Logan City Council, its planners, councillors and bureaucracy. For this visioning project, the community were not critical in the process.

Planning tools such as legislation, policies, and strategies, then, are typically being served by particular and predominant worldviews, and these worldviews are creating one future without consideration of other, alternative futures for communities. For planners that do step outside normal practices, there is the added dilemma of how to manage heightened community expectations for future involvement in all planning decisions.

The question then is "Who is responsible for planning decisions and the future of the community?". Traditionally, it seems that communities have relied on elected leaders to make sound planning decisions on their behalf as reflective of representative democracy processes. As such, the activated visions or images of the future are grounded in the views of the elected officials. This view of the future becomes the 'official version' of the future. Thus, governments are being seen as creating the 'official version' of a community's future rather than a future developed and designed by the community and implemented by those elected to represent them. It seems that planning and community engagement approaches traditionally used by governments are operating in reverse.

In this manifestation, those community engagement processes, frameworks and strategies that are in use by local governments seem to support passive community participation. In this form of participation, the role of the community is to receive information or be consulted on a decision that has already been made by the council; there is limited opportunity for the community to change or influence the final decision.

Hence, the processes and success of local government planning approaches and schemes are questionable, because communities tend to see local government planning systems as either heavily politicised, bureaucratic or short term focused, operating within political cycles or in the interests of developers (Tucker 2002). Government planning schemes are allegedly based on the interpretation of achieving ecological sustainable development outcomes, and meeting community interests and needs. However, it seems that planning strategies and development applications are ultimately at the mercy of the decisions made by councillors, who then leave the planners with the role of imposing or implementing decisions on their respective communities under the auspice of legislative regulation, with little or no recourse for accountability or measurement of their effects.

Considering these points, it seems communities are being excluded or are deliberately forfeiting their opportunity to have a say in what the future of their community could be like and they have remained passive in their involvement with creating variations or alternatives to the official versions of the future. Of course, it is important to recognise that there may be other contributing factors, be it lack of opportunity, desire, method, access or simply capacity for a community to become involved in future related planning activities. However, what has resulted is that community aspirations and desires for participatory planning have been abrogated in favour of a four year, short term, political cycle that support the visions of the politicians' preferred future.

1.3.4.1 Community visioning: A challenge for planners

Community visioning as a concept is relatively new for governments in Australia, and as such has not been legislated as a planning requirement, especially for local government. However, the Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation have made recommendations in their 'Plan and Deliver Guidelines' (Grogan 2004) that councils undertake exercises to strengthen the robustness of their planning approaches. This is despite the suggestion in the 'Plan and Deliver Guidelines' that the requisite levels of knowledge and expertise in community visioning practices is still lacking in local government. On the other hand, competency in conventional local government planning situated in land use perspectives is high and is supported by targeted legislation; hence, this legislation (Queensland's *Integrated Planning Act 1997* — IPA) tends to become the model for all planning activities

This makes the likelihood of community visioning problematic. Firstly, the worldviews of local government planners support a belief that the town plan 'is' the community's vision. Secondly, the community tends to default to government to make planning decisions. Finally, local governments see it as their role and responsibility to make the planning decisions. Central to the task of engaging community with envisioning their future in the face of entrenched planning approaches in local government is the study of communities creating alternative future images. Although various visioning techniques derived from strategic planning research have advanced the planning process, the critical question that need to be asked by the researcher is "Who is advantaged and or disadvantaged by such images of the future?". When it comes to the matter of community visioning planning, as Slaughter (1996b) has noted, 'Images and imagining processes powerfully affect the ways in which people and organisations look ahead, yet they are seldom studied explicitly'.

In the context of the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project, an opportunity to engage in imagining processes was created through the use of an anticipatory action learning framework. This project was unique in its extensive use of applied futures studies concepts and methods in real world contexts. Between 2002 and 2005, Maroochy Shire Council, a local government in Queensland, Australia, undertook a community visioning project to establish a community developed vision statement, six vision focus areas and an action plan. Based on a desire by the local bureaucracy to adopt strategies to manage uncertainties for Maroochy Shire's future, the then Maroochy Shire Council sought to engage the community in a new dialogue in order to co-create a preferred image and vision for Maroochy Shire's future. Visions were developed and could be studied explicitly by the whole community, and subsequent reflection on the meaning of the images was used to advance the discourse on the future of Maroochy Shire. Nevertheless, this was a risky process, as some of the elected officials saw the resulting images as being in direct opposition or even threatening to their own 'official' version of the future. Seen in the context of elected officials retaining the ultimate legitimacy to make planning decisions regarding the future of their communities, the lack of critical analysis of planners' assumptions and their approaches, and legitimacy of the official images of the future, warrants further investigation. This study on the Maroochy 2025 project and the use of applied futures studies in community planning aims to explore and provide insights to re-address these issues.

In the light of the above lines of enquiry, it can be hypothesized that local government community planning approaches and community visioning are potential areas for transformational change, not only for local government planners and elected officials, but whole communities. However, community visioning is fraught with politics, pitfalls and dangers because of the worldviews of planners, politician and bureaucrats and because of the limitations of representative democracy. The following chapters detail that central to the study of community visioning is the notion that applied futures studies, specifically when used in a framework of anticipatory action learning, can build foresight capacities for both local governments and communities. The potential benefit of using applied futures studies methods is that opportunities can be created for increased community leadership, social and community capacity building and a sense of individual agency in knowing, owning and creating a preferred future.

1.3.4.2 Challenges facing Maroochy Shire Council planners

There are several key challenges facing planners in Maroochy Shire and Maroochy Shire Council today. Firstly, the attitudes of the community reflect a view that communities tend to see local government planning as being heavily politicised, bureaucratic and short term focused, operating within political cycles or terms (Maroochy Shire Council 2003a). Government planning is based on the interpretation of alleged community interest and needs, then imposed upon or implemented in the respective communities under the auspice of legislative regulations, with little or questionable measurement of their effects. Ironically, the very same democratic processes that support a philosophy of inclusiveness also limit the opportunity for community participation in decision making through the nature of bureaucratic processes. The resulting community attitudes include a sense of disempowerment about the future, and about the inability to influence government planning and policymaking.

1.3.5 Community engagement approaches

There is anecdotal evidence from the researcher's observations to suggest a growing desire by communities to become more directly involved in the processes of decision making, especially when in matters that will affect the communities' futures. Current local government approaches to planning which are heavily situated in a land use and regulatory paradigm will not necessarily provide the needed solutions to address the future challenges facing our communities. Local government planning processes will

need to shift to more inclusive, participatory practices and shared decision making, in line with the previously mentioned United Nations 'Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002', if they wish to create sustainable communities.

Consequently, the value of the input and the purpose of community engagement approaches have come under criticism by councillors, and projects specifically designed to highlight decisions preferred by the community are ignored or seen as not being sufficiently representative (Lander 2006). In addition, arguments have been made by local government councillors, to the researcher, that the nature of democracy is being undermined by community engagement approaches; such engagement has given rise to a litany of questions by the councillors as to the need for such practices.

In the case of Maroochy Shire Council, the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project was regarded as being one of the most ambitious community engagement projects that Maroochy Shire Council had ever undertaken and was recognised by Lander (2006, p.9) as being one of the most successful community partnership projects ever undertaken in Australia. However, Lander (2006, p. 9) also states that the project was seen as having no place, legitimacy or power to affect the shire council's decision making processes. Arguments and statements made by some councillors to the researcher, stated that they were the only individuals who had the electoral legitimacy to make decisions on what the official version of the future is and will become for the community — from a local government governance, economic, environmental and social contexts. Furthermore, they argued that it was not, nor should it be, the role or right of the community or council administration to make decisions in these matters, irrespective of whether the advice came directly from the constituency who elected them to power. This position adopted by some Maroochy Shire Councillors also extended to the implementation of the community visioning results and the council administration advice on other local government matters.

However, creating alternative futures requires more than simply the input and acceptance of council. Firstly, trying to build a sense of agency in community stakeholders becomes problematic when communities have not been engaged in the decision making process in first place. Secondly, from the standpoint of sustainability, councils find can find it difficult to galvanise the required support for intervention strategies due to a lack of buy-in or sense of ownership by the stakeholders. Finally, creating commitment to the official image of the future requires input from multiple

parties from multiple perspectives. According to the International Association of Public Participation (2005, p. 8) by excluding key parties from decision making processes can severely limit and narrow the quality of the solutions and the decisions.

It has been broadly recognised that local governments, in their role of representing communities, are legitimate planning, decision and policy makers through the right vested in them by our existing democratic parliamentary legislation and processes. Depending on the level of government, the planning focus is different; each level however follows legislation that is intended to safeguard and represent the interests, needs and wellbeing of the whole community and its future. It can be concluded then, those at all levels of government, listening to input from the community is vital for political survival. One area where this has developed into a more mature process has been in the area of public consultation.

Traditionally, community consultation methods have formed the basis for extracting and identifying community attitudes regarding development in areas such as infrastructure, economic and community development, rather than for the purpose of future scenario planning. The main purpose of community consultation tends to be the end product of issues management. Thus the aim of public participation is to generate options for consideration, prior to a decision being made by government. With the litany of emerging and complex issues pertaining to sustainability, this has given rise to more contemporary and sophisticated community consultation practices, for example the framework and processes developed by the International Association of Public Participation (2005, and see <http://www.iap2.org/>).

Yet communities still seem to have limited input to the important decisions that will affect their future, let alone the opportunity to contribute to decisions 'in real time'. Instead, what tends to happen is token consultation after the fact. Indeed, it is ironic that the very same democratic processes that support a philosophy of inclusiveness also limits the opportunity for community participation in decision making through the nature of bureaucratic and electoral processes. The resulting community attitudes include a sense of disempowerment about the future and their inability to influence government planning and policymaking. Despite these negatives and a sense of disempowerment, many communities in Maroochy Shire retained hope in the capacity of visioning processes to help address the imbalance. This optimism was highlighted in the results from the Maroochy 2025 community priming workshop, where it was

established that 95 percent of the workshop participants agreed that Maroochy Shire needed a shared community vision (Maroochy Shire Council 2003b).

However, communities still look towards local government as having the role and responsibility to resolve issues associated with planning for the future. This view may suggest a forfeiting of the right to criticise planning decisions made by local authorities. However, there has been commitment by local governments to improve public participation processes, particularly in terms of how local government engages communities in a more empowering manner. Consequently, Maroochy Shire Council developed its own public engagement program called the Maroochy Public Participation Program (MPPP) to assist Council to improve its level of competencies. The MPPP was modelled on the framework developed by the International Association of Public Participation (2005). The MPPP framework is intended to assist the Maroochy 2025 Project Team to situate engagement methods to support community empowerment throughout the visioning process.

It is hypothesised in this research that local government councillors are assumed to be the sanctioned and legitimate entity for making decisions on the future of their respective community. In the context of futures studies, community visioning and foresight activities, this positioning would suggest that a few privileged individuals within local governments are creating the official version of the future. It is also hypothesised that community and local government public service administration input on planning issues is considered as 'advice only'. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some local government councillors assume that it is their role, responsibility and right to accept or reject such advice, irrespective of whether such advice is clearly representative of the solutions to address existing and future needs of the community.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore whether the use of applied futures studies methods within a framework of action learning can contribute to the creation of alternate community futures. By recording and analysing the results from the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project, this study will highlight whether community visioning processes can influence local government policy, planning and decision making processes. A second purpose of the study is to determine whether local governments effectively use and incorporate the community visioning results into their

planning schemes and corporate strategies. However, this aspect is perhaps moot, considering the current focus on local government planning is allegedly on creating sustainable communities.

The study will initially explore and discuss theoretical concepts and emerging issues pertaining to terms such as futures studies, local government planning, community development and social capacity building in the context of sustainable development and community futures discourses. This is followed by an introduction to the Maroochy 2025 case study. Specifically, this study will focus on the use of anticipatory action learning approaches within Maroochy 2025, and how such approaches have shaped the choice of methods selected throughout Maroochy 2025 and their implications for shifting community attitudes towards the future.

Thus, the context for this research is based upon the Maroochy Shire 2025 Community Visioning project. This project presented an excellent opportunity for the researcher to record and analyse applied futures studies, specifically to observe the application of futures studies theory to real world settings. Therefore, the study evaluates the effectiveness of applied futures studies with a view to:

- Expand the existing futures studies discourse;
- Challenge the implicit assumptions held by local government planners and politicians on the merits of community development and community visioning processes;
- Discuss the effects from the application of anticipated action learning methods in futures visioning;
- Measure the attitudinal effects of participation in applied futures studies processes and methods; and
- Presentation of research evidence of the results of using futures studies methods.

At another level, this study explores whether the use of futures studies methods within the context of community planning and visioning activities creates opportunities for local governments to develop representative and meaningful images and visions of the

future from their communities. Currently, local governments in Australia rely on more conventional approaches to develop their strategic and statutory planning schemes. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, local governments are obliged to follow local government and planning legislation. Secondly, the planning scheme (previously referred to as the town plan), has a long established history in local government, hence land use planning is the main domain that influences the thinking, assumptions and approaches of local government planners when it come to planning the community's future. This study will evaluate the effectiveness and potential benefits/consequences of using applied futures studies as an alternate method to enable local government planners and policymakers to move from a regulatory paradigm to a more participatory and collaborative problem solving and decision making framework when planning the future of communities.

From a community perspective, this study will evaluate community attitudes and assumptions held about the future and identify the attitudinal results and shifts in their thinking about the future as a result of participation in the Maroochy 2025 project. From the researcher's perspective, the study will evaluate the effectiveness of the Maroochy 2025 project from the perspectives of personal observation, critical analysis and results, and discuss the consequences of applied futures studies in Maroochy 2025.

This study provides useful insights for local government planners and politicians, communities and policy makers, encouraging them to challenge their own assumptions on community planning as more than simply land use planning. The study will provide alternative pathways for consideration when undertaking community planning activities. These considerations may assist in enabling the development of further creative and innovative practices for local government in their endeavours to create sustainable communities.

1.5 Brief description of research methods of analysis

In order to formulate responses to the research questions, the researcher selected a triangulation approach as the preferred research methodology. Triangulation allows the systemic comparison of research phenomena. Maroochy 2025 provides the research with a contextual background as a 'real world' case study in application of applied futures studies. This application was situated in a framework of anticipatory action

learning research. The researcher worked as a key facilitator on Maroochy 2025 from start to finish, recording personal observations which will provide a subjective method of analysis for the research. The second method of analysis details combined qualitative and quantitative methods used to assess community attitudes to community visioning and the use of applied futures studies methods throughout Maroochy 2025.

The third method of analysis presents the theoretical perspectives behind futures studies and the social science method called 'causal layered analysis' (CLA). Derived from theories of poststructuralist discourse, and developed by Inayatullah (1998, and see, 2004, p. 11), CLA provides a basis for critiquing the social construct of the 'real' and offers a layered approach with which to analyse the results from the key focus areas of the research. These focus areas in this case are the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project and local government planning and community futures. The CLA method assumes four levels of analysis: the 'litany' level which is the official public description of the issues; the 'social causes or systems' level, at which some underlying systemic causes are revealed; the 'world-view or paradigm' level in which the analysis is concerned with challenging the deeper assumptions behind the issue; and the 'myth/metaphor' level where the perspective is rational, and the method attempts to discern the irrational. These four levels are used to find the full panoply of stories, the conscious, unconscious and emotive view/s of the issues. CLA's ability to create new ways of knowing by interpreting and re-interpreting issues and their solutions provides a rich method for the analysis of scenarios and case studies.

Data for the research was collected throughout Maroochy 2025 using several means. These included public consultation methods, the use of four interpretative community surveys conducted through a Brisbane based research company, and personal observation by the researcher. For the purpose of investigating the research questions, the researcher used an independent interpretive survey alongside the Maroochy 2025 data collection methods. A detailed overview of the Maroochy 2025 methods, public participation approaches and surveys utilised is provided in Chapter 3.

1.6 Research setting

Maroochy Shire is situated in South East Queensland (see Figure 1.1 below, from Maroochy Shire Council 2006–7) and is experiencing rapid growth in terms of population, urban migration and urban development. Coined a 'sea change' community,

Maroochy Shire is the fifth fastest growing local government area in Australia. South East Queensland (SEQ) is one of the most rapidly growing regions nationally, with population predicted to swell from 2.46 million people in 2001, to 3.4 million by 2021 (ABS 2002). Rapid growth in the southeast corner of the State is likely to continue unabated for the next 20 years, accounting for a quarter of Australia's growth (Heyward 2002). The population of the Sunshine Coast region, within which Maroochy Shire sits, is predicted to grow from 245,000 to 435,000 by 2021, with Maroochy Shire growing at 3.1 percent annually. Maroochy Shire itself is predicted to absorb approximately half of the Sunshine Coast's total growth. This means the current Shire population of around 130,000 is predicted to reach 243,000 by 2025 (Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport & Recreation 2001).



Figure 1.1. South East Queensland and the Maroochy Shire

With these anticipated growth patterns, the local community expressed concern to Maroochy Shire Council about growth management issues and expressed fears of becoming another Gold Coast², contributing to a 'Los Angelisation' effect within SEQ. In light of these concerns for growth management and the need to be a sustainable community, Maroochy Shire Council responded by considering the potential of a long term community vision.

² Queensland's Gold Coast is a very heavily developed and densely populated tourist destination at the south eastern tip of Queensland.

This response was also cognisant of the direction being proposed by the Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport, and Recreation, which recommended that local councils develop a 20 year community plan as an endeavour towards creating sustainable development and, more importantly, sustainable communities. Moreover, there was influence from the Local Government Management Association Queensland (LGMAQ) through their adoption of a 'Position Statement on Sustainability' to support major themes and functions for creating sustainable communities (LGMAQ 2000). Thus, through Queensland's local government association and participation in the LGMAQ, the Shire Council was encouraged to think about initiating strategies to develop and adopt sustainable initiatives.

Therefore Maroochy Shire Council's position was that of recognition of a changing environment and the need to develop a strategic response. This response was initially identified as a commitment to updating the shire's planning scheme. Thus, Maroochy Shire Council was the second council in Queensland to develop a planning scheme (Maroochy Shire Council 2000) that embraced the *Integrated Planning Act* and used the principles of ecological sustainable development (ESD) within the planning scheme. This paved the way for Maroochy Shire Council to begin an alignment of the planning scheme with the intent and principles of Local Agenda 21. However, based on the drivers of urban migration, population growth and community feedback, the need to plan for the future required a planning effort that considered issues beyond simply strategic land use planning.

1.6.1 Maroochy 2025: As a strategic response

These aforementioned issues have all contributed as drivers to developing a strategy for managing Maroochy Shire's future. The key question to be asked of the Maroochy Shire community is "Do the citizens of Maroochy Shire want to be passive receivers of the future or active co-creators?". A second response by Maroochy Shire Council towards managing the future was to initiate a strategy to undertake community visioning. This strategy would eventually be called the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project. It was recognised from previous feedback from community satisfaction surveys (see Maroochy Shire Council 2003a) that the Council needed to work constructively with the community in planning. Therefore, Maroochy Shire Council officially commissioned Maroochy 2025 in 2003, with a view to harnessing the community's energy, passion and desire to identify its 'preferred future'. This need to achieve certain outcomes — namely, to sustain Maroochy's unique environment,

character, culture and social dynamics — was the core reason for undertaking Maroochy 2025. What was not anticipated nor interpreted correctly by Maroochy Shire Council was the level of desire in the community to have a greater influence in local planning and policymaking decisions. This would prove to be a major impediment later in the project.

As a means to determine the validity of the proposed Maroochy 2025 strategy, Maroochy Shire Council undertook preliminary research through a review of existing strategic documentation pertaining to Maroochy's future. Results were presented and discussed at a Maroochy 2025 priming summit. The summit was attended by key public and private sector and community stakeholders who had previously been active in planning for the region's future. It was within this early consultation period that it was made clear that the Maroochy 2025 strategy would be much better equipped to address future issues if a deeper understanding of the nature of the Shire's community was acquired. This deeper understanding included emergent issues and clarifying how communities define their futures.

At the time, community engagement surveys suggested that the community was very motivated to be involved in the creation of preferred visions for the Shire (Maroochy Shire Council 2003b). This motivation was underpinned by the community's desire to sustain the very aspects and elements that attracted individuals and families to move into the Shire.

Maroochy 2025 was a two-year community planning project and the objective of the project was to develop a twenty-year vision and a five-year action plan for the Maroochy Shire community. The main aim of Maroochy 2025 was to answer five simple questions regarding the future using input from the community. These questions were based on the Steve Ames Oregon Model (cited in Ding 2005, p. 91) which was utilised in the Hillsboro 2020 projects as depicted in the following Figure 1.2, from (Ames 2004, cited in Ding 2005, p. 91).

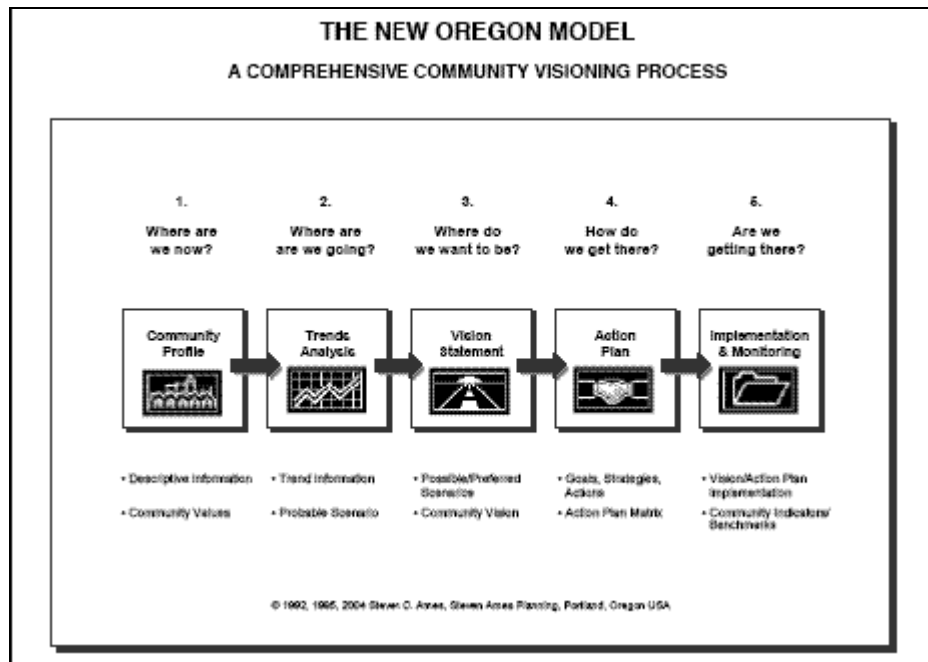


Figure 1.2. The New Oregon Model

As indicated in Figure 1.2, these questions included:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to be?
- How will we get there?
- Are we getting there?

In seeking to answer these questions, Maroochy 2025 would become the most extensive public consultation exercise ever undertaken on the Sunshine Coast. By completion, the project had cost approximately \$500,000 and collected over 40,000 inputs to answer these questions. What makes Maroochy 2025 unique is the utilisation throughout the complete lifecycle of the project, of methods in applied futures studies and anticipatory action research on a large scale.

1.7 Significance of the research

This study highlights the benefits of embracing new planning discourses and involvement in public consultations for local government. Local government as potential custodians of the community's future is in a powerful position to create alternate

community futures. Local government can provide communities with foresight on these trajectories and discuss solutions that reflect alternative images and pathways to different futures. Local government can go a long way to empower a community to take responsibility for creating truly inclusive and sustainable communities. By using foresight to identify and address the emerging issues, local government can make a significant impact in preventing undesirable futures.

This study aims to highlight the value of embracing community planning approaches, especially those that involve visioning. The study aims to demonstrate how these approaches can greatly improve the quality and quantity of collaborative planning, decision making, and problem solving efforts, while still providing innovative and partnered responses to the challenges of the future. In using a foresight approach, local governments are able to benefit from involving communities, regional partners, and state government agencies, in developing futures oriented approaches to government planning and policymaking. Local government can play a major role as a positive change agency and, more importantly, a major contributor to the creation of alternative and sustainable community futures.

At another level, the study will highlight that for Maroochy Shire, the timing for these new endeavours and processes has never been so crucial, as the Shire faces the collapse of key local industries, and the potential release of large parcels of land for new or alternate use. It appears crucial that in times of major change in communities, both local and state governments work together with the community to decide the most effective way forward for ensuring sustainable development.

This study challenges the worldviews and assumptions held by elected officials who hold the view that the concept of representative democracy creates equitable access to the future. The study hopes to demonstrate that public participation efforts by local government are no more than token exercises and mere gestures of inclusiveness, while councillors continue to pursue personal and political agendas under the guise of legitimate democratic authority. This study will attempt to make explicit that community visioning is heavily politicised; that the predominate memes of the councillors win over the collective intellect of the community; that any real opportunity for a community to become empowered with decisions that affect their future is denied under the auspice of our current 'democratic' system.

On the practical side, recording and investigating the outcomes of the Maroochy 2025 case study assists in interrogating the merits of community planning and visioning efforts. In so doing, an important opportunity is created for investigation of the effectiveness of futures studies methods not only within a local government planning context, but also in 'real world settings'.

In the longer term, this study hopes to expand the literature on applied futures studies as an emerging discipline that can compliment and add great value to strategic planning, land use planning and public participation methods in local government. The benefits of using futures studies methods in planning and public consultation include the creation of greater opportunity for active participation by all types of stakeholders or opinion holders. Those that are directly affected by decisions made may never have previously been given a voice to articulate what they prefer as an image for their future. Futures give a voice to the marginalised and disenfranchised elements in our communities. By engaging the whole community in the identification of issues, trends, drivers, *probable* scenarios and visions, the whole community can have a say in what needs to be created as a preferred future. Applied futures studies greatly assists in the development of a community's sense of agency with the future and empowers the community to actively challenge and question the official versions with legitimacy.

Finally, this study will highlight that communities desire the opportunity to influence local government planning and policymaking decisions through their images and visions. In the longer term, it is expected that insights and perspectives gained by investigating the research question will provide the subject council, and others facing similar challenges with a framework for transformational change.

1.8 Brief outline of the chapters

Chapter 1 has provided an overview of the study area within the context of sustainability, Maroochy 2025 and applied futures studies. Chapter 2 elaborates upon the theoretical foundations of futures studies, along with an investigation into different futures studies approaches, specifically the use of the anticipatory action learning research framework. Presented within the literature is a review of the concept of community and the approaches utilised in community development. The notion of democracy is discussed, along with forms of democracy, with a specific focus on

anticipatory democracy. Community issues and community futures are explained with a brief section critiquing the contradictions present in our communities.

Chapter 3 initially presents the details behind the drivers for the research setting and discusses the theoretical perspectives of applied futures studies. This is followed by details of the selected applied futures studies and public participation methods deployed in Maroochy 2025. A detailed outline of Maroochy 2025 is provided to add contextual background for the reader, concluding with details of the three methods of analysis used in the triangulation approach. The three methods include personal observation, causal layered analysis and interpretative surveys.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from each stage of Maroochy 2025, including the researcher's personal observations and results from the researcher's interpretative survey. Chapter 5 critically discusses the results from both the Maroochy 2025 project and the researcher's interpretative survey. This is followed by a CLA on the whole Maroochy 2025 project, applied futures studies, local government planning approaches and community futures.

Finally Chapter 6 summarises the main findings and links these findings to the research questions. This chapter highlights the lessons learnt from Maroochy 2025 and makes suggestions for further research.

1.9 Limitations

One limitation of this study is in the use of anticipatory action research methods, as the anticipated outcomes were to some degree going to change. This created a great deal of angst among key stakeholders who were either funding the project or had a preference for a clear sense of what was going to be produced. This ultimately led to the Maroochy 2025 Project Team being heavily criticised as having poor project management rigour and skills.

The study was significantly impacted upon by the large number of changes in Maroochy Shire Councillors, due to a local government election being held midway through the project. Of the original Councillors who endorsed Maroochy 2025, more than half were not re-elected. Consequently, the new Councillors did not all embrace the merits of continuing with Maroochy 2025, as they believed it was their role (and not

that of the community) to decide the future of the community. This change severely hampered the effectiveness and support received for Maroochy 2025 from the Council and created a predetermined rejection of the results from the Maroochy 2025 project by project's end.

It must also be pointed out that the use of futures studies was still an emerging discipline for the researcher and that the application and competency in the use of these methods were still being learnt throughout the time of Maroochy 2025.

This study does not assume that the Maroochy 2025 approach is suitable for other locations. When visioning is appropriate will largely depend on the unique needs and issues, how much funding is available within the community and the level of desired public impact in the decision making process.

Finally, this study is based on a number of assumptions and intuitions by the researcher, from personal observation and experience with government planning approaches prior to the research being undertaken. These assumptions are:

- Representative democracy is the norm;
- Government thinking is situated in a short term paradigm and in timeframes no greater than 10 years into the future;
- Communities default to elected governments to make sound planning decisions on behalf of their future;
- The planners are the experts when it comes to planning and are the most suited to provision of planning advice;
- Governments have a hegemonic approach to decision making; and
- The official version of the future needs to be challenged and alternative futures created.

The above assumptions have changed for the researcher after completing this research and a new set of assumptions have been acquired and are discussed in the final chapter.

1.10 Summary

This chapter introduced the intent of the research and the research questions. It also highlighted the emerging issues facing local government and their communities. The purpose of the study was discussed and a brief description of the research methods given. The concepts behind community visioning and Maroochy 2025 were introduced. Finally, the chapter discussed how this research aims to inform local governments about consequences, dangers and benefits of empowering communities with creating alternative community futures.

The following chapter introduces an overview of the literature pertaining to broad areas relevant to the research of this thesis. This includes futures studies thinking and key concepts on sustainability, sustainable development, power, democracy local government planning and community engagement and visioning.

2. Literature review and theoretical perspectives

2.1 Introduction

There is a great deal of literature on the field of futures studies. Initially, this literature review will provide a definition of futures studies and outline the historical foundations of the discipline. However, the main aim of the literature review is to explore the context of sustainability, local government planning, types of democracy, power, decision making and community engagement approaches. The literature review discusses these contexts in a variety of separate yet interconnecting themes. The intention is to focus upon and highlight the interconnectedness of the themes in the research questions understand the links between the research results and discussions to the literature.

This chapter is structured into six sections. The first section (2.2) provides the theoretical foundations for futures studies, beginning with a definition of futures studies together with an investigation into the evolution of the futures studies field. Specifically, this section presents the foundational concepts of futures studies including an outline of futures studies research frameworks and the consequential challenges and pitfalls for futurists. The concept and use of anticipatory action learning techniques is introduced and discussed. This section concludes with a discussion of approaches to envisioning the future.

Section 2.3 presents the concept of sustainability and sustainable communities and the interplay of local government's role and responses to the creation of sustainable development approaches.

Section 2.4 explores the concept of community and emerging community issues with a specific focus on societal structures of power and empowerment. It discusses how such structures can advantage and disadvantage an individual's sense of agency and their ability to create different futures. In addition to the concept of community, the discussion covers the notion of emerging democracies and how they relate to the concept of anticipatory democracy.

Section 2.5 discusses the emerging challenges for local governments and their relationship with the concept of community. This section explores the discussion of

emerging community issues and local government responses through the concepts of social planning, capacity building, community engagement and community development.

Section 2.6 focuses on ways communities and local governments are responding to the litany of emerging issues around sustainability, specifically issues pertaining to growth, the declining levels of environmental and social capital, and attempts to create sustainable futures. The chapter concludes (section 2.7) with a discussion around types of local government responses to these emerging issues through community visioning approaches.

2.2 Futures studies, concepts, methods and applications

To assist the reader with key concepts in the field of futures studies, this section provides the definitions, terminology, evolution of the field, frameworks and challenges.

2.2.1 Futures studies, futurology, futurism, futures and foresight

The definition of futures studies according to Inayatullah (2005, p. 1) is:

Futures studies is a systematic study of possible, probable and preferred futures and the worldviews and myths that underlie them.

Beyond the historical labels of prophet, witch doctor, or mystic guru, a more modern label of futures studies has evolved through the centuries, according to Inayatullah (2005, p. 1), who states that:

Futures studies has moved from being historically an external force involved in the practice of influencing by astrology, prophesy and forecasting to an era of structuring the future through an understanding of historical patterns of change, to eventually the study and creation of preferred images of the future.

The present definition of futures studies is focussed on interpreting the meanings and politics behind images of the future. Those who studied the future in the early 1940s were called futurologists, and the name given to the field was futurology. However, this term did not last long and was soon dropped, due to the perceptions that it was too closely aligned to individuals who were involved in the practice of medicine or medical

interventions (Strathern 2007). Consequently, the modern term used to describe a person who studies the future is 'futurist' and the area of study is called futures studies. In regard to the term 'futurism', this is connoted to mean a systemic approach to the study of the future as argued by Strathern (2007, p. 4) who states that:

Futurism is often called the second oldest profession. Not because of its affinity to the oldest, but because it was the early astronomers who were the first to think systematically and scientifically about the future.

With regard to the term 'futures', Fletcher (1981, p. 29) defines it as meaning more than one future, rather many futures. Accordingly, for the benefit of the reader, the title of this thesis, 'Creating alternative community futures: A Maroochy Shire case study' and the use of the word 'futures' throughout this thesis, implies that there can be more than 'one' future for a community, rather there are many futures that can be considered. The use of the word futures by the researcher is based on an assumption that communities can be empowered to create many different and alternative futures rather than simply accepting an official version. Thus, for the purpose of this thesis, the term 'community futures' denotes many futures.

Finally, the concept of 'strategic foresight' is a term prevalent within futures studies discourse. The difference between futures studies and strategic foresight is that strategic foresight tends to be situated in organisational contexts. Strategic foresight, as suggested by Slaughter (1996a, p. 799), is 'the ability to create and maintain a high quality; coherent; and functional forward view and to use the insights arising organisationally in useful ways'. Strategic foresight integrates the earlier concepts and approaches of strategic management and strategic planning with futures studies methods. Strategic foresight enables organisations to transform their planning approaches to extend beyond the traditional times frames of five to ten years. Strategic foresight can greatly assist organisations to develop longer term perspectives and to identify emerging societal, economic and environment trends. Strategic foresight creates capacity for better policy making and planning by enabling organisations to develop responsive strategies to emerging trends and issues. Strategic foresights can thus 'future proof' an organisation's ability to remain sustainable.

2.2.2 Foundations of futures studies

Futures studies is still considered a relatively new field for both academia and commercial settings. In the 1970s, journalist and futurist Alvin Toffler, author of *Future Shock*, began drawing public attention to the need to plan and discuss the impact of images of the future and how these images influence public policy and societal cultures. By the early 1980s, multiple discourses on futures studies were being developed by futurists such as Slaughter, Stevenson, Dator, Henderson, Elgin, Nandy, Boulding, Inayatullah and Bell. Recognised by their peers as the foundational futurists in the twentieth century, much of what is known today in terms of futures studies discourses, literature and epistemologies has been generated by these futurists.

The field of futures studies has multiple implications for planners, bureaucrats, politicians and communities. It is increasingly being utilised as a method for managing the un-certainties and drivers of change, in both public and private sectors. Specifically, futures studies is being used as a complimentary methodology to support the processes of strategic planning, policy-making, and risk management. As an emerging discipline within local governments, futures studies methods are contributing to the provision of more holistic and longer-term dimensions to the planning debate and process. Whether or not an envisioned future becomes a reality, it has been noted by Fitzgerald (2000), that involvement in a futures studies process tends to shift attitudes towards the future.

As a discipline and science, futures studies is expanding and changing as a diverse application, complementation and integration into other academic discourses. Being a relatively new and contemporised discourse with diverse origins, futures studies' conceptual boundaries sometimes seem to be unclear (Fitzgerald 2000). Currently there are many individuals, from both private and public sectors, who are considering the use of futures studies methods with a great deal of interest, specifically with a view to solving complex issues such as sustainability and sustainable development (Bell 2000). This level of interest in the value and use of futures studies methods is proving to be extremely poignant, given the current climate of dwindling resources, pollution, religious fanaticism, and rapid population growth (Elgin 2000).

Considering that futures studies is still viewed by academics as a relatively new field of study, futures studies epistemologies are viewed with scepticism by academia as to the value of futures studies in assisting with the development of other academic discourses.

The reason for this scepticism according to Fletcher (1979, p. 28) is that the conceptual boundaries of futures studies still remain unclear to the academic community. Nevertheless, Fletcher (1979, p. 28) suggests that even in the 1970s the field of futures studies had evolved to a level of conceptual clarification and that the field had identified and developed five key futures studies concepts. These concepts have provided the necessary foundations for conceptual clarity, as follows:

- The supposition of alternative choices;
- The value of holistic involvement;
- Purposeful actions;
- The need to extend the concepts of time and space; and
- The importance of guiding images.

These five key concepts have formed the foundation for futures studies assumptions. Fletcher (1981, p. 29) goes on to discern a key pivotal assumption within the field: that there is not one future, but rather myriad futures. Thus, futures studies does not necessarily try to predict the future, rather it explores and investigates the different images and their meanings (Dator 2002, p. 5).

These foundational concepts have greatly influenced the approaches of futurists in more recent times. Futurists are now using a selection of different futures studies and foresight techniques. It is relevant to point out that the field of futures studies is more than predicting the future; rather it has evolved to encompass the use and exploration of the alternative futures. This point is highlighted again by Dator (2002 p. 6), who argues that 'the future is fundamentally plural and open, an arena of possibilities and not of discernable inevitabilities'. Most futurists therefore forecast a wide variety of alternative futures rather than predicting 'the future'.

However, futures studies is still criticised for its lack of conceptual explicitness and analytical clarity. Prior to the 1980s, results from the futures studies field were seen as lacking academic rigour, thus the works of futurists were heavily criticised by academics as being irrelevant and limiting. This criticism may have been attributed to the prevailing academic paradigms which have historically been derived from empirical and interpretive frameworks. Such frameworks have long-established standards and criteria for research disciplines.

Subsequently, to satisfy the academic critics, Amara (1981) recommended that the field of futures studies learn how to develop clear research criteria for evaluating its usefulness, and base its field research on conceptual explicitness and analytical clarity. Nevertheless, given the relative youth of futures studies in the realm of academic discourses and epistemologies, the value of futures studies is evident with an increase in standing among other academic concepts (Amara 1981, p. 25).

Through his many articles published in the journal *The Futurist*, and his role as President of the 'Institute for the Future', Amara (1981, p. 27) has greatly contributed to the development of clearer foundations for the futures studies field. These earlier concepts eventually led to the establishment of three important foundational assumptions behind futures studies discourses:

- The future is not predictable;
- The future is not predetermined; and
- Future outcomes can be influenced by individual choices.

These foundational assumptions have led to the further development of three distinctive focus areas emerging within the futures studies field. These are *probable* futures, *possible* futures, and *preferred* futures. Each focus area has its own distinct principle objective and has tended to shape the methods and frameworks utilised within that area accordingly.

The key assumption for 'probable futures' according to Amara (1981, p. 28) is that the future can be structured. Probable futures are developed using existing drivers of change and assumes the continuance of the drivers and variables of change as remaining unabated. The image of the future is based on the extrapolation of the drivers and variables of change to highlight the consequences. The key message from a probable futures scenario perspective is that the future can be anticipated. Futurists who use a probable futures approach tend to focus on and assume that:

- There are technological innovations and society will react to social change;
- There are dangers and risks of non-intervention;
- There is the ability to make recommendations, thus convincing others to change behaviours;
- There is empirical data which can be extrapolated to confirm a high degree of probability; and

- The study of the future is a science and hence a closed system.

The key assumptions for 'possible futures' according to Amara (1981, p. 28) is that the future is perceptual and the discovery of new social ideas and beliefs can be explored, giving the tendency to add variations to the drivers of change. These variations can include change in social, technological, economic, governance, and environmental assumptions. The key message from a possible futures scenario perspective is that the anticipated future can be altered from the future that is forecasted. Futurists who use a possible futures approach tend to focus on:

- Shifts or trends;
- The options of varied interventions;
- 'What if' questions;
- Interpretative data which explores attitudinal assumptions; and
- The study of the future as an open system where almost anything can happen.

Finally, Amara (1981, p. 28) states that preferred futures are the utopias, the best possible real world we can imagine using existing assumptions. It is assumed that a preferred future scenario can be achieved through our efforts and good luck. Preferred futures are one's current vision of the best scenario — all things considered — and that it is in the realm of achievability. Preferred futures, according to Amara (1981, p. 28), could be created through participative processes.

Whether a futurist uses one or all three of the above approaches as a framework for futures studies, any or all can become problematic if the creations of probable, possible and preferred future scenarios grow from existing worldviews. So long as that worldviews remain unchallenged, futurists can unwittingly contribute to the perpetuation of past and present worldviews into the official future.

2.2.3 Challenges and pitfalls for futurists

The study of the future comes with its own set of challenges and pitfalls for futurists. Firstly, in the early twentieth century, futurists often had conflicting views as to what their role was: either anticipating the future or creating alternatives to the future. This was due to the paradox between predicting and knowing the future. To study the future is problematic because it does not yet exist, so how can one use or know something

that has yet to happen? This was and still is a conundrum for some futurists and this problem is highlighted by Bell and Olick (1989, p. 15) who state that 'futurists strive to know and predict what cannot be known'. This conundrum has not, however, deterred futurists from evolving the field of futures studies. The challenge is recognised by Bell and Mau (1971, p. 9) who state that 'there are no future facts, but there are no past possibilities'; in other words, a study of the future is best situated in the context of the present, and considering the influence of past while anticipating and creating alternatives images for the future.

A second challenge for futurists is the pitfall of prediction. The dangers of prediction are emphasised by Dator (2002, p. 93), who states:

What is often popularly, or even professionally, considered to be 'the most likely future' is, in all probability, one of the least likely futures and that given the volatility and fundamental unpredictability of most important facets of society, it is a common mistake to believe it is possible to determine what is 'the most likely future' or 'the probable future' and then to plan for that. However 'the most likely future' seldom eventuates, and often is among 'the least likely futures' in reality.

The issue with prediction is that it uses the futurist's tacit assumptions. Accordingly, individuals can change their images of the future, by changing their assumptions.

Thirdly the future can be seen as either an open or closed system for analysis (Dator 2002). A closed system of futures studies is when assumptions go unchallenged. Alternatively, in an open system of futures studies assumptions are questioned, deconstructed and then reconstructed to create alternative futures. Based on his work at the University of Hawaii Research Centre for Futures Studies, Dator (2002, p. 7) argues that the future is continually an open system and that:

Even though the future cannot be studied, futures studies is not necessarily a study of the future but rather, the examining the ideas and images that specifically relate to the future, hence the future needs to be understood and seen as alternatives, plural, open, the arena of possibility, struggle, and hope, and not of inevitability, helplessness, or despair of prediction.

A key challenge for futurists is to move beyond prediction, and to take up the challenge to understand the future as a study of alternatives. Alternatives can provide the opportunity for a shift in worldviews. Another reason to move beyond prediction is the

need to overcome the influences of the past practices of colonisation and its ability to perpetuate a colonised future, especially from a cultural perspective. Today's approaches to futures study, according to Sardar (2006), still seem to have a strong western cultural perspective and are seen as a continued colonisation of the east by the west and even a colonisation of the future itself. Sardar (2006, p. 1) argues that the problem with western based futures studies predictions is that they neglect other worldviews and cultures due to:

Its overemphasis on forecasting and prediction, its over preoccupation with technology, and its neglect of non-western cultures and concerns have transformed the discipline into an instrument for the colonization of the future.

Notwithstanding this possible negative, there have been recent efforts to make futures studies a more credible, culturally benign and equitable science and art. And the use of forecasting and prediction activities is still highly regarded in the business and financial arenas. The use of anticipatory scenarios has been widely used as a method to predict future profit markets or opportunities. However, most predictions continue to be proven inaccurate, and to disappoint those who rely on them and those who make them.

Fourthly, an emerging challenge for futurists is the area of applied futures studies research and its application to real world problems and issues. The incentive to take up this challenge is highlighted by Bell and Olick (1989, p. 126) who argue that 'the past is over and closed where the future is open and new'. In other words, the way of the future for futurists is in the realm of possibilities and alternatives rather than anticipation alone.

Futures studies and futurists alike will continue to move beyond the ontology of prediction, and further into the context of developing new discourses for futures studies through research combined with application. Thereby, according to Inayatullah (2004, p. 63):

Futures research must not solely be engaged in pure research, but rather the future must actualise itself through praxis. There must be an effort to identify cultures that have been suppressed or that will be suppressed given various trends, and then aid them in articulating and realising new visions.

Merely pursuing identical growth without applied action tends to fall short of addressing the five key futurist concepts underlying futures studies. Fletcher (1981, p. 31) asserted that the five key concepts were a means to assist the development of futurists' worldviews regarding the pedagogy of futures studies.

Finally, although prediction is still seen by some futurists as having a legitimate purpose, it has been the late twentieth century works of Slaughter (1996a), Dator (2002), Stevenson (1998), and Inayatullah (1998) that have greatly contributed to the further development of new worldviews within the futures studies field. As a result, there are many current futurists who now subscribe to Inayatullah's (1990, p. 117) statement:

There is agreement that conventional methods used to forecast the future, to interpret the future and to create desirable visions for the future are of little use if those within the field of futures are unable to unpack archetypes, myths and metaphors, not to mention worldviews, ideologies and discourses.

However, for futurists to overcome the seductiveness of predicting, it seems they need to find new images of the future of futures studies. These images must be held within the minds of futurists for the purpose of creating clear goals and actions. As Keyfitz (1987, p. 237) states, 'one cannot act purposefully in any small respect except within a picture of what the world will be like when the action produces the effect'. Thus, the future of futures studies is dependent on futurists co-creating a better future for the field of futures studies.

The future images of futures studies are what will keep futurists to the causes that affect their futures. These images can be situated in either anticipatory or alternative paradigms by the futurist; either way, futures studies will continue to actualise itself through praxis and the causes that affect their futures will be determined by the goals each futurist establishes for her/himself. Consequently, according to Stevenson and Inayatullah (1998, p. 1), there are a number of goals being adopted by today's futurists which suggest a shift from a prediction role to that of assistance in the future development of the futures studies field. These are:

- Utilisation of visions and scenarios;
- Development of methodologies on how to think about the future;
- Exploration of the means for obtaining future visions;

- Discussion of the implications or consequences of existing and imagined depictions of the future;
- Analysis of current worldviews, events, issues and problems;
- Discussion of 'what if' different courses of action had been implemented and how this alternative future may have looked;
- Deconstruction of texts on the future to identify what is missing from futures discourse; and
- Instigating a social analysis of language, gender and social systems to examine alternative futures.

The value of these goals is their universality in their application for futurists and the ability to align research and futures studies methods to future studies frameworks. All of these goals can be utilised across all of the four futures studies frameworks, which are the subject of the next section: the predictive, cultural, critical and action learning. The four future studies frameworks mirror the three main academic frameworks of empirical, interpretative and critical, as used by other fields of research.

2.2.4 Futures studies frameworks: predictive, cultural, critical and anticipatory action learning futures

In envisioning images of the future for society or by the individual, there are four main categories of futures studies frameworks to situate. As suggested by Inayatullah (2002, p. 192), these are predictive futures, cultural futures (some may call this interpretative futures), critical futures and, more recently, anticipatory action learning futures.

A predictive futures framework has neutrality embedded in the use of language and assumptions. This means the language and connotations associated with statements of what the future will be like, go unchallenged. Predictive futures links theory and data and is based on the assumption that the future can be known and that those who possess such knowledge are in the position to colonise the official version of the future. In effect, this means that those who are in a position to make such statements are by default creating an official version of the future, and it is this version of the future that tends to be adopted.

A cultural futures framework focuses on comparison of subjective interpretations of what the future may look like. This comparison of interpretations looks at how, through

the many cultures of humanity, we are provided with contrast, and it is this cultural contrast that can provide insight into our own culturally bound assumptions of the future. Inayatullah (2004, p. 63) states that, within 'cultural futures the goal is to discern how other cultures create and interpret the future'. Alternatively, seems is needed, is the recognition that there is universal commonality in all our needs and aspirations for the future, regardless of community values or cultural differences.

Using a range of methods and tools to critique or penetrate beneath the surface of social constructs of the real, in order to make explicit that which is implicit (Slaughter 1989, p. 447) is the intent of the critical futures studies framework. A critical futures framework has its origin in post-modern discourse.

Finally, an anticipatory action learning framework supports the achievement of innovative and intuitive outcomes by those directly affected by the issue/s. This is through 'those affected' playing an active and participatory role in defining, creating and analysing the issue/s (Inayatullah 2002). What separates action learning from anticipatory action learning is that the context for reflective learning is situated in the future. Hence, the reflection is focussed on the image and meanings behind the image itself, rather than reflecting on a present learning experience. The three key elements of anticipatory action learning involve questioning assumptions at every level, scanning the future by using all ways of knowing, and participation by many so as to include multiple perspectives and variables in the learning (Inayatullah 2002).

2.2.5 Concepts behind action learning and anticipatory action learning

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA 1999, p. 27) describes action learning as 'an equation of learning equals programmed knowledge plus questioning' and developing fresh perspectives, or $L = P + Q$. This equation means that learning occurs as a result of reading texts, examining audiovisual material, listening to others/experts, and reflecting on this knowledge with a group of stakeholders. Action learning as a concept was developed by Revans (1980). According to Dick (1999), action learning research can be described as 'a family of research methodologies which pursue action or change and research or understanding at the same time'. Action learning research uses (Dick 1999):

- a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection; and

- in the later cycles, continuously refining methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles.

Action learning as a process creates opportunity for learning to be applied in solving real world, work-based and future orientated problems. The learning is contextually situated with a group of colleagues who share the same problem and who have the potential to contribute mutual support, advice and criticism. The action-learning group develops a united approach to solving their collective problems. Thus, action learning in summary according to Dick (1999) is:

an emergent process which takes shape as understanding and knowing increases; an iterative process which converges towards a better understanding of what happens. The value of action learning is that it is participative, as change is usually easier to achieve when those affected by the change are involved and qualitative.

Hence, action learning is more than learning by doing, as it aims to develop both fresh perspectives on existing knowledge and experience with which to apply to current problems or issues. The need to review, reflect, rethink and reinterpret knowledge and experience is pivotal to the action learning process, and achieving a balance between the different elements of action learning is often a challenge within the context of action learning facilitation.

Anticipatory action learning (AAL) approaches differ from action learning because AAL supports the achievement of innovative and intuitive outcomes to transform individuals, organizations and society through a unique style of questioning the future. Those directly affected by issues play an active and participatory role in defining and creating alternatives solutions to both the issues and their own images of the future. AAL, according to Inayatullah (2005, p. 30), involves three key steps, as follows:

1. *Questioning assumptions at every level, the mission the goals, the product, core competencies;*
2. *Anticipatory, scanning the future by using all our ways of knowing, all our senses; and*
3. *Participating, including others, since non-inclusion of one variable can change the outcomes in unanticipated ways.*

More specifically, AAL means engaging as many methods, means and participants so as to ensure multiple perspectives and variables to learning and knowing the future are

gathered. However the use of AAL does have its own challenges. These challenges can be best summarised through the main points of AAL usage. According to Inayatullah (2006, p. 656), these are:

- *Sensitivity to the environment, workshop dynamics and ways of learning and knowing of participants;*
- *Dealing with the anxiety that comes from questioning the future;*
- *Identification of the learning as it happens;*
- *Identification and naming of barriers and resistance to learning including ways to understand and transform; and*
- *The deepening of authentic understanding of the other (what we don't know we don't know).*

A crucial factor for futurists is the need to recognise that AAL is more than simply prediction, but rather the creation of mental, spiritual and emotional spaces along with a sense of agency as a means to motivate individuals, organisations and society to explore alternative futures. Inayatullah also suggests (2006, p. 665) that AAL is more about the 'the creation of confidence in individuals and their system's abilities to creatively adapt to new challenges'. Hence, the value of AAL techniques is in greatly assisting people's capacity in questioning a given future. This can give rise to an increased sense of agency within the individual to pursue other futures.

2.2.6 Envisioning the future

The ability to visualise in detail the possible results of major changes in existing social, technological, economic and environment spheres has not been developed as a skill in many institutions and, as a result, the consequences of decisions made long ago are only now being felt (Boulding 1978). Thus, motivation to use futures studies has never before been so present, according to Elgin (2000), who argues that:

There is a vital need for discovering a compelling vision of our future because of emerging global crisis with dwindling natural resources, pollution, fanaticism, religions, population growth and lack of visions based on alternatives. The consequences of not resolving the development of these visions may mean communities may lose confidence in our leaders, our institutions or in ourselves, with the ability to create a preferred future that reflects our aspirations.

According to Bell (2000), futurists have much to offer through their ability to systematically explore alternative futures and develop new ways to solve complex issues. Furthermore, futurists who focus on co-creating alternative futures with communities, create new capacities to solve complex community issues.

Another aspect of the futures studies field, according to Dator (2002, p. 7), is that the field is a participatory inquiry into many views of the future. This participatory enquiry means thinking and imagining our lives in the future and considering alternatives to predicted images. The purpose of futures studies, Dator (2002, p. 7) argues, is finding new, alternative and preferred futures rather than furthering any particular view of the future. This view is supported by the work of Boulding (1956), Polak (1961), Mau (1968), and Boulding (1971):

the concept of images of the future and its corollaries, forecasting alternative futures and inventing preferred futures in contrast to predicting the future is key to understanding contemporary approaches to new images of the future (Dator 2002, p. 8).

Hence, futures studies can be more than anticipating images of the future. Rather, futures studies needs to be more about envisioning and implementing *alternative* images of the future. This can be achieved by futurists who pursue the results of praxis, action learning research, continuous evaluation, and the challenge to facilitate with others the re-envisioning of official images of the future.

Yet to re-envision images is not without problems both for the futurist and for the people with whom they work. Acceptance or willingness to encourage people to re-envision or to embrace new alternative behaviours based on an alternative future has its own set of barriers. Futurists have long recognised that there are many barriers that prevent people from adopting alternatives to the future. These barriers are recognised as:

- *People tend to follow patterns;*
- *Routines are stronger than laws and reason;*
- *So few legislations dare challenge established patterns;*
- *Routine is stronger than reason;*
- *Education changes patterns slowly;*

- *People and their routines make the present and the future; and*
- *Futurists collude with patterns by the avoidance of making recommendations that put people in conflict with their routines (Amara 1981, p. 67).*

To surmount the barriers, futurists need to be innovative and provocative. By situating the futures studies discourse and applied research approaches in frameworks of critical futures and action learning, there is an opportunity for the futurist to become innovative. There is much to be offered to governments, organisations and communities through futures studies praxis. The value and worth of futurists and futures studies is best summarised by Inayatullah (2006, p. 666), who states that 'organisational, social, environmental, cultural and spiritual innovation is one of the most important potential contributions of futures studies'. These innovations are becoming more crucial given the global and local crisis for sustainable futures.

2.3 Sustainability — The context

This section presents the context for sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable communities. It highlights the interplay and necessity of the local government role and responses in the creation of sustainable communities and sustainable local governments.

Governments globally have acknowledged that immense changes are occurring in the economic, social, environmental and political spheres within the context of managing societies, and more specifically, at the local community level. Hence the increasing number of sustainability themes at conferences across the globe on issues pertaining to futures. More recently, large numbers of politicians, mayors, civic leaders, representatives of private enterprise, local governments, international and national associations from various countries have congregated to articulate issues pertaining to sustainability, sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities. Two world summits (1992 in Rio de Janeiro, and 2002 in Johannesburg) have established a set of standards and strategies to cope with emerging futures. These standards were based on images of sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable communities, and are set down in the 'Declaration on Sustainable Development' (United Nations, 2003). More specifically, local governments were acknowledged as one of the main enablers with a significant role and level of influence

in sustainable development. This role was outlined in the Declaration as follows (Chapter 28):

National states cannot, on their own, centrally manage and control the complex, fast-moving cities and towns of today and tomorrow — only strong decentralised Local governments, in touch with and involving their local citizens can do this... The effects of economic liberalisation and globalisation are felt most sharply at the local level.

This statement spells out the importance of local government involving the local community in managing and controlling the future. Hence, local governments and their use of community engagement as a method to determine what communities deems as valuable and important are seen to be crucial in the creation of successful sustainable development decisions. This would imply involving the community through collaboration and partnership in decisions throughout the whole problem solving process and in the identification of solutions. The 'Declaration on Sustainable Development' (United Nations 2003) further suggests that no one country can expect to resolve sustainability or sustainable development issues independently, or that communities could remain impervious to either local or global effects of change.

The 'Declaration on Sustainable Development' (United Nations 2003) specifically challenged all local governments to adopt measures that would combat economic, environmental, social and political poverty. To empower people to create and own their futures for the purpose of creating peaceful, prosperous, safe and sustainable communities, the 'Declaration on Sustainable Development' (United Nations 2003) is a real challenge to which some local governments have responded by placing the concepts of sustainability, sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities, high on their agendas.

Local government leaders at the Johannesburg World Summit in 2002 developed the Agenda 21 Initiative, during the session on 'Communities co-creating their sustainable future'. This initiative clearly articulated a local government commitment, passion and drive to take on the global issues of sustainability, sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities. The aims of Agenda 21 were to develop actionable steps at a local level. To assist with the establishment of boundaries for the actions, three key inter-connected principles were identified and included:

- *effective democratic decentralisation;*

- *good governance; and*
- *co-operation and solidarity* (United Nations Division on Sustainable Development 2002, Agenda 21, Chapter 28, Local Authorities Initiatives in Support Of Agenda 21).

These principles form a basis for the development of actions towards resolving sustainability issues. This acknowledges according to Tonn (1999, p. 345) a key point and that is the involvement of a representative community through a democratic process that will provide an effective means to contribute to sustainability solutions.

The concept of the involvement of the community had its origins at the previous world summit, titled the 'Earth Summit', in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. At this summit, according to Tonn (1999, p. 345), there was an inaugural discussion on community participation, with support for the notion of increasing the levels of community involvement in the sustainability debate and solution making. It was argued by Tonn (1999, p. 345), that by involving the community in the sustainability debate, there is the opportunity for the community to identify the changes required to make their communities sustainable while at the same time increasing the levels of buy-in and commitment to change their habits. As Mauser (1999, p. 19) states, 'we are all responsible for creating community cohesion and building community transversality which includes the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions', thus enabling societies to participate in decision making, and accepting responsibility towards future generations and disadvantaged populations. Participation is thus argued to increase the likelihood of a community changing its behaviours towards more sustainable practices.

In analysing Mauser's position, it is apparent that he believes that the responsibility for resolving sustainability issues is a shared responsibility and it will require a whole community to work together. However, communities and local government need to do more than simply work together developing sustainability solutions, they need to move their thinking beyond a perspective of mere survival or simply sustaining the status quo to evolutionary steps to alternate ways of existing. As Elgin (2000, p. 1) argues:

If we do no more work for a sustainable future, then we are in danger of creating a world in which living is a little more than only dying. To engage our enthusiasm for evolution, we must look beyond sheer survival.

Furthermore, thinking and imaging a sustainable future encompasses a longer time frame than simply the next five to ten years. It will require careful positioning of the sustainability debate in different time contexts, developing the skill and capacity to interrogate the past, know the present and question the future from multiple perspectives. However, what seems to be missing in the sustainability debate is a common definition and meaning of the term sustainability.

2.3.1 Definitions of sustainability

While the term sustainability is continually being used in government discourses, Tonn (1999, p. 344) argues that 'there seems to be no universally accepted definition of sustainability'. However, there are a number of definitions that one may choose from, many of which seem to draw the concept into the sphere of concern for future generations. Furthermore, Tonn (1999, p. 344) suggests that the term sustainability denotes a future orientation because it implies a state of preference.

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) established by the United Nations published a report entitled *Our Common Future*. The document came to be known as the *Brundtland Report* after the Commission's chairwoman, Gro Harlem Brundtland. The *Brundtland Report* included guiding principles and definitions for sustainability and sustainable development. It states that critical global environmental problems were primarily the result of enormous poverty and non-sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and called for a strategy to unite communities with decision making processes relating to sustainable development. The *Brundtland Report* defined sustainability and sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (1987 section 1, paragraph 1).

However, Dunphy, Benveniste, Griffiths & Sutton (2000, p. 23) argues that the *Brundtland Report's* definition is deficient in several ways and that:

As part of a political document the definition seems to equate to 'needs' within 'wants' and to assume that economic growth is necessarily part of the development. Because it does not clearly distinguish between different types of economic structure, it appears to support economic growth in the use of materials and energy, a form that damages the environment. The definition focuses only on human needs or

wants. However, the report as a whole makes it clear that these needs include the conservation of the natural environment.

According to Dunphy et al. (2000), sustainability and sustainable development definitions and solutions must also include a composition of economic and social development actions that protect and enhance the natural environment and social equity, rather than being at their expense.

However, sustainability, sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities has been argued as clearly shaping definitions that serve to keep the status quo. As Inayatullah (1999, p. 113) argues, 'sustainability is but a return to a general equilibrium and systems theory which once again favours the status quo over transformational futures'. The alternative is to preserve some of the aspects of the present in order to create a better world for future generations.

Hence, sustainability is more about balance. That is, keeping some of the things a community values today, while recognising a need for change in conjunction with the recognition that values of the future will be different. The creation of sustainable communities is situated in a context of transformation. It is about transforming our community values and the formulation of future community values. These values can be formed through the exploring of images of the future and discussing the reasons for associating certain values with the images of the future.

Given the responsibility of local government to deliver services such as planning schemes, social and environmental infrastructures, community and economic development, regulations and governance, this arm of government has the capacity to directly and immediately impact upon the lives of their constituents. Therefore, local government has much to offer in terms of the necessary funding, knowledge and opportunity to assist communities transform into sustainable communities.

2.3.2 Local government and sustainable communities

According to Agenda 21 (United Nations Division on Sustainable Development 2002, Chapter 28), local government, as the level of governance closest to the people, can play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to community sustainability issues. By means of democratic processes, local governments have the legitimacy to receive and allocate the necessary funds to support Agenda 21 objectives.

However, local governments working alone cannot hope to resolve the myriad of sustainability issues. It will require increasing the level of responsibility, involvement, consultation and partnership of communities, and of state and federal government agencies. Sustainability is not the work solely of local governments; it is a shared community project and, more importantly, a shared responsibility; no single entity within a community could assume that they have the correct assessment, knowledge, or skills — not even government specialists — to resolve sustainability issues. Tonn (1999, p. 346) suggests that it will require local government to engage their communities in:

- *multi generational dialogue;*
- *Consultation and collaboration;*
- *multi-dimensional coordination;*
- *sharing values and goals;*
- *empowerment; and*
- *learning a set of key imperatives with creating sustainable communities.*

This view is supported by Wills (2001), who argues that by encompassing an even larger geographical area such as a catchment,³ an inter-sectoral sense of community develops. With an inter-sectoral sense of community, local government is well positioned to reframe situations and community identities from broader dimensions, with a view of communities and local governments developing new regional concepts to build social and economic capacity, and to plan and improve infrastructure requirements.

The more that local governments move from an often inherently conflict-based and regulatory approach to a cooperative and partnership approach, the greater the opportunity to develop a common ethos, high levels of trust, and capabilities within a community. Through the practice of participatory approaches by local government in interactions with their communities, there is by default an increase in building constituency, a sense of community ownership and support for resolving community

³ In this context, catchment refers to a geographical area between main bodies of water.

issues. All these activities would constitute the implementation of the key aspects of the 'Local Action 21' on sustainable development which states that:

In order for a community to address sustainable development, and sustainability issues, Local governments will need to enter into a dialogue and consult with its communities, local organisations and private enterprises. Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues (Local Action 21, 2002, Chapter 28, Sections 1-7).

Therefore, local governments will need to transform themselves away from the past approaches of regulatory compliance to a model of collaboration and leadership if they are going to resolve sustainable community issues. The quality of local government relationships with community will determine the levels of success. For those local government elected members who continue to solve the sustainability issues, their reward will be communicated through re-election.

From an organisational perspective, unless local governments embrace the concept of strategic foresight as a means of transformation, their capacity to remain sustainable will become increasingly tenuous. This is owing to changing community expectations and increasing levels of community activism, for example arguing for rates to be used on sustainability solutions and other futures and not for supporting ineffectual and highly costly government bureaucracies. Never before has the understanding of the concept of community and community power and emerging democracies become so important to the future of local government.

2.4 Community context, power, disadvantages and anticipatory democracy

This section explores the concept of community and emerging community issues. Specifically, there is a focus on societal structures of power and empowerment and how such structures can advantage and disadvantage an individual's sense of agency with the issues and their ability to create different futures. In addition to the concept of community is the discussion on how the notion of emerging democracies relate to the concept of anticipatory democracy.

2.4.1 The concept of community

Australian governments at all levels are attempting to re-discover the concept of 'community'. Terminology such as community development, social capital, community capacity building and, more recently, community resilience, has extended the discourse relating to governments and their understandings of the concept of community.

However, the term community is not without debate. The broad application and contextual use of the term community makes the definition of community difficult to clarify. Accordingly, Bell and Newby (1971, p. 80) argues that 'the definition of community is highly problematic, and the many definitions that have been proposed have very little in common'.

Maser (1999, p. 27) proposes a definition which states that 'a community can be thought of as a group of people who welcome, honour and exchange one another's gifts, which are unique to each person'. However, what seems to be a problem with this definition, and what is not clear, is that the nature of the gifts that are exchanged could be tangible or intangible. Kenny (1999, p. 38), for example, argues that 'most community development workers base their definition on the idea that communities have some common identity which are based on a number of significant criteria [sic]'. These criteria can include relationships, identities, goals, interests, gender, class, race, ethnicity or political persuasion. What seems to be a common theme in most definitions is one of common identify, irrespective of whether this is in current time or future time perspectives.

Notwithstanding, the term community, according to Wild (1981, p. 14), may refer to 'an object of study rather than a method of study'. Wild (1981, p. 14) identifies four broad perspectives that can assist when studying communities, these are:

Communities focus on a common identity through human association;

Communities can denote a physical location that is finite and has clear boundaries such as villages;

Developing the idea of locality and community as a social system that underpins discussions on localism and local socialism; and

The term community tends to be used in the pretext of what should be than what is. It is more useful to use the definition of community in a transformative way rather than a normative value based way in the use of the term.

All of these perspectives prove to be useful in the analysis of a community. However, what remains is that there are many definitions of community and it is important to use the term and concept thoughtfully and understand that it remains contested, with different communities and people using their own definitions. Still, community does have recognition and meaning for people and is closely linked to the concepts of power and social justice. Moreover, according to Kenny (1999, p. 38), the concept and term community, 'communicates some important understandings of the ways in which people share common experiences; goals and interests; develop common identities; cooperate to achieve common goals'.

2.4.2 Community and perspectives of power

Kenny (1999, p. 43) argues that, as communities 'are organic; self organising systems and thus cannot be organised bureaucratically', this tends to contribute to the many frustrations from government agencies with their approaches to community governance and regulation. In contrast, communities need the freedom to be organic and self organising. That is, they need the freedom to develop their social relationships, goals, identities, levels of participation and ultimately their futures if they are going to become sustainable.

What is notable about the organic concepts of community is that 'it is pertinent to the rise in new and emergent political cultures in our communities based on new forms of cooperation, collaboration and empowerment' (Kenny 1999, p. 43). This rise in alternate political cultures is aimed at shifting the power away from politicians and back to the community. Thus, emerging political cultures continue to give rise to increasingly alternate political cultures that are in favour of other views of power and the development of other forms of democracy.

These alternate political cultures are changing the political landscape of our communities. Cochrane (1986, p. 52) states that community politics:

begins to redefine politics as a process which stretches from daily experience of ordinary life to wider decisions about resources. It implicitly challenges the notion

that certain areas can be defined out of political discussion and that other areas of decision making, namely government, have to be left to political experts, whether bureaucrats or party politicians.

Whether the wider or local decisions are made by political experts or local government bureaucrats, community politics is challenging the societal structures and uses of power. However, there are many perspectives of power. Ife (2002, p. 53) states that power is 'a complex and contested notion and there are varying views of power that have been identified by social and political theorists'. Political perspectives on power can be divided into four categories. These are pluralists, elite, structural and poststructuralist accounts.

According to Ife (2002, p. 53), a pluralist perspective on power is associated with 'individuals and society competing for power and influence and encourages people to learn the rules and become better players in the game'. An elite perspective on power is associated with the elites 'controlling ownership and domination of the main institutions' (ibid p. 54) of society. For structuralists, power is associated with society being stratified according to 'dominant forms of structural oppression such as class, race and gender' and power is 'exercised by dominant groups through structural oppression' (ibid p. 55). The poststructuralist perspective on power is associated with a view of society being defined through 'constructed meanings, understandings, language, knowledge accumulation and control'. Power is exercised through 'control of discourse, construction of knowledge' (ibid p. 55). Examples of all four perspectives and uses of power are evident in our societies.

However, the rise in community based social movements with community leadership, radicalism, capacity building and people creating their own destiny are changing the community discourse towards the poststructuralist perspective on power. Implications from these social movements, according to Ife (2002 p. 57) highlight the desire of communities to have power over:

- *personal choices;*
- *the definition of need;*
- *ideas;*
- *institutions;*
- *resources;*

- *economic activity; and*
- *reproduction.*

From a futures studies perspective on power, Inayatullah (2004, p. 57) argues that the politics of language can afford to describe a future for those privileged by its definitions and meaning. Individuals privileged by statute or elected position in local government determine the image and definitions of the future with full knowledge of who will in turn be privileged by its definitions. Consequently, when planning the future, the politics of language and meaning finds their way into the decision making processes and the decisions made by political experts or local government bureaucrats on the future of communities.

People must have control and power over knowledge and information, social relationships, decision making and their own resources (Kenny 1999, p.25). Communities need the power to accept, reject or adapt the official images of the future. If communities are to self-actualise and take responsibility for the creation of sustainable futures, they need to be given the opportunity to take individual and collective responsibility for that future. Therefore, individuals and communities need to be empowered, and to become connected and cohesive to ensure that real choices are available.

2.4.3 Community empowerment

Given the increasing issues of social sustainability, integrating the social and the physical, intergenerational equity, global justice and environmental rights emerging in our communities across the globe, communities will need to become increasingly involved in the decision making processes (Ife 2002). If communities are to become active agents in the implementation of sustainability solutions, they will need power to take matters into their own hands. However, not all communities want to be empowered, or have a degree of apathy towards the democratic decision making processes and are quite content with the system of representative democracy. As Cochrane (1986, p. 293) highlights, 'we cannot assume that decision making in communities is democratic. Decisions at the community level can be influenced by petty self interest, bickering and jockeying for power'. So, although a community may be advocating for interventions to be made by their elected officials to make their community more sustainable, the paradox can be that elected officials within local

government may be focused on making decisions that are in essence about their own short term needs and not those of the longer term needs of the constituents that they represent.

According to Tonn (1999, p. 349), individuals will need to:

develop a heightened state of consciousness about one's community based responsibilities and a substantial broadening of one's concept of community and sustainability that encompasses all people and life into the very distant future is they are to become sustainable.

Hence, communities will need to be empowered so as to re-engage in the responsibility for their own futures. Communities will constantly need to re-define the official images of their futures and be given the power, control and opportunity to create alternative community futures.

The notion of community empowerment is central to the concept of community and sustainability. Empowerment, according to Ife (2002, p. 53), aims to 'increase the power of the disadvantaged'. Empowerment of the disadvantage is achieved by 'giving power and control to the individual or groups' (ibid p. 53). If political experts, political parties or local government bureaucrats exclude or limit communities from government decision making processes, then communities are disadvantaged. According to Bezold (1978, p. 23), 'representative democracy supports a process of community being planned upon' and communities are 'seldom consulted or engaged for ideas about their future'. Thus, representative democracy could be seen as being situated in a context of pluralist, elite and structural perspectives of power.

The challenge is to situate a context of empowerment across all perspective of power, so as to find multiple applications and uses of power across society. Translating the concept of empowerment across the four perspectives of power can greatly assist with the development of empowerment strategies for sustainability. This means according to Ife (2002, p. 56) that from a pluralists perspective, empowerment is about 'teaching people how to compete with the rules of society' (ibid, p. 56). From an elite perspective, empowerment is 'showing people how to influence and form alliances' (ibid p. 56); from a structural perspective, empowerment is about learning 'how to question and challenge oppressive structures' (ibid p. 56); and from a poststructuralist perspective, empowerment is about 'learning how to change the discourse, meanings and

understandings' (ibid p. 56). Hence, by situating the concept of empowerment, communities, politicians and government institutions can become innovative with the sharing of power with the context of representative democracy.

2.4.4 Anticipatory democracy: An emerging democracy

In Chapter 1, Dator's (2006, p. 63) definition of democracy was adopted:

Democracy is a form and process of governance that allows each person affected by the actions of an entity, a continuous and equal opportunity to influence actions of that entity.

Accordingly, new types of democracy are emerging in our societies. These are:

- e-democracy;
- deepening democracy;
- consensus democracy;
- deliberative or active democracy; and
- anticipatory democracy.

The rise of each of these forms of democracy can reflect a challenge or symptom of concern with the use of power and representative democracy. Most notable has been the greater emergence of anticipatory democracy (Bezold, 1978). The simplest definition of anticipatory democracy (AD) is:

A process for combining citizen participation with future consciousness... anticipatory democracy is, to put it another way, the fusion of freedom and futures (Toffler 1978, p. 7).

The main aims of an AD, according to Glenn (1978 p. 252), are to create processes or opportunities that are:

- *future orientated;*
- *purposeful;*
- *contextual;*
- *participatory;*

- *include depth of study; and*
- *integrity based.*

In planning terms, the concept of AD challenges the planner's worldviews of having to be the experts and the idea that there can only be one master plan or vision for the future. AD is about the creation of a new process for decision making in matters relating to the planning of the future (Bezold 1978, p.14). AD is not an end in itself, rather it is a process by which people are empowered to make decisions about their future. The difference between AD and representative democracy is the use of power when making decisions about the future. In representative democracy the elected few make decisions on behalf of the wider collective, and so few decide what will be the official version of the future. Consequently, representative democracy excludes and disadvantages the majority in the decision making process and decisions on the future. Thus, representative democracy which, according to Inayatullah (2004, p.57) argues that 'the politics of language can afford to describe a future for those privileged by its definitions and meaning', will advantage those who would be advantaged by such official versions and leave the rest disempowered and disadvantaged by such official versions.

Alternatively, AD has a key focus with the idea of people becoming involved in the politics of the/their future. AD approaches that use futures studies and foresight methods can be seen as challenging representative democracy. These methods attempt to return the power of decision making processes relating to the images and official version of the future back in the hands of the community.

2.5 Local government challenges and responses

There are many emerging challenges for local governments and their relationship with the concept of community, visioning the future and community empowerment. This section explores the discussion on local government responses to these issues through the concepts of social planning, capacity building, community engagement and community development.

Local governments will require a paradigm shift from an inherently conflict-focussed, regulatory based response, to a more participatory and partnered response if they are to avoid the consequences of past, current and future decisions that result in

community non-sustainability. Accordingly, Elgin (2000) argues that the motivation for using futures studies as a means to develop foresight has never been so vital given the need to discover sustainable solutions to pending local and global issues.

From an Australian perspective, some local governments within South East Queensland have recognised the need to use futures studies and foresight methods within their planning processes and have started to empower communities through the use of an anticipatory democracy framework. Several local governments (councils) in Queensland have commenced long term community visioning and urban land use planning exceeding twenty years into the future, including Brisbane City Council's 'Our shared vision: living in Brisbane 2026', Logan City Council's 'Logan 2026: City directions', and more recently Toowoomba City Council's 'Toowoomba 2050 Vision' and the Gold Coast City Council's 'Bold Futures'.

These projects are attempts to empower the community in the decision making processes with matters pertaining to planning a sustainable future. However, local governments have also embraced other more contemporary concepts of social planning, community development and community engagement. These concepts are expanded on below.

2.5.1.1 Social planning

Social planning frameworks recognise that a mix of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors impact on community wellbeing outcomes. According to Menzies (2002, p. 3) these can be described in terms of liveability, conviviality, equity, adequate prosperity, sustainability, and viability. Local government's role in providing facilities and services which meet the social as well as the physical needs of local communities, is long established in Queensland (Stone & Hughes 2002). The need to plan, as well as provide community services, has become considerably more important in recent years.

Social planning is central to the growing role of local government. According to Menzies (2002, p. 4), five long-term trends in the role of local government have been important in bringing social planning to the fore. These are:

- The promotion of integrated, multidisciplinary planning by all spheres of government. Local government is in the best position to coordinate and facilitate such planning at the local level.

- Community development is increasingly recognised as a key role of local government.
- The increasing demand for local community services means that integrated planning of community services and facilities is necessary for using resources fairly and efficiently.
- The move by councils into corporate planning has encouraged them to develop a holistic vision for their communities.
- Councils want outcomes, which reflect social considerations (community wellbeing outcomes) in carrying out statutory responsibilities in preparing planning schemes as well as through development assessment.

Thus, social, economic and environmental issues need to be considered within the context of local government planning and policymaking. Queensland's *Integrated Planning Act* (1997) has particular relevance to social planning. Core objectives of the Act relate to an integrated approach to planning and a requirement to enhance community participation and consultation by local councils. Social planning is therefore a core responsibility for local governments and integral to effective community governance.

Menzies (2003, p. 5) further argues that there are a number of arenas in planning and policy where the use of social planning is growing. These include, urban design, development assessment, local area planning, issue based planning, community facilities planning, human services planning, corporate planning, land-use planning schemes, council policy development, regional planning, and input into State and Commonwealth policies and programs. Thus, there is an increasing emphasis within Queensland on the consideration of social factors in decision making processes. As a result, there has been a call from within local councils to bring community development activities into line with social planning and public participation initiatives.

2.5.1.2 Community development

Community development intervenes in the social structures of society. It is in a conceptual sense a form of politics. The aim of community development is to create structures that facilitate democratic participation in the decision making process (Kenny 1999, p.8). Community development is based on a commitment to empower people in such a way that they have real options for their futures. Community development can involve new ways of viewing and organising social relations. At the more extreme end,

Mathews (1989 cited in Kenny 1999, p. 14) describes the emergence of a new industrial relations system based on what he calls associated democracy, which can be about communities reaching for self-determination. Thus, for Kenny (1999, p.8), community development refers to:

The process, tasks, practices and visions for empowering communities to take collective responsibility for their own development. The aim of community development is to enable communities to have effective control over their own destinies. Community development is based on a commitment to the empowerment of the ordinary people.

Hence, community development implies developing a community's capacity by unwrapping potential (Muirhead 2002). Although the concept of community development is not new, contemporary practices require new approaches to transform the existing paradigm, from one based on a strong social justice and service delivery mentality to one driven by the need to empower the community. Another definition, provided by Ife (1995, p.131), states that:

The definition of the term "community development" is to re-establish the community as the location of significant human experience and the meeting of human need, rather than rely on the larger, more inhuman and less accessible structures of the welfare state, the global economy, bureaucracy, professional elites, and so on.

The principles associated with community development within the context of local government are expanded by Ross (2003) who states that 'local councils will need to continually base all community development activities upon the following principles':

- Confront the structurally disadvantaged;
- Let the community define its own needs for the present and future;
- Empower, and link people to the politics of planning;
- Ensure community ownership, self-reliance, and self-efficacy;
- Create developments at a pace decided by community; and
- Ensure inclusiveness and co-operation.

These principles support the concepts of AD and can be integrated into community futures and social capital approaches.

The major goals for community development workers in local government, according to Wills (2001) are to:

- Build a strong and self-reliant community.
- Have a council responsive to community needs.
- Coordinate and make links between the community and other spheres of government to meet the current and future needs of the community.
- Encourage equity of access and opportunity for all members of the community to participate in all community activities.

Although the concept of community development is not new to local government, contemporary practices require new approaches to transform the existing paradigm. According to the proceedings of the National Local Government Community Development Association (2003), local governments need to transform their community development approaches to align with the goals of strong social justice, ecology, sustainability and the empowerment of the community.

The definitions of community development imply that the role of community development workers is to facilitate the goal of community's becoming self-sustaining and empowered. That means community development work is aimed at developing a community's capacity to be self-sufficient, self-organising and self-responsible, and sustainable. The implications of community development work, according to Stone and Hughes (2002), are that local governments will need to assist communities to move towards self-efficacy. Local government approaches need to shift from a traditional role as compliance checkers or regulators to facilitators of change and collaborators. By recognising the benefits of increasing the level of involvement in community development, social planning and community engagement opportunities, local governments can transform themselves.

Other principles of community development are further expanded upon by Ross (2003), who states that 'local councils will need to continually base all community development activities upon the following principles':

- *Confront structural disadvantage;*
- *Let the community define its own needs;*
- *Empower, link people and politics;*
- *Ensure community ownership, self-reliance and self-efficacy;*

- *Create developments at a pace decided by community; and*
- *Ensure inclusiveness and co-operation (Ross 2003).*

Thus, the major goals of community development in local government according to Wills (2001) are:

- *Build a strong and self-reliant community;*
- *Have a council responsive to community needs;*
- *Coordinate and make links between the community and other spheres of government to meet the needs of the community; and*
- *Encourage equity of access and opportunity for all members of the community to participate in community activities.*

Community development can greatly assist local government strategies for the creation of sustainable communities. By developing community capacity and community 'know-how', communities are better positioned to respond to and actively engage in the problem solving and decision making processes. Such opportunities can increase the likelihood that communities will follow through with the building of just, vibrant and sustainable communities.

2.5.1.3 Community engagement

At the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) 2002 National Agenda, People and Community conference, it was suggested that in their roles, 'Local government recognises the need for efficient and effective provision of services which are flexible, culturally appropriate and equitable. It will foster strong community participation in service planning and implementation' (Australian Local Government Association 2002). Hence, in seeking to develop appropriate responses local governments initiated community engagement frameworks and programs. The intention of the frameworks and programs was to create a whole of government thinking towards community engagement; clearly, within these frameworks and programs, local government, because of its closeness to the community, is often seen as the lead agency for community engagement practices.

Local level frameworks have been developed to align with other international models and frameworks on engagement. The most notable community engagement framework is that of the International Association of Public Participation (2005) which specifies five

levels of engagement: inform; consult; involve; collaborate; and empower. Individual councils in Queensland have developed individual community engagement frameworks and toolkits based on the International Association of Public Participation model.

Traditionally, community engagement methods in local government have formed the basis for extracting and identifying community attitudes in the development of infrastructure, generally on isolated issues. The main purpose of community engagement in local government was to function as the last step in a problem solving process, just prior to a decision be made by elected councillors. Existing local government approaches suggest that the main motivation for engaging the community has been to fulfil a legislative requirement and provide the opportunity to confirm the pre-determined decision or strategy. It was assumed in many local government planning circles that the community lacked the necessary expertise, intellect or knowledge to contribute meaningful feedback. The idea of involving the community would tend to be limited to informing only.

Most problems occur in community engagement situations where there is a mismatch between the method of engagement and the complexity of the issue or decision. If there is a complex decision to be resolved and potential for a high level of impact on the community from the decision but low methods of engagement are utilised, there is an increased and elevated risk for conflict to arise between the engager and the engaged when it comes to implementation of the decision. In the case of local government planning and visioning exercises, historical practices suggest that this has been the cause of many community versus local government conflicts.

2.6 Community visioning

Local governments are now responding to the litany of emerging issues around sustainability, specifically issues pertaining to growth and the declining levels of environmental and social capital. However Elgin (2000) argues that:

we cannot build a future consciously if we have not imagined it first, without a hopeful future to work towards, people will tend to focus on the short term and withdraw into protected inner worlds.

The challenge for community visioning practices is to encourage communities to move beyond their immediate focus on roads, rates and rubbish, or the politician's perspective, to how to anticipate a probable future.

Still, community visioning is gaining popularity as a method for local governments to increase the level of community involvement with the creation of sustainable communities (Gould 2005). However, in their attempt to create sustainable futures, local governments are still only engaging the community to test the visions developed against the official version of the experts and politicians worldviews of the future. This approach can still leave the community disadvantaged.

Community visioning success can be greatly improved through the inclusion of futures studies methods. Futures studies methods can create an opportunity to build capacity to move beyond anticipated futures and increase the opportunity for the development of alternative visions and scenarios for the future. Engaging the collective community in the identification of issues, trends, drivers, probable scenarios and visions, creates a more representative articulation of the preferred futures. The community can, thereby, actively challenge the official version of the future or at least influence possible adaptations. The use of futures studies methods in community visioning empowers the community from multiple power perspectives, thus increasing the likelihood that the community will be able to influence the planning and policy-making decisions that directly affect them. In the long term, insights and perspectives gained by exploring community visioning are expected to provide local governments with a framework for transformational change. The main criticism of community visioning is the lack of resourcing and the failure to follow visioning with responsive implementation (Gould 2005).

2.7 Summary

This chapter provided the various definitions used to describe the concepts behind the terms futures studies, sustainability and community. Initially, the literature review explained the foundations of futures studies, the context of sustainability, local government planning, types of democracy, power and decision making and community engagement approaches. The literature discussed these themes in a variety of separate yet interconnecting themes. The aim of this literature review is to focus the

reader on the interconnectedness of the themes to the research questions and to establish a context for the Maroochy 2025 case study.

The Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project is presented in the next chapter as an action learning research project. This project demonstrates the effects of integrating futures studies methods into a community visioning process. It also represents an alternate model of community visioning engagement for assessment by local government planners and community development workers when considering their own approaches to community visioning.

3. Futures studies methods, Maroochy 2025 project outline and research methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the applied futures studies methods used throughout the Maroochy 2025 case study and presents the triangulation method of analysis used for this thesis. The chapter is separated into six sections to provide the reader with a detailed insight to the Maroochy 2025 case study. The next section (3.2) outlines the context of the research setting and how the case study has been situated with a community engagement framework. Section 3.3 presents the background, rationale and context for Maroochy 2025. Section 3.4 presents an introduction to the applied futures studies theoretical perspectives and approaches used for Maroochy 2025, specifically discussing Inayatullah's futures studies framework (2005).

The methodology used in each stage of Maroochy 2025 is discussed in detail in section 3.5. Section 3.6 presents an introduction to the triangulation method of analysis, including details on the poststructuralist theoretical approach of causal layered analysis (CLA), including the details of the researcher's applied futures studies questionnaire. Finally section 3.6 outlines the data collection methods used in each stage of Maroochy 2025 including the researcher's questionnaire.

3.2 Situating the research

This research is situated in a local government authority in South East Queensland, Australia, Maroochy Shire Council. Local governments in their role of managing issues and planning for the future have recently embraced the concepts and approaches of community engagement and sustainable development. This is in line with the recommendations of the Australian Local Government Association's National Agenda (2002), People and Community, in terms of inclusivity and transparency regarding planning for a sustainable future.

Nevertheless, in adopting such concepts and approaches, local governments are being faced with a rise in community expectations for local governments to implement the results of such engagement (Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4). In Maroochy

Shire, some councillors stated to the researcher that the nature of representative democracy is being undermined by community engagement approaches; political leaders see themselves as having all the necessary legitimacy to consult without needing to accept or implement the results of such consultation. Consequently, a litany of emergent issues has been raised by the Maroochy Shire Councillors for the electoral period 2004–2008 regarding the value of such practices. In addition, in the context of community planning and futures studies, local governments are seen by the researcher as creating the official version of a community's future rather than a future developed and designed by the community. The question being asked by the researcher is “who is advantaged and or disadvantaged by such versions of the future?”.

Inayatullah (2004, p.57) argues that ‘language colludes or is complicit in power and privilege’. Individuals privileged by status or elected position in local government determine the image and definitions of the future while knowing who will be privileged by its definitions. Consequently, the politics of language finds its way into communities and community visioning activities. Community visioning results may seem only to matter if definitions of the future created by a community vision align with the administrator's pre-determined and official version for the future. Given the politics surrounding planning and decision making, it seems that community visioning results that conflict with the official version may become problematic for the councillors and the local government bureaucracy.

3.2.1 Research background

The research background for this thesis is the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project, an exercise facilitated and enacted by Maroochy Shire Council. Maroochy 2025 was Council's response to several key external and internal drivers that were seen to be shaping the future of Maroochy Shire. The first of these drivers was a rapid and increasing migration of people into South East Queensland, the Sunshine Coast and specifically Maroochy Shire. South East Queensland has been identified as one of the fastest growing population areas in Australia (Department of Local Government, Planning & Sport & Recreation 2001).

Secondly, from an internal perspective, Maroochy Shire Council had introduced new corporate functions, specifically the concept of social planning. This led to the recruitment of a social planner to Maroochy Shire Council. The introduction of the social planning function resulted in planners' conceptualising how to accommodate and

integrate social, environmental and economic planning in urban land use planning disciplines. Another function introduced to council was that of corporate planning. Between these two new functions, an expanded dialogue on broader planning approaches led to the establishment of an integrated planning team (eventually to be called the Maroochy 2025 Project Team) to develop holistic planning frameworks, projects and initiatives for the Shire Council.

Thirdly, in 2001, the then Chief Executive Officer of Maroochy Shire Council contracted the professional services of Professor Sohail Inayatullah, a leading academic in futures studies, to facilitate a series of futures studies seminars. The researcher was a participant in these seminars. The purpose of the seminars was to introduce the organisational management team to futures studies concepts with a view to possibly applying the concepts to future local government planning activities, including the possibility of using foresight techniques and methods to enhance the next corporate planning process prior to the forthcoming local government elections.

Queensland local government elections are held every four years and after each election the incoming elected Maroochy Shire Councillors are required by the *Local Government Act 2007*, to complete a Corporate Plan for the purpose of guiding the decision making processes, actions and annual budget expenditure during their term of office. The Corporate Plan is the Council's policy platform. Its purpose is to guide decision making processes, actions and annual budget expenditure during the Council's term of office. As is customary, when developing Maroochy Shire Council's Corporate Plans, the inclusion of a vision is designed to communicate aspirations for those to whom the plan relates. However, what becomes problematic for the community is that the vision is primarily based on the Maroochy Shire Councillors vision for the future and essentially the Corporate Plan vision became the Maroochy Shire Council's official version of the future (Maroochy Shire Council 2005–2009). Preparations for the next Maroochy Shire Council's Corporate Plan had commenced in early 2002 with the view of using futures studies methods to develop the next vision for Maroochy Shire Council.

The futures studies seminars provided an opportunity for Maroochy Shire Council's management team to explore and question their assumptions relating to Maroochy Shire Council's future, and more broadly, Maroochy Shire's future. Throughout the futures studies seminars, the Maroochy Shire Council management team became

familiar in the use of the many futures studies methods. The outcome from the seminars led to the development of four possible scenarios for Maroochy Shire. These scenarios were based on four main archetypical scenario constructs which included a 'business as usual scenario' a 'growth mania scenario', a 'collapse/nightmare scenario' followed by a 'transformational scenario'. By undertaking the scenario development exercises, the Maroochy Shire Council management team could see the value and benefit of the use of futures studies for improving their levels of strategic thinking.

The evaluation of the seminars and scenarios concluded that the use of futures studies approaches and methods was advantageous in creating an integrated and sustainable planning framework for Maroochy Shire Council. Additionally, the evaluation highlighted that through the development of a sustainable planning framework, the framework could provide a context in which to situate community visioning concepts. The seminars led to a shift in the foundational thinking and identification of the benefits that futures studies could bring to Maroochy Shire Council's planning processes. Thus, the seminars greatly assisted in a decision being made by the management team to use futures studies as a preferred method to achieve a community vision. Consequently, Maroochy Shire Council's management team decided to start the Maroochy 2025 project in early 2002.

The Chief Executive Officer and his executive management team stipulated that the aim of Maroochy 2025 would be to create an inclusive Shire-wide vision, representative of Maroochy Shire community's preferences and aspirations for their future. The vision/s would then be used to assist in the development of the next Maroochy Shire Council Corporate Plan. Specifically, the community would be asked to develop and choose a preferred scenario, vision, strategies and actions. This decision by the executive management team to use futures studies and start the Maroochy 2025 project complemented one of the main thrusts of the futures studies field: to embed futures studies and futures studies research in real world settings and policy making processes.

A fourth key driver which led to the development of the Maroochy 2025 project was the support received by Maroochy Shire Council from the Queensland Department of Health towards funding another Health Plan for Maroochy Shire Council. This created an opportunity for Maroochy Shire Council to discuss the broadening of the terms of reference to support the use of these funds for the development a community vision

and action plan. It was agreed that the funds could be used for developing a community vision and a plan that addressed future health related issues. Consequently, approval was granted in April 2002 by the Queensland Department of Health and a grant for \$10,000 awarded to support Maroochy 2025.

The combined effects of these events led the Chief Executive Officer to submit a proposal to Council to commission a project team to develop a community wide twenty-year vision. Maroochy Shire Council endorsed the proposal in June 2002, signalling the official approval to start the Maroochy 2025 project.

The researcher was and is still employed by Maroochy Shire Council in the capacity of Strategic Community Engagement Officer. The researcher has been in the employ of Maroochy Shire Council for seven years and performed various roles and functions in the corporate areas of Maroochy Shire Council, including having responsibility for corporate planning, organisational development and community engagement. As a result of these responsibilities and his recognised skill in strategic planning, organisational development and futures studies, the researcher was selected to be part of the Maroochy 2025 Project Team. The researcher attended all the initial futures studies seminars held by Maroochy Shire Council in 2002 and was inspired to undertake post graduate studies in applied futures studies. Consequently, as a result of being accepted to complete a Master by Research, the researcher decided to use Maroochy 2025 as the focus for completing a research thesis.

3.2.2 Maroochy Shire Council's public participation model

To assist in the integration of an accepted model of public participation into the Maroochy 2025 project framework, the Project Team was to incorporate the principles of the Maroochy Shire Council public participation model (see Figure 3.1, from Maroochy Shire Council). This model had been developed based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Model. According to the Association (International Association of Public Participation 2005, p. 8), public participation is: 'Any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions'. In the IAP2 Model, there are five levels of engagement. These levels are:

- Information;
- Consultation;

- Involvement;
- Collaboration; and
- Empowerment.

Each level increases the level of public impact and participation goals change accordingly, with the promise to the public increasing to the point of implementing the public decision. The Maroochy Shire Council Public Participation Guidelines (2005) were designed on the IAP2 model; hence the framework provides a guide for all public participation activities in Maroochy Shire Council. Considering the Maroochy Shire Council Public Participation Guidelines, the Project Team chose to engage the public at an empowerment level, with the aim of creating an inclusive visioning outcome.

| Information | Different Levels of Public Participation | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| | Consultation | Active Participation | | |
| | | Involvement | Collaboration | Empowerment |
| PURPOSE To provide the public with balanced and objective information on Council decisions, policies, plans and strategies. | PURPOSE To obtain public feedback on analysis and alternatives to inform a decision. | PURPOSE To work directly with the public so that community concerns are consistently understood and considered. | PURPOSE To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision process – including the development of alternatives and identification of a solution. | PURPOSE To place a final decision in the hands of the community. |
| MESSAGE to the public "We will keep you informed" | MESSAGE to the public "We are willing to take your views into account and use the information you provide us in shaping our decisions" | MESSAGE to the public "We will work alongside you so that your views are reflected in the issues identified and the options developed" | MESSAGE to the public "We will partner with you in formulating and implementing solutions to agreed problems" | MESSAGE to the public "We will resource you (the community) with the authority and resources to make your own decisions" |
| OUTCOME Community is informed and therefore better able to contribute to Council participation processes. | OUTCOME Community concerns are listened to and acknowledged and feedback is provided about how public input influenced the decision. | OUTCOME Community concerns and ideas are reflected in the options developed and feedback is provided about how public input influenced the decision. | OUTCOME Council actively seeks community advice and incorporates into decision to maximum possible extent. | OUTCOME Council implements what community decides . |
| Example Tools • Community education programs eg WaterWise • Fact Sheets • Websites • Maroochy In Focus | Example Tools • Focus Groups • Public Meetings • Survey • Public comment eg. submissions | Example Tools • Workshops • Working groups • Task Force | Example Tools • Partnership mechanisms • Advisory Boards • Joint Ventures | Example Tools • Ballots • Delegated decisions • Council to community hand-over with resources |

Figure 3.1. Maroochy Shire Council Public Participation Guidelines

3.2.3 The role of the researcher

The role of the researcher was as one of the two main facilitators for Maroochy 2025. The researcher was be part of the Project Team for stages 1 and 2, and was the Project Manager for stages 3 and 4 of Maroochy 2025. Accordingly, due to these roles, the researcher was able to record and evaluate the case study in real time application and observe the Maroochy 2025 from an applied futures studies and anticipatory action learning perspective. In later stages of the project, the researcher was the main author of the Maroochy 2025 publication, specifically volumes one and three and co-editor on volume two of the Maroochy 2025 publication (Gould & Daffara, eds 2005). The publication can be found at www.maroochy2025.net.

3.3 Context of the Maroochy 2025 Community visioning case study

Maroochy 2025 is a combination of many events, people and cultural artefacts. It is a document, a process, a framework, and an action plan. It has been an evolving form of community engagement and applied futures studies. It was a community visioning project intended to increase the quality of life for Maroochy Shire residents both now and into the future. Most of all, it was an opportunity to develop new levels of empowerment, knowledge, and trust, between local government and the wider community.

Maroochy 2025 was specifically designed to improve and expand current community capacity levels in foresight; to increase individual and collective (organisational) efficiency and confidence in dealing with the challenges of understanding and planning for the future. Thus, the Maroochy 2025 processes were about actively engaging the community with tools, opportunity and methods on how to question their future.

Thus, it was decided by the Maroochy 2025 Project Team that the preferred technique for an empowering community engagement method was the recruitment of a 32-member Community Task Force (CTF). The CTF was charged with the responsibility to develop the Maroochy 2025 vision. During this period the researcher was on the Maroochy 2025 steering committee, however, due to the high costs of recruiting an external facilitator for the CTF, it was decided to appoint the researcher, along with Dr Philip Daffara (a planner from Maroochy Shire Council) to be the principal facilitators of

the CTF. In designing the methods for facilitating the 32-member Community Task Force, and considering that the researcher was studying futures studies, the researcher and Dr Philip Daffara decided to facilitate the CTF through an applied futures framework and utilise anticipatory action learning methods as a means to accomplish the project objectives.

3.3.1 Maroochy 2025 as a strategy for managing Maroochy Shire's future

The changes that accompany the forecast population growth anticipated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) would eventually affect every Maroochy Shire community member in some way. Thus, it became an imperative to find ways of managing the drivers of change that could produce undesirable futures. Maroochy 2025 was designed specifically so that the community and Maroochy Shire Council could plan and actually anticipate, direct, and engage with each other in determining an agreed future, thereby sharing the joint responsibility for creating such a future.

An early strategy in the project was to determine the level of thinking and assumptions held by the CTF members and the Maroochy 2025 Project Team using the futures studies landscape method. This four level method (jungle; chess set; mountain tops and sun/star perspectives) enabled the participants' assumptions to be mapped. Considering that Maroochy 2025 was aiming to develop a long term vision, the Maroochy 2025 Project Team decided to facilitate the movement of the CTF assumptions and thinking from the survival, jungle level to the star level.

Consequently, the project was managed and deployed methods that supported the star level. Accordingly, the researcher and Dr Philip Daffara (Maroochy 2025 facilitator) used strategies during the CTF facilitation to shift the thinking up to the sun/star level. To support this strategy from a cultural perspective, the Project Team developed the Maroochy 2025 project logo to communicate the intent of the star level philosophy. The logo (Figure 3.4, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.49) was about communicating a clear message of a future community reaching for the sun/stars. The child in the Maroochy 2025 project logo represents tomorrow's community reaching for the vision today.



Figure 3.4. Cultural symbol of the Maroochy 2025 project branding. This logo signifies the intent of the project, 'To create a sustainable future for our children and their children's future.'

3.3.2 Community requests for involved decision making

Shaping the future may appear attractive, so much so that some individuals pursue a full-time career in planning or futurising the future. Politicians, planners, and futurists alike regularly design and communicate visions. However, more and more communities desire to become involved in determining their future. Maroochy Shire's residents have long expressed their determination to have a say in the decisions that directly affect their lives based on the researcher's observations from the many headlines in the local papers. Maroochy 2025 was created as one method for the community to have a stronger say in their future.

Empowering community engagement principles were the cornerstone of the Maroochy 2025 project and processes. The project and processes endeavoured to determine the community's opinions and aspirations about their future, and to build the level of social capital to empower communities within the Shire to take responsibility for activities that facilitated the implementation of their preferred visions for the future of their region.

As a custodian of the Shire's future, Maroochy Shire Council partnered with the Maroochy Shire community to co-create aspirations for the Maroochy community. This was achieved through the recruitment of a Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force (CTF). The purpose was to get a balanced representation of the community to create the vision, thus ensuring that the vision was community owned and representative of the community. The deeper intention was to enshrine and communicate a belief that

the community could become an active creator of its own future, rather than a passive receiver.

3.3.3 Maroochy 2025 as an agent of change

The project itself is unique for the reason that it represented an opportunity to utilise futures studies method and anticipatory action learning on a large real world project. Secondly, through the use of foresight methods, Maroochy 2025 created an opportunity to return the power of deciding the Maroochy Shire's future back into the hands of the community. This was evident from the results of the pre Maroochy 2025 community visioning workshop, where the community participants was asked whether there was a need to do such large scale visioning. It was established that 95 percent of the more than 100 workshop participants believed that Maroochy Shire needed a shared community vision. Preferred methods of community engagement were defined at this workshop.

Building on the results from this community visioning priming workshop (Maroochy Shire Council 2003b), it was determined that the community was very much open to the idea of questioning their future. It was then concluded by the Project Team that the timing was right to re-negotiate existing pathways to the future. Additionally, Maroochy 2025 provided a valuable means for the Maroochy Shire Council staff to up-skill Council staff and revise standards in community engagement.

3.3.4 Maroochy 2025 objectives

There were both short term and long term objectives essential to the achievement of developing a vision. These were the:

- Education of community participants in visioning techniques;
- Identification of key drivers of change affecting the Shire;
- Development of key focus areas to support the visioning discussions;
- Creation of the probable scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025;
- Development of four scenarios for Maroochy's future;
- Development of preferred visions;
- Development of a five-year Community Action Plan for Maroochy 2025's vision goals;

- Synergising outcomes of Maroochy 2025 into the Maroochy Shire Council 2005–2009 Corporate Plan; and
- Establishment of a Maroochy Visioning Implementation Committee.

In the long term the objectives were:

- Synergise planning and actions from regional perspectives;
- Build on the community's engagement capacities;
- Ongoing engagement in anticipatory action learning experiments pertaining to the Maroochy 2025 vision and actions;
- Manage ongoing future orientated planning and partnerships between local government and the community;
- Further empower Maroochy's community to implement the Maroochy 2025 strategies and actions; and
- Evolve the concept of community visioning as a way of life in Maroochy Shire

3.4 Theoretical perspectives — applied futures studies

To assist with the further understanding of the methods used in Maroochy 2025, this section will provide an overview of the theoretical constructs behind futures studies. All futures studies methods of analysis are useful as conceptual tools to deconstruct and reconstruct the future (Inayatullah 2002). Futures studies aim for a level of analysis that is layered, from both a deep and shallow perspective and as a result tends to be a transformative process for individuals involved. Inayatullah (2002, p.192) states that there are four main categories of futures studies research approaches. These are 'predictive futures, cultural futures (some may call this interpretative futures) critical futures and more recently anticipatory action learning futures'. The particular approaches used in futures studies differ between each futures studies theorist and practitioner. However, in applied futures studies, it is preferable to use multiple approaches for the purpose of education, strategy formulation and capacity development by the participants.

3.4.1 Overview of methods used in each futures studies research approaches

Predictive futures research methods focus on controlling and knowing the future. Knowledge of the future is based upon the official version or current discourse about the future. This approach, according to Inayatullah (2002, p.7), relies on methods of forecasting and prediction. The image of the future is based on the assumption that the universe is deterministic and that the future can be known based on our assumptions of today. Forecasting and prediction methods are expressed in a linear timeline and current knowledge on the issues or elements being discussed are extrapolated out on a trajectory path into the future. These trajectories rely on the assumption that the current drivers of change are highly likely to remain constant and thus the trajectory has a high probability of being realised. The message of predictive futures is that the past will show us the way to the future. The predictive futures approach involves the use of such methods as shared history, the futures triangle and emerging issues analysis. These methods are explained in section 3.2.3 below.

An interpretative futures research approach suggests that the truth about the future is relative to how it is situated in the context of culture and language. Both, according to Inayatullah (2002, p.8), are intimately involved in creating the real. Interpretative futures methods focus on identifying individual and cultural values in the present, including the identification of values that may be held in the future. The goal is to explore the comparisons, contradictions and impacts of values, language and meanings regarding images of the future. The essence of interpretative futures is to understand those values and cultures which have been colonised and those which have not even been considered in the debate about the future.

Critical futures studies research approaches are designed to disturb the official structures that make language and its meanings possible. According to Inayatullah (2002, p.8), critical futures studies methods are situated in poststructural concepts with the main aim to uncover the structures that shape official discourse about the future. Methods used from a critical futures perspective are designed to explore the politics of language and how such politics can describe a future for those privileged by its definitions. The key purposes of critical futures methods are to explore the consequences of predominant definitions of future issues and solutions from a layered perspective whilst discovering who or what is missing from such definitions. A

recommended method for use in critical futures is the causal layered analysis (CLA). Developed over many years by Inayatullah (1998), CLA is derived from post structural thinking, and as such provides a means to open up alternative ways of viewing the same issue from many perspectives. Inayatullah (2005, p.52) argues that analysis is based upon the assumption that the way one views a problem affects the solutions derived, hence, using multiple levels of analysis provides more robust solutions.

Anticipatory action learning research methods focus on mixing action learning research with a futures orientation. The assumption is that the future is open to continual questioning and our knowledge and reflections of the future can change accordingly. This means the existing pathways to the future can be re-negotiated. Anticipatory action learning futures methods differ from conventional action learning methods (Inayatullah 2005, p.132). Action learning futures is present based while anticipatory action learning futures is future based. Action learning methods include questioning of programmed knowledge, active experimentation and reflective learning. Similarly, in anticipatory action learning futures, the questioning process does not end once the alternative future is created. Rather, this method is about constantly questioning the official version of the future.

Each of the four futures studies approaches have specific application dependant on the type of research being undertaken. One approach is not necessarily better than another approach; rather preferred approaches are dependant on the needs of the environment, context and purpose. Ideally, the more one can use these different approaches simultaneously, the greater the opportunity to maximise the depth and breath of analysis and results on any given futures studies initiative.

3.4.2 Futures studies approaches selected for Maroochy 2025

Maroochy 2025 used three of the four futures studies research approaches: anticipatory, interpretative, and action learning research methods. The critical futures research method was used as a method of analysis to assess the research findings. Within each of the selected approaches for use during Maroochy 2025, a range of different futures studies methods was utilised for the purpose of mapping existing future images and issues, exploring alternative scenarios, and ultimately creating a community vision for Maroochy Shire.

3.4.3 Future studies framework for Maroochy 2025: Inayatullah's six pillars of applied futures studies

Developed by Inayatullah, the six pillars of futures studies framework provided an opportunity to manage the process of questioning the past, present and future meanings behind our images of the future in a logical and sequential way. According to Inayatullah (2005, p.199), the six pillars are:

- Mapping the future;
- Anticipating the future;
- Timing the future;
- Deepening the future;
- Creating alternatives; and
- Transforming the future.

Each of the six pillars is intended to provide a useful framework in which to explore, interpret and create alternative/preferred images of the future. In Maroochy 2025, the results from the use of each pillar in a logical sequence created a natural linkage to the next pillar. Maroochy 2025 adapted and used all six pillars for all stages of the project. A detailed description of the framework is provided below.

3.4.3.1 Mapping the future

The main requirement of the first pillar is to establish a starting point for discussion. Mapping the future has three parts. Firstly there is gathering the shared history of the community; secondly there is discerning the forces at play which are creating a particular type of future; and thirdly, the mapping seeks to situate the focus for the future in one of four levels in the 'futures landscape'. According to Inayatullah (2005, p.102), the 'shared history' method is the process of mapping and recognising key historical events from the past to the present. The purpose is to create an understanding by participants as to what created their current situation through recognition of past and present events. In shared history, the context is to explore what has happened, what has changed and, more importantly, what has not changed. The purpose of this exercise is to identify and validate what elements of the past existed,

and are being experienced in a community, that are continuing to influence the future. The method to perform this task is to create a timeline.

The second part to mapping the future is to identify those forces that shape or create a particular future. This can be done through the application of a 'futures triangle'. Inayatullah describes the futures triangle (2005, p.103) as moving our thinking from the present to mapping the forces of change that are creating the future. The process has three key dimensions — push, pull and the weight of the future (see Figure 3.2, from Inayatullah 2007, p.103). The 'push' or what is often referred to as key drivers of change, can include elements of technology, urbanisation, waste, energy and demographics. The 'push' of the present comprises those significant drivers that are recognised as creating or having a major influence on the outcomes for the future. For instance, in Maroochy Shire's case push factors included the changes in economic industries, demographic profiles, environmental degradation, energy consumption levels and population growth.

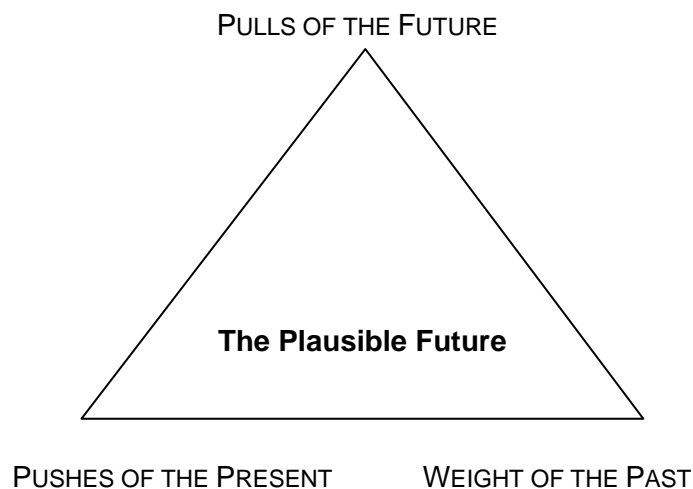


Figure 3.2. The futures triangle

The 'pull' is the official and sometimes feared image of the future. These images are often contested or contradictory images of the future and tend to conflict or compete to be labelled as the official version of the future. The pulls of the future are the various images of the future that are held by different stakeholders.

The 'weight of the past' includes those elements that resist the forces of change and can include organisational and societal structures, past histories and patterns of behaviour. The weights of the past are those elements within a community that are

difficult to change. The weights tend to be identified as macro patterns, structures of power, class and gender. Other weights tend to be embedded in ethnicity, values and recognised traditions.

The third part of mapping the future is to situate the focus for the future in one of four levels in the 'futures landscape' (see Inayatullah 2007, pp.24-25). The first level of the futures landscape is the 'jungle'. This level of focus is about approaching the future from a 'survival of the fittest' perspective. Perceived solutions to the issues in the future are about size, speed and smartness with technology, with the entrepreneurs being those who will save us in the future. The second level is a 'chess set' or strategy that focuses on the future. The aim is to plan for the future strategically and use contemporary concepts in organisational structure and design. It is about building one's organisation to strengthen the core competencies required for being a step ahead of the trends and emerging issues. The third level of the futures landscape is the 'mountain tops' — alternative futures. At this level, the focus of the debate on the future is about creating capacity and results from scenarios and foresight, with these methods assisting in clarifying alternatives and in the decision making processes pertaining to the creation of alternative futures. The final level in the futures landscape is the 'sun/star' perspective. This level situates our response to the future as a clear statement on the future that is detailed, enabling, ennobling and representing a clear vision of what is a preferred future. Mapping the future is an exercise in determining the level of awareness on current assumptions about the future.

3.4.3.2 *Anticipating the future*

The second pillar is anticipating the future in order to imagine the possible trajectory of current problems or issues and what future these issues might create. Anticipating the future is based on known assumptions, and as such does not challenge their validity. Rather, there seems to be a tendency to support them, especially if based upon an 'expert' version of a probable future scenario.

There are many methods for forecasting and prediction. One method is called 'emerging issues analysis'. Emerging issues analysis is an anticipating and disruptive method that focuses on moving our focus beyond the problems of the present to the identification of trends and emerging issues shaping the future. Developed by Molitor (1977, p.4), emerging issues analysis attempts to identify issues before they become

known. The aim of this method is to identify the origins of issues and attempt early interventions, thus preventing such issues from evolving into undesirable trends or problems. From a forecasting perspective, emerging issues analysis can be used to express how today's issues, if unchecked, might evolve into a probable scenario for the future. As a way to express emerging issues, trends and problems, the use of an 'S-curve' can map a selected issue from inception to problem status (Figure 3.3, from Inayatullah 2005, p.25). This analysis can potentially assist with developing interventions, which prevent an issue from evolving. However, this method of analysis, whilst useful in conjunction with other methods, can be problematic when used in isolation, as it assumes that the future is predictable and stable.

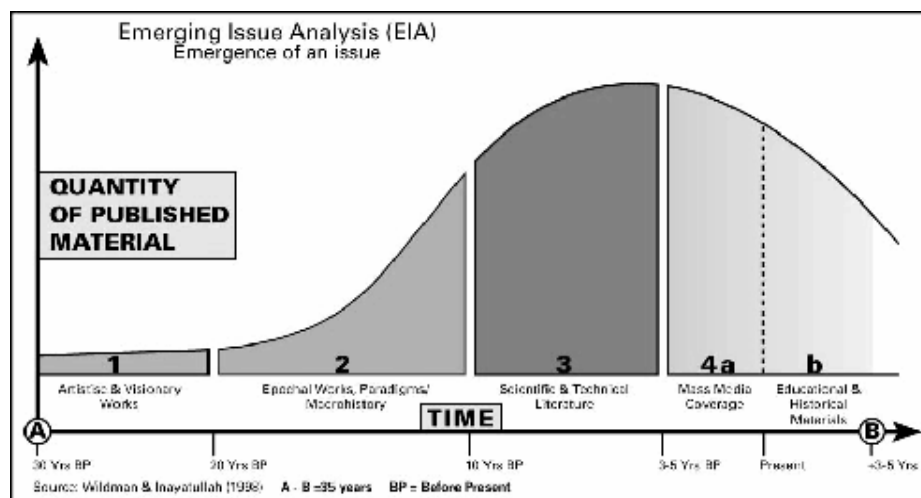


Figure 3.3. Emerging issues analysis

3.4.3.3 Timing the future — Macrohistory and patterns

The third pillar is timing the future. Timing is the use of macrohistory and the study of grand patterns of social change. According to Galtung and Inayatullah (1997, p.159) macrohistory is about: 'The study of a trajectory of a unit through time and the study of non contiguous points, neighbourhoods, and contexts, while searching for patterns, regularities and change'.

Developing an understanding of the historical social patterns of individuals, organisations, communities or even nations as a unit, can lead to our understanding as to their patterns of change, and which phase of the pattern is representative of current situations. This 'knowing where one is at' in the broader pattern, can be seen as useful in determining where one might be heading. Analysis focuses on how to develop

innovative and creative responses to the next stage within the pattern. The use of macro-history as a method can assist with creating opportunities to think more broadly in terms of how we move through time. As a method, it provides the opportunity to step back and distinguish the difference between regular disturbances and real transformations from a longer term view about the past, present and future (Inayatullah 2005, p.29).

3.4.3.4 Deepening the future

The fourth pillar is about deepening our ways to know the future. Here, the causal layered analysis (CLA) method is useful to deepen our understanding of the issues creating the future. The process of CLA works by selecting an issue and conceptually unpacking our understanding of the issue from four levels of perspective. The first level is the litany, followed by the social systems, viewing the issue through different worldviews, and finally, identification of the issue in terms of myth or metaphor. Further analysis can then be undertaken to find solutions at each level of analysis. From here, scenarios can be developed. Our understanding of the future is thus deepened through our ability to open up ways of viewing the same issue from many perspectives or ways of knowing. CLA is further explained in the methods of analysis section later in this chapter.

3.4.3.5 Creating alternatives

The fifth pillar explores the means to create alternative futures. Alternative futures methods explore and expand the concept that there is more than one image of the future. Alternative futures methods are based on scenario development. According to Inayatullah (2005, p.146), scenarios can offer us a choice: an alternative image as a means to motivate and stimulate action to create such images. Scenarios for individuals, organisations, and communities, develop and provide a capacity for change, or for a sense of empowerment that was otherwise lacking. Scenarios help us clarify what should change during our lifetime, what effects this may have on us, and what alternatives we need to consider. In this sense, scenarios serve as an early warning mechanism.

Scenarios tend to be constructed from social, technological, economic, environmental and political views about what the future is likely to contain. Dator (2002, p.10) describes these perspectives as archetypes. These archetypes are expressed as:

- a. Continued growth along current lines;
- b. Collapse;
- c. Disciplined society; and
- d. Transformation or outlier.

Scenarios have the ability to create the space for recognition and mapping of the uncertainties pertaining to the future. Hence, scenarios have the purpose of trying to manage the level of risk associated with the possible consequences of *not* managing such uncertainties. There are many methods to construct scenarios that accordingly lead to different types of scenarios being developed. Some of these types outlined by Inayatullah (2005, p.219) are:

- Single driver scenarios;
- Double driver scenarios;
- Organisational scenarios;
- Classical typology scenarios;
- World scenarios;
- Contradiction scenarios;
- Causal layered analysis scenarios; and
- Anticipatory scenarios (derived from emerging issues analysis).

Scenarios highlight contrasts or contestability (tensions) between different images of the future. Out of these contrasts, image-rich alternative futures can be developed and a preferred scenario established. Subsequently, by aligning our preferred images of the future with specific strategies and actions, we can work towards creating a preferred future.

3.4.3.6 Transforming the future: Anticipatory action learning

Finally the sixth pillar explores ways to transform the future through questioning and active experimentation. Transforming the future firstly is a process that involves the creation of a particular vision for the future, preferably derived from a preferred

scenario. According to Inayatullah (2005, p.223), there are three ways visioning, imagination and imagining the future can be facilitated. These are:

1. Logical imagination (extrapolation of current trends to show their absurdity).
2. Critical imagination (searching for the structural weaknesses of an existing state of affairs).
3. Creative imagination (breaking radically with prevalent concepts about the future).

All three methods are enable users to achieve a vision, although the third method suggests a stretching of our concept of the future into new and innovative dimensions, thus creating the possibility of creating transformational visions.

The second part of transforming the future involves back-casting. The aim of back-casting is to connect the vision to the present day in terms of time and space. Back-casting can identify the key milestones and indicators that help to define manageable chunks of time and events that collectively contribute to the achievement of the vision.

The final part of transforming the future involves anticipatory action learning experimentation. The aim of anticipatory action learning is similar to action learning that uses reflection and programmed knowledge, yet it includes the added dimension of questioning the futures constantly. The purpose is to actively experiment and adapt our ways of knowing and creating the future.

3.5 Detailed outline of the Maroochy 2025 project process

3.5.1 Structure of Maroochy 2025

Maroochy 2025 was comprised of four main stages (see Figure 3.5, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.33), with Stage 1 split into two phases for the purpose of determining the current and projected situation for Maroochy Shire. Throughout each stage, data was collected to provide a level of understanding so that decisions could then be made to progress the development of the vision. Each of the stages was aimed at answering five specific key questions relating to Maroochy Shire's present and future. These questions were:

- Stage 1: Where are we now? (Current Reality);
- Stage 1(a): Where are we going if we continue on the same path? (Probable Future);
- Stage 2: Where do we want to be? (Preferred Visions);
- Stage 3: How do we get there? (Action Planning); and
- Stage 4: Are we getting there? (Implementation and Monitoring)

The four stages and questions were based on the community visioning model developed by Ames (1989) used in the 'Charting a course for Corvallis: A Case Study in Community Visioning'. Each stage involved a suite of specific methods and activities (see Figure 3.5).

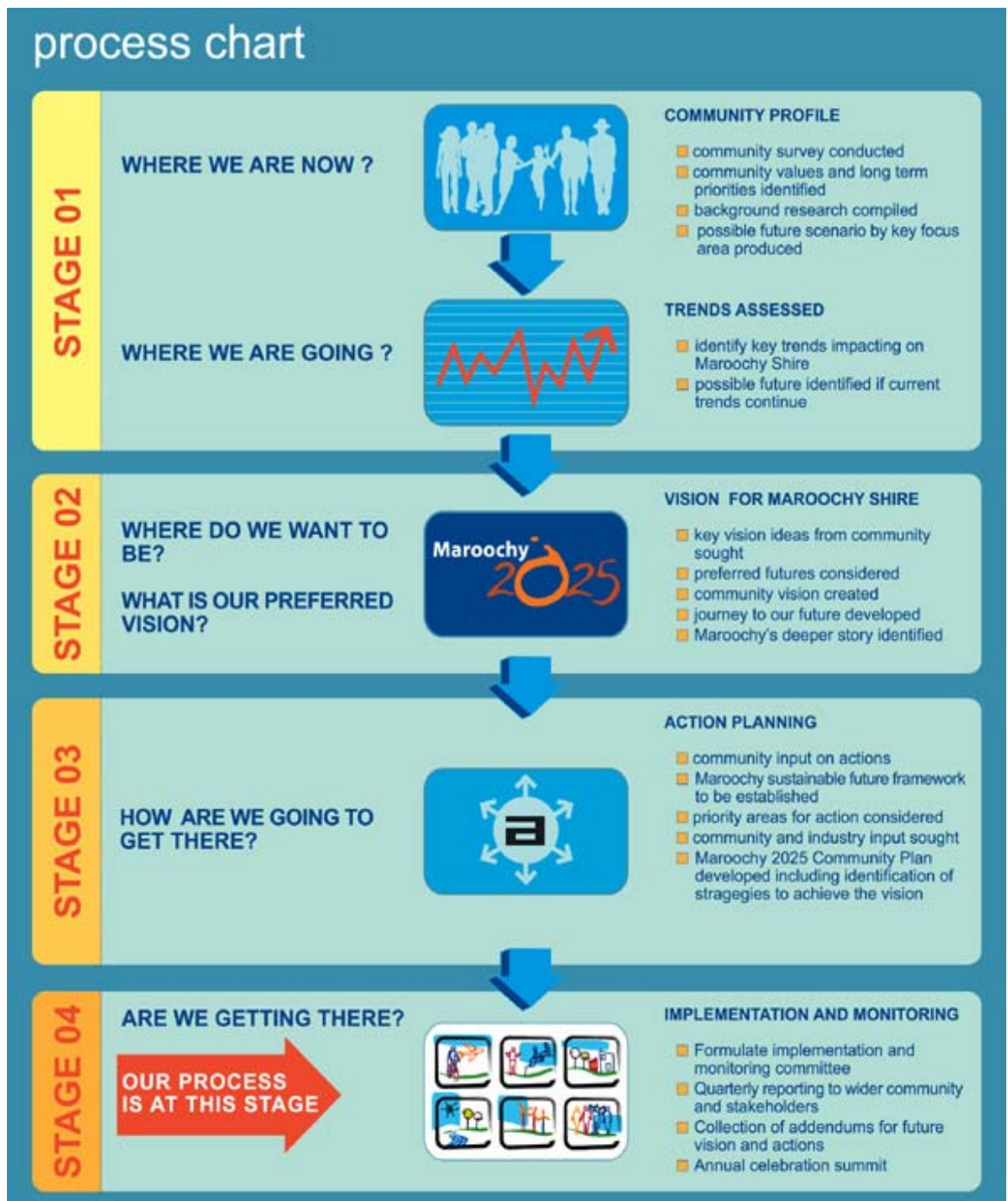


Figure 3.5. Maroochy 2025 Model based on the 'Oregon Model' developed by Steven Ames

3.5.1.1 Who participated in Maroochy 2025?

The Maroochy 2025 processes were specifically designed to ensure the community's contributions could be collected in as many varied and diverse ways as possible. To maximize the success of the community engagement phases, a variety of data collection methods were developed. These methods included:

- A pre-consultation workshop
- The 'Maroochy 2025 Background Paper'
- A website
- Stakeholder consultation and questionnaires
- Community workshops
- School summits
- Youth Council ('Youth Voice') visioning sessions
- Maroochy Shire Council staff workshops
- Community summits and summit pre-polling
- Creation of a Community Task Force
- Action planning groups
- An Action Planning 'Integration Night'
- Document and literature reviews
- Community surveys
- Maroochy 2025 Community Newsletters
- Articles in Maroochy Shire Council newsletters, local newspapers and other media

Participants in these processes represented a range of stakeholders including:

- State and Local Government
- Local academics and professionals
- Business representatives
- Community groups
- Schools and youth groups
- Local ethnic groups
- Indigenous communities
- People living with disabilities
- The general public

This broad mix of representatives was especially active in the development of the action planning stage of Maroochy 2025.

3.5.1.2 Who managed and delivered on the objectives?

The Maroochy 2025 Project Team was the principal body who managed and coordinated the community visioning processes. The team consisted of a small number of individuals, all with professional backgrounds in managing complex and inclusive community engagement projects. The composition of the team was flexible, and changed over the course of the project due to the type of expertise required for the different phases of the project. Each team member brought their own speciality and foresight to the Maroochy 2025 process, ensuring a varied and collective involvement in project planning and execution.

To increase the professional competency of the Maroochy 2025 project, the Project Team engaged the services of Mr Steven Ames, on a consultancy basis. Ames is a community visioning planner whose experience in community visioning has been applied in various communities in the United States (see Ames 1989, 1998, 2004). Ames facilitated a priming community workshop which provided feedback and confirmation that a vision was needed in Maroochy Shire. The workshop also provided insights into what to include in the project plan. Moreover, the workshop provided an opportunity to increase the skills of the Maroochy 2025 Project Team in the foundational concepts of community visioning. The workshop was an essential opportunity to gain feedback on preferred methods and outcomes expected from the Maroochy 2025 project by the community.

The Community Task Force (CTF) consisted initially of 32 community members from across the Shire, aged from 11 to 70 years of age (see Figure 3.6, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p. 50). During an eighteen month period, the task force met a total of 26 times (nearly every fortnight). The makeup of the CTF changed over the life of the project, as some members left the project for a variety of reasons. By end of the project, just fewer than twenty members remained. The CTF members worked under a charter which provided a level of governance to ensure political or individual agendas remained outside the visioning process. The main role of the CTF members was to communicate with several stakeholders, specifically the community network groups,

the Maroochy 2025 strategy and action planners, community stakeholders, the Maroochy 2025 Project Team and the Maroochy Shire Councillors.



Figure 3.6. The Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force.

During the third stage of the project, various stakeholders from community groups, industries and levels of government were recruited to develop strategies from the thirty key visions which had been developed in Stage 2 of the project. These visions had previously been endorsed through a community survey and were based on the six key focus areas supporting the Vision Statement. Seventy-two diverse action planners were recruited from the wider community through a process of inviting community members to nominate and volunteer their time to participate in the action planning process and by specific invitation to the Community Task Force in order to involve specific Council and State Government experts.

The action planners were divided into teams of twelve; each team was then allocated a key focus area to address. Teams were given six weeks to come up with strategies and actions for the top thirty vision ideas, with each focus area containing five key vision statements. These vision statements had previously been developed by the CTF.

In addition, 12 Maroochy Shire Council facilitators were also recruited to participate in the action planning process. Maroochy Shire Council provided these action planning facilitators to assist with the completion of the action planning phase. Two facilitators were allocated to each action planning team. The role of the facilitators was to guide the six action planning teams in developing the required strategies and actions through action learning methods that included brain-storming and questioning of known

assumptions. The researcher trained each of the twelve action planning facilitators in futures studies methods and strategy formulation techniques.

Maroochy 2025 also utilised other Maroochy Shire Council professionals, including council planners, technicians and management personnel. Invitations were also extended to other regional government and educational professionals to participate in the Maroochy 2025 engagement workshops and in the development of the five-year action plan (see Figure 3.7, Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p. 123).



Figure 3.7. The Maroochy 2025 facilitators and CTF.

These professionals greatly increased the community and CTF knowledge of existing regional government strategies, planning approaches and areas of community interest. From a strategic perspective, the inclusion of these professionals provided an opportunity to share expert information on key issues and strategies that could potentially affect both the development of the vision and Maroochy Shire's future.

Maroochy's elected decision makers, including the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and divisional Maroochy Shire Councillors, were also invited to participate in both the visioning and the action learning processes. It can be seen that from the diversity of the stakeholders involved that Maroochy 2025 established an unprecedented level of involvement, thus ensuring that its approach to developing alternative community futures was thoroughly representative.

3.5.2 Pre Stage 1 activities: Priming the community

Prior to the commencement of Maroochy 2025, it was necessary that the Project Team determine whether the community agreed with the idea of developing a community wide vision. By March 2003, the pre Maroochy 2025 project activities were in full swing, and on 17th April 2003 a pre-consultation community priming workshop was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast (Maroochy Shire Council 2003b). Agreement from the community to proceed was reached at this workshop and the community advised the Project Team of the most suitable methods to achieve the completion of a vision. It was identified that the community wanted a high level of presence, empowerment and involvement, if the vision was to be considered the *community's* vision. Consequently, towards the end of September 2003, a 32-member CTF was formed.

The establishment of a CTF was considered essential if the project was to operate in an 'empowering framework' of public participation. The process of recruiting the CTF was outsourced to the University of the Sunshine Coast, who preformed an independent assessment of all applications received by the Project Team from a public advertisement calling for volunteers. The main purpose for the outsourcing of this process was to maintain levels of integrity, transparency and governance over the selection of individuals who were to represent the interests of the whole community. Recruitment of the CTF signified the start of Stage 1 of the Maroochy 2025 project.

3.5.3 Stage 1: Where are we now? Mapping Maroochy's future

Stage 1 comprised of a range of key activities and methods designed to answer the Stage 1 questions: "Where are we now?" and "Where are we going if we continue along our current path?". The outcomes identified by the Project Team for Stage 1 were the recognition of Maroochy's shared history and the setting of the present context as a starting point for the visioning dialogue. The aim of Stage 1 was to empower the CTF with the responsibility of defining the boundaries for the visioning key focus areas.

To assist with the development of the key focus areas, the Project Team initially requested the production of a Maroochy 2025 research paper. The aim of the paper was to, firstly, identify where the Shire was in the current timeframe through key themes, in other words, to answer the question of "Where are we now?" The second aim of the paper was to provide a contextual foundation for visioning dialogue and

discussions, to prime, inform and stimulate the community in their initial discussions on Maroochy's future and to assist with the development of key focus areas for the Maroochy 2025 project.

The research paper was prepared by Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM), a leading engineering, sciences and project delivery firm who have a history of undertaking research for Maroochy Shire Council. The research paper provided an initial version of the probable scenario snapshots for Maroochy Shire in the year 2003 and 2025 respectively and included eleven key focuses where Maroochy Shire could expect significant changes in the future. These areas were:

- Nature;
- Water;
- Architecture;
- Settlement pattern;
- Culture;
- Shire decision-making;
- Community wellbeing;
- Transport;
- Waste management;
- Energy; and
- Sustainability.

As part of Stage 1, a website was established at www.maroochy2025.net for the purpose of disseminating information to the public, to report outputs and outcomes, and as a means to communicate the progress of the project stages and activities. The website's blog and chat room facilities also presented the community with a setting in which to engage each other in debate and discussion.

3.5.3.1 Establishment of six key focus areas for the visioning

In all visioning projects there is a need to establish some boundaries so as to enable community groups to focus their input. The Project Team decided that establishing key focus area boundaries — a manageable number of key themes in which to situate the

visions — would greatly assist the management of the project. Initially, the Project Team identified the following key drivers of change which could assist the CTF in determining the final focus areas. These drivers included:

- Growth of new economies: leisure, entertainment, service, life sciences, information;
- Globalisation of economies;
- Altering the nature of employment;
- Diminishing availability of fresh water;
- Widening gap between rich and poor;
- Existing and desired planning and policies about our future;
- Technological advancements;
- Globalisation of cultures (consumerism);
- Energy usage and fuel consumption; and
- Ecological sustainability (e.g., climate change / global warming).

The key focus areas encapsulated the broader drivers of change while considering the research to date and other areas of major community interest. Areas of interest were expressed by the CTF as being:

- A desire for greater regional planning and policies about our future;
- Management of population growth and expanding demographic profiles including the shifting demographics — mainly ageing and wealthy newcomers to the region;
- An increasing desire in the community for involvement in complex decision making process;
- Community demands for continuous opportunities for lifelong learning;
- Community demands for developing community leadership;
- Ecological sustainability;
- Regional moves to protect unique environmental and community values and lifestyles;
- Rapidly growing knowledge industry / creative economy;
- Local physical (recreational/sport/medical), mental, emotional, and spiritual needs;

- Local levels of energy use and resource consumption;
- Local economic growth/decline and sustainable development; and
- Political governance.

Identification of the key focus areas was completed by firstly tasking the newly formed CTF to examine projected plans of current strategic documents, and aligning this with the results of the Sinclair Knight Merz research paper. Focus areas identified in the research paper assisted with a first draft of key themes which eventually were narrowed down to six key focus areas. The CTF was then asked to cluster the key focus statements generated through discussions and vote on the key statements. The final six visioning key focus areas were agreed to by the CTF. These six key focus areas were:

- Our valued natural environment;
- Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning community;
- Our diverse transport, infrastructure and mobility;
- Our responsible leadership, participative decision making and foresight;
- Our smartly managed rural and urban future; and
- Our innovative and diverse economy.

The aim of the Maroochy 2025 CTF was to create a vision statement that balanced all the six focus areas and kept an alignment with the principles of sustainability and sustainable development. It was determined by the CTF that there was no specific order or hierarchy for the six key focus areas and that no focus area was more important than another. Each focus area was then crafted into an outcome statement for the purpose of creating language and contextualisation of wording to support the clustering of the community engagement data and eventually the development of the vision. It was recognised by the CTF that the development of a key focus area matrix would become an invaluable and useful framework to assist future discussions, remaining focussed on the subject matter, and clustering visioning ideas and decision making associated with the crafting of the vision statement. This framework was called the 'Key Focus Area Matrix' (see Appendix 8.1: Key Focus Areas Matrix: sub themes and principles).

3.5.3.2 Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 1

The first survey, begun in October 2003, identified the community values, issue focus areas and key choices to be made if Maroochy Shire wanted a better future. Community Survey No. 1 (Market Facts 2003) provided a vital means for the CTF to understand “Where our community is now”. The main focus of the survey was to identify the values held by the community now and into in the future. It also provided important statistical validation on the community’s current thinking, values and fears relating to the future of Maroochy Shire.

3.5.3.3 Maroochy 2025 newsletters

The aim of the Maroochy 2025 project newsletters was to sustain a level of awareness in the community on the progress of the Maroochy 2025 project deliverables. It was proposed by the Project Team to publish a newsletter at the completion of each stage of the project.

The first newsletter aimed to communicate the key messages regarding the purpose of Maroochy 2025. Secondly, it was designed to provide key pieces of information to the community, including who was involved in the projects and the membership of the CTF. Finally, the newsletter was to highlight the results of the Community Survey No. 1, specifically in terms of values, strengths and weaknesses of Maroochy Shire.

3.5.4 Stage 1(a): Where are we going if we continue along our current path? Anticipating a probable future

Over the following three months, the CTF was to meet fortnightly to answer the second part of the Stage 1 question in the project: “Where are we going if we continue on the same path?”. The outcome desired by the Project Team in this stage was the development a probable future for Maroochy Shire based on the known research, knowledge and assumptions surrounding the identified issues. The aim in developing a probable scenario was to highlight what a future might look like if these issues were left to run their course. Outputs in Stage 1(a) included the completion of the second community newsletter to communicate the progress of Maroochy 2025 and results from the CTF’s deliberations.

The second newsletter communicated the identified strategic issues and trends, by key focus area facing Maroochy Shire, as determined by the CTF. Secondly, it provided information on the state of Maroochy Shire in today's terms and the probable scenario for Maroochy in 2025.

In Stage 1(a) the following goals were set by the Project Team:

- Increasing the level of knowledge of the CTF;
- Completing an emerging issues analysis; and
- Publishing results in the *Maroochy 2025 Community visioning newsletter issue no. 2*⁴ for distribution to the community.

Given that the newly recruited CTF was drawn from diverse backgrounds and demographics, it was noted by the Project Team that the group represented a variety of levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes to planning, regional issues and assumptions about the future of Maroochy Shire, and the future in general. Hence, an initial goal of the Project Team was to create a similar level of knowledge and understanding of futures studies, local government planning approaches and government service delivery. This would ensure that each CTF member could contribute equally to the discussions and feel confident in their participation. Therefore, the Project Team organised the Maroochy Shire Council experts from each of the six focus areas to provide information sessions to the CTF. These information sessions provided details on current strategic issues, trends and Council's current responses to the management of the issues.

3.5.4.1 Development of a probable scenario

The development of the probable scenario entailed the use of the futures studies method emerging issues analysis. The researcher and Dr Phil Daffara facilitated the emerging issues analysis with the CTF. The CTF was asked to identify the key drivers of change, or pushes influencing Maroochy's future. The CTF's first task in this analysis was to consider the emerging issues, trends and problems facing Maroochy Shire, using the research paper results, details from the Council information sessions and

⁴ The Maroochy 2025 newsletters are available online from:
<http://www.maroochy2025.net/Background.php>

their own assumptions to identify the key drivers of change. The second task was to extrapolate these drivers of change into the future and describe what they thought the Shire might look like in 2025. The result of this exercise provided the necessary content for the development of a probable scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025.

3.5.5 Stage 2: Where do we want to be? Preferred visions

In January 2004, the Maroochy 2025 project commenced Stage 2, which aimed to answer the question: "Where do we want to be in 2025?". To arrive at a comprehensive answer, the wider community was invited to participate in a series of extensive community engagement activities, including anticipatory action learning workshops, qualitative/quantitative surveys, visioning summits, voting, and personal interviews. The signature engagement activity in Stage 2 was the Community Visioning Summit which included the final selection of a preferred alternative scenario and identification of the top 30 vision ideas. Stage 2 was very important as it provided the CTF with decisions from the community and narrowed the focus for development of the vision statement. The vision statement was based on the preferred scenario and the top 30 vision ideas.

Outputs from Stage 2 included the completion of the community engagement activities, development of four scenarios and the drafting of the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement and Vision Narrative. To achieve the required outcome and outputs, the following methods and activities were used by the Project Team:

- Community engagement/ visioning workshops;
- Schools Visioning Summit;
- Maroochy youth voice council meetings;
- Council employee workshops;
- Stakeholder interviews;
- Community Survey No. 2;
- Development of four possible scenarios for Maroochy in 2025;
- Community Visioning Summit;
- Clustering and coding of community engagement data by the CTF;
- Crafting the Community Vision Statement and 30 supporting vision goals;
- Developing visioning narrative;

- Development of the visioning document; and
- Presentation of the Maroochy 2025 vision to Maroochy Shire Council.

3.5.5.1 Community visioning workshops

Throughout February and March 2004, a series of 20 community visioning workshops was held in 11 locations across Maroochy Shire (see Figure 3.8, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.62). The main aim of these workshops was to unravel the deep images surrounding Maroochy Shire's collective future. Within a framework of anticipatory action learning, participants were engaged in a dialogue of questioning the future. Using framework questions developed by Sohail Inayatullah (2005, p.197), participants were asked to consider their responses to the future through the following questions:

- What will the future be like?
- What do we fear about the future?
- What is missing from our possible future?
- What are the alternatives? and
- What do we prefer the future to become like?

In outlining the process of the workshop, participants were firstly given background information on the Maroochy 2025 project via a PowerPoint presentation, followed by engagement in facilitated anticipatory action learning questioning and creative visualisation exercises. Participants were then asked to complete individual visioning worksheets (see Appendix 8.2). These worksheets contained two key questions for each of the six Maroochy 2025 focus areas. The first part of the question asked participants to 'describe the focus area expressed as a vision, being a descriptive image for Maroochy in 2025'. The second part of the question required the participants to think from a futures studies perspective, and asked 'how did we as a community create the suggested vision ideas?'.



Figure 3.8. Community residents participating at the Maroochy 2025 community visioning workshops.

After completing the worksheets, participants were then requested to select and prioritise their top three vision ideas from their worksheets. Participants were then issued three coloured footprints with each colour representing a level of importance and choice: red symbolised the first choice vision idea, yellow the second, and orange the third choice vision idea. These footprints were then placed according to personal preferences on six large posters, each poster representing one of the Maroochy 2025 key focus areas. Those who wanted to express their vision ideas through an alternative method to the written format were supported through the provision of visual aids such as paint, drawing paper and pencils. The researcher was one of three main facilitators for the community visioning workshops.

3.5.5.2 School futures program and Visioning Summit

The support of the Queensland Department of Education provided Maroochy 2025 with an opportunity for Maroochy Shire school children to become involved through a school based visioning initiative. In total there were eight schools across the shire that participated in Maroochy 2025, four secondary and four primary schools, involving students from ages eight to eighteen. Visioning as an activity was added to the curriculum of the eight schools during the first school term of 2004. School children from grade two through to grade twelve in the eight participating schools all contributed to the development of their own individual vision, initially at the individual level and then collectively from a whole-of-school perspective. The eight participating schools were then co-ordinated by Dr Phil Daffara to share their results with each other at a School Futures Visioning Summit. For this Summit, the Project Team contracted the services of Performance Frontiers who specialise in creative visioning. The results from each

school were then combined to formulate a singular collective vision statement for Maroochy Shire in the year 2025.

During a second round of school workshops held in October 2004, 30 students and teachers from five schools participated in developing action strategies to achieve the top 30 vision goals. Again the services of Performance Frontiers (see Figure 3.9, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.63) were utilised and through the use of a 'mandala' students were asked to express their ideas and thoughts on how the community could make their visions a reality. Historically, a mandala is often used to refer to the "personal world" in which one lives, the various elements of the mandala are the activities and interests in which one engages, with the most important elements being at the centre of the mandala and the least important at the periphery. Jung (1964, p. 8) suggested that the mandala was 'a representation of the unconscious self', and believed his paintings of mandalas enabled him to identify emotional disorders and work towards wholeness in personality. Depicting one's personal mandala can give one a good indication of the state of one's intuition. The mandala was selected as a visioning tool for the purpose of tapping into the intuition of the students' collective wisdom. The students work provided numerous recommendations for the action planning teams to consider in the development of strategies and actions against the vision ideas.



Figure 3.9. Facilitator, Ms Deborah Robinson from Performance Frontiers facilitating school student action planning sessions

3.5.5.3 Maroochy's youth voices

Considering the success of the schools program, the Project Team decided to expand the opportunity to capture the voices of Maroochy Shire's youth. This included people in the age group between 15 and 25 years and drew representatives from the following groups:

- Maroochy Shire Council Youth Council;
- University students; and
- Community Christian youth groups.

Maroochy Shire's Youth Councillors held their own visioning session in March 2004. They discussed issues that concerned them regarding the future of the Shire, and investigated methods that might address those issues. Their involvement was video recorded and presented at the Visioning Summit in a video titled 'Youth Voice'. The video was designed as a message from the young political leaders of the Shire to Visioning Summit participants.

University students were approached at the university during orientation week. As part of orientation week activities, the Project Team established a survey booth for students to record their vision ideas. Community Christian Youth from Fusion were also approached and engaged in strategy workshops.

3.5.5.4 Maroochy Shire Council staff

Maroochy Shire Council staff attended information sessions throughout the project. In April 2004, a visioning workshop was held with 300 indoor/outdoor staff. Participants were polled on their preferred future. The results from the staff workshops served two purposes. Firstly, these workshops were used as a trial engagement process for the pending community visioning workshops; secondly the workshops were a site of data collection for the project.

Maroochy Shire Council's Corporate Management Team held one-on-one information sessions with high profile community stakeholders. The aim of these interviews was to encourage their support for the project and, at a later date, their participation with the implementation of Maroochy 2025 projects. The results from these interviews were included in the vision ideas database for use by the CTF.

3.5.5.5 Scenario development

Based on the community vision ideas collected through the community engagement activities and community surveys, two key uncertainties about the future for Maroochy

Shire emerged. These two key uncertainties had the potential to affect Maroochy Shire's future, and were identified as being:

- How would the natural environment be valued by the local economy? and
- How would Maroochy Shire's leaders engage their community in foresight activities to enable the development of participatory leadership styles?

The inter-relationship of these two uncertainties created an opportunity to use a double variable method to develop four scenarios for Maroochy Shire. The researcher worked with the futurist Dr Sohail Inayatullah, Dr Philip Daffara, Co-facilitator of Maroochy 2025; Mr Eric Moes, Project Manager Maroochy 2025; and with consultant Mr Steven Ames, to develop the four scenarios in conjunction with the CTF. The four alternative scenarios were:

- Maroochy by Decree;
- E-Maroochy Cyber City;
- Maroochy's Connected and Learning Villages; and
- Maroochy Metropolis.

The structure of the scenarios included elements that expressed social, technological, environmental, economic, and political dimensions plus the inclusion of a systemic values and metaphorical perspective for each scenario.

3.5.5.6 Community Task Force activities

During Stage 2, the CTF continued to meet on a fortnightly basis. The CTF's main role prior to the Visioning Summit was the completion of the following tasks:

- Development of a coding system to process and cluster the vision ideas being collected from the community engagement activities;
- Sorting and clustering the 3,368 vision ideas into the six Maroochy 2025 key focus areas; and
- Filtering the vision ideas down to the top 124 vision ideas by using specified visioning criteria.

The researcher and Dr Philip Daffara worked with the CTF to develop a 'cluster system matrix' which contained key trigger words for each focus area. This was achieved by using the existing Key Focus Areas Matrix (Appendix 8.1) and further developing a

second 'Key Focus Area: Sub Matrix'. This second framework expanded on the sub themes and principles by establishing trigger words that connoted a similar meaning (see Appendix 8.3: Cluster theme worksheets).

The vision ideas were then clustered together using the 'Key Focus Area: Sub Matrix' thus enabling the CTF to filter the vision ideas into strategic themes and groupings. Using this approach enabled the CTF to eliminate those vision ideas that were duplicated. Eventually the CTF identified the top 124 vision ideas for submission to the Community Visioning Summit and eventual voting by the community at the Summit.

The aim at the Summit was to invite the community to vote on the 124 vision ideas for the purpose of culling the 124 ideas down to a manageable top 30 vision ideas. It was determined by both the CTF and the Project Team that 30 vision ideas provided enough information from which they would be able to craft the vision statement.

3.5.5.7 The Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Summit

The main purpose of the Summit was to encourage the community to choose their preferred scenario for Maroochy Shire. It was designed to produce and filter information that would to guide the CTF in crafting a collective vision statement around the preferred scenario.

Outline of the structure for the summit

In planning preparations for the Summit, an opportunity was presented by the local TAFE college. The Project Team received a request from the college to utilise their students in a real world action learning event. Given that the students were studying event and project management processes, this initiative was consistent with the principles of Maroochy 2025 as an action learning process. The TAFE students were approved by the Maroochy 2025 project sponsors to participate in the planning of the Summit. Subsequently, the students provided innovative solutions to complex event management problems and were key players in making the Summit a great success.

The Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Summit was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast on Saturday, 3 April 2004. The summit created an opportunity to showcase the work generated through the community engagement phases. The layout of the summit was choreographed on entry to the summit to highlight to the community

the journey of the engagement process; this included participants being able to walk through a visual arts presentation highlighting the school visioning results, youth visioning results, and the community engagement results.

The summit comprised three main sessions:

- Plugging into the Future;
- Lay your cards on the table; and
- Join the dots for our future.

The main aim of the Plugging into the Future session was to provide information on Maroochy 2025 via a dramatization and visual arts presentation of the six key focus areas. The intent was used to stimulate the creative energies of the participants. In the next session, 'lay your cards on the table', participants were encouraged to choose their preferred scenario. Finally, the 'Join the dots for our future' session would aim to get the community to vote and prioritise the vision ideas through the use of adding each of their six voting dots to the displays of the vision ideas that appealed to them the most.

The Community Visioning Summit activities commenced after a local Indigenous welcome was performed by the Gubbi Gubbi Dancers. Summit participants then 'plugged into the future' through the viewing of a creative interpretation and dramatization of the four future scenarios. The aim was to help participants appreciate the distinctive traits of the scenarios at an emotional, spiritual and creative level. This was then followed by presentations from the youth council on 'youth voices', school students on their 'vision statement', and the spokesperson for the CTF on task force activities.

In the Lay your cards on the table session, Professor Sohail Inayatullah provided an analytical presentation on the four alternative futures scenarios facing the Shire. Participants were then provided with detailed descriptive worksheets on each of the four scenarios and encouraged to discuss the alternative futures amongst themselves. Participants were then asked to vote on their preferred future by holding up a colored card which was representative of their chosen scenario (see Figure 3.10, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.46).



Figure 3.10. Community residents participating at the Maroochy 2025 Visioning Summit

In the final session (Join the dots), participants were issued with six colored dots with which to 'vote' for their priority vision ideas (see Figure 3.11, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.46).



Figure 3.11. Community residents poll the top 124 key vision ideas identified by the Community Task Force

3.5.5.8 Crafting the Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement

After the summit, the Project Team and the CTF assessed the results of the polling and both the Project Team and the CTF agreed that it was necessary to validate the key decisions made thus far by the Project Team, the CTF and the summit participants with the wider community. In May 2004, a second survey was conducted to assess the level of support for the key focus areas, preferred scenario, polled vision ideas, and values prior to developing the main Vision Statement. Community Survey No. 2 (Market Facts 2004a) results demonstrated that the key decisions made thus far in Maroochy 2025 matched the views of the general public.

Given the encouraging results from the Community Survey No. 2, the CTF then began the task of crafting the language for the Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement and the Vision Narrative for each of the six key focus areas in Maroochy 2025 (see Figure 3.12, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.64).



Figure 3.12. The Community Task Force completed the scripting of the Maroochy 2025 Vision/s

The process of guiding the CTF to complete a clear and ennobling vision statement was guided by the use of the futures landscape model (See Appendix 8.4: Maroochy 2025: Futures landscape model). It was agreed by the CTF and the Maroochy 2025 Project Team to situate the crafting of the Vision Statement at the 'star' level, in keeping with the principles established in the beginning of the project.

The Vision Statement became a clear statement for the future that reflected the elegance of Maroochy Shire's community visions. A second method deployed by the researcher and Dr Philip Daffara, to assist the CTF with the process of writing a vision, was to educate the CTF in the concept of what constituted a criterion for a vision. The purpose of this education was to ensure that the CTF had a mental model to assist their thoughts and decision making processes (see Appendix 8.5: Vision criteria worksheet)

The layout of the Maroochy 2025 Vision/s was designed by mutual agreement between the project facilitators and the CTF and expressed a combination of vision results as told through an imaginary journey into the future of Maroochy Shire. The views expressed in the Vision were a comprehensive compilation of what the majority of Maroochy residents strongly wanted, hoped for and aspired to as an alternative community future in 2025. More than a wish list, the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement also charted how this future could be achieved. The Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement described a view of that future according to each of the

six key focus areas. Of particular importance to the CTF was how to depict the five key vision ideas for each key focus area, and how the Vision Statement could be expressed in a visual model, highlighting how the ‘journey’ towards Maroochy’s preferred future unfolded in the year 2025.

The final visual layout of the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement and supporting visions as depicted below (see Figure 3.13, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.85) was developed by Dr Philip Daffara and the CTF. This model will assist the reader to navigate through the Maroochy 2025 vision results, starting with the Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement. It then divides the Maroochy 2025 vision into its six key vision areas, providing an overview according to each key focus area of the preferred future desired by Maroochy residents for their Shire

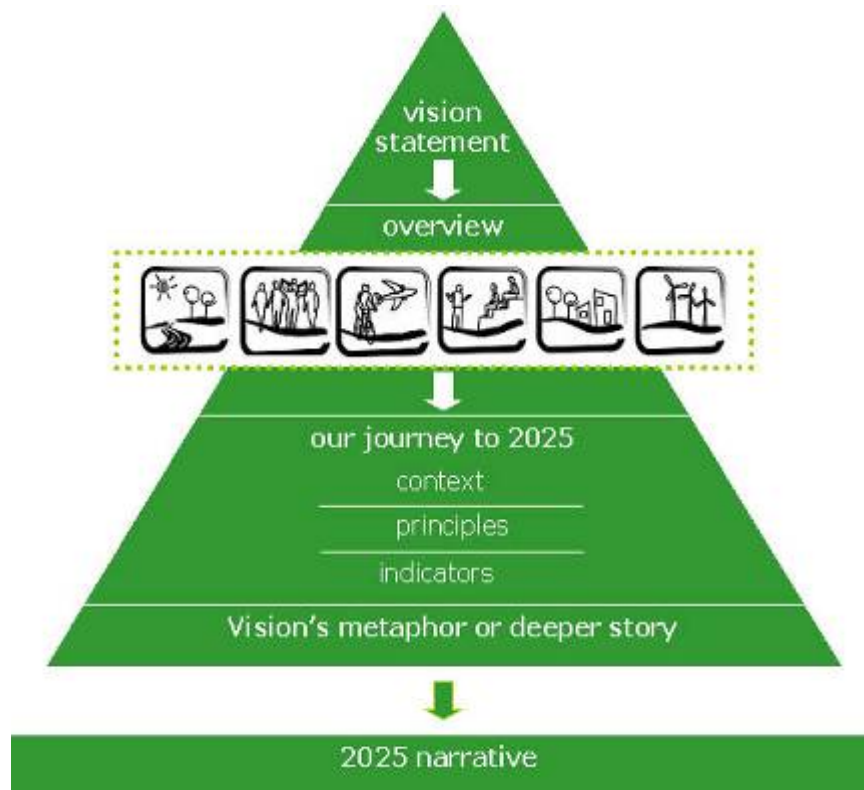


Figure 3.13. Maroochy 2025 Vision Framework: A descriptive diagram for Maroochy 2025 visions

The middle part of the model creates context for attaining the Maroochy 2025 visions. Organised according to each key focus area, the Vision Narrative first charts where we were, that is the Maroochy of 2005. It then details the steps required to transform from 2005, and describes the Maroochy environment as it was envisioned for the year 2025. It outlines the principles that need to be followed in order to achieve this vision and then documents the top five key vision ideas. The final area in the journey section

considers the measurement of achievements and describes the visible indicators that would be evident in order to meet the stipulated goal.

The Maroochy 2025 vision model concludes with a description of the deeper story or metaphor which was revealed through the unfolding of the Maroochy 2025 project. Values in term of images and metaphors were collected during the visioning process from Maroochy Shire residents across the diverse strata of the community. These reflected the values underpinning the community ethos. These values included what resident's feel best encapsulates what Maroochy represents, what residents aspire for Maroochy to be, and what epitomised the residents' identity. Part of this unfolding story includes an imaginary narrative which describes the world and lifestyle of a Maroochy resident in 2025, should the community vision be fully realised.

By July 2004, the CTF had completed the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision. They presented these results to the Maroochy Shire Council for endorsement and further actioning (see Figure 3.14, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.56).



Figure 3.14. Community Task Force spokesperson, Ms Francis Howes presenting the Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement to Mayor Joe Natoli, July 2004

The completion of the Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement and Vision Narrative formally acknowledged that Stage 2 had been completed. However, what seems to be problematic with community visioning processes is the recurrent inability to translate visions into actions. Stage 3: Action Planning aimed to create a pathway for the Shire to plan strategies and actions that could enable the visions to become reality.

3.5.6 Stage 3: How will we get there? Action planning

The purpose of Stage 3 in Maroochy 2025 was to answer the question “How will we get there?”. A vision is understood to be long term, inspirational, and motivational. By contrast, a strategic action plan is short term, specific, information-based, action-oriented and instructional. A vision might be updated just once during its lifespan, for example after 10 years over the life of a 20-year vision. Action plans however, can be updated numerous times — for example every three to five years — yet must remain consistent with the original vision.

Action plans for Maroochy 2025 used each of the six key focus areas and top 30 vision ideas as the basis to develop the strategies and actions for each area. This approach ensured the strategies and actions aligned and were compatible with the Vision Statement and vision ideas, ensuring overall consistency with the intent of the community aspirations. The aim of Stage 3 was to specifically develop the first of four, five-year action plans required to achieve the 2025 visions. It was proposed to undertake action planning at five year intervals.

The main strategy to complete the required deliverable in Stage 3 was the recruitment of six action planning teams. To achieve the other required deliverables the following activities were deployed by the Project Team:

- Development of newsletter no. 3;
- Delivery of community engagement workshops to develop strategies and actions;
- Delivery of school action planning workshops;
- Completion of Community Survey No. 3 (assessment of the Maroochy 2025 strategies and actions); and
- Evaluation of the Maroochy 2025 project through the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4.

The aim of the Stage 3 newsletter was to communicate several key messages to the Maroochy Shire community: firstly, the results from the Visioning Summit in April; secondly to publish a copy of the 'Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement' as developed by the CTF; and finally, to highlight upcoming community activities associated with 'Stage 3: Action Planning'.

As a precursor to the action planning stage, a series of major community engagement workshops was held to re-engage the public in the Maroochy 2025 project and processes. These workshops provided the community with an opportunity to receive feedback on their input from Stage 2 and to develop strategies for the vision ideas.

In these workshops, the visioning results were communicated, as a means of setting the context for strategy development. At the same time, the community engagement results provided the action planning teams with the necessary foundational sources of data from which to start the process of strategy formulation. Action planning teams categorized this raw data into usable content themes to eventually support the wording of the strategies. Other data sources such as regional strategies and material on government planning and policies was also used by the action planning teams to ensure their developing strategies complemented the regional initiatives.

3.5.6.1 The action planning teams

Six diverse and dynamic volunteer teams were recruited from within the wider community to form the Maroochy 2025 Action Planning Teams. Each team was comprised of 12 members and was a combination of community, and State Government and Council employees, including Councillors and CTF members. Each team focussed on one of the six key focus areas and their respective five top vision ideas from the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement. The action planning teams met fortnightly over the course of four months. Their main function was to contextualise the Maroochy 2025 visions into operational form through the development of specific, measurable, achievable realistic and timely strategies and actions. This strategy and action formulation took place in synergy with the strategies and actions developed by other teams.

Prior to the first session, action planning facilitators were appointed from Maroochy Shire Council and trained in action learning and strategy formulation techniques by the researcher. Training for the action planning teams took place in late July 2004. Team

members learnt action planning terminology and how to write strategies and actions within a specific and focused strategic planning context. The training set the scene for the endorsement of action planning charters, which assisted in guiding the teams and the task force during the next four months.

3.5.6.2 Action planning Integration Night

To ensure the strategies and actions from action planning teams would compliment one another, all of the action planning teams attended a mini summit called 'Integration Night' (see Figure 3.15, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.36) as their final meeting. During the mini summit, action planning teams were engaged in a dialogue of negotiation with each other to find the potential for complementary integration between each focus area's strategies and actions. The aim of the Integration Night was to remove any duplication of strategies and actions from the respective action plans and build synergies between the strategies. The Integration Night was also designed to celebrate the teams' achievements and recognise the evolving community *esprit de corps* (team spirit) within the Maroochy 2025 project.



Figure 3.15. Action planners negotiating strategies at the Integration Night

The process used to facilitate the required negotiation dialogue was a community engagement technique called 'world cafe'. The teams were gathered together on this final night to eat, work and negotiate to win/win solutions at a series of team focus tables. Teams were given intervals of ten minutes at each table to share and discuss

their strategies with other action planning teams before moving onto the next focus table.

Teams were split into two, with some remaining at their original tables and the others moving to other team focus tables, allowing an exchange of ideas for all teams and members involved. After all teams had rotated through each focus table, original teams were then re-formed to view, negotiate, filter and finally agree on the feedback received from the other teams. The teams then presented their results to the main group.

To add fun to the process, team members were invited to dress in symbolic artefacts pertaining to their specific focus area (see Figure 3.16, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.65); this was for the purpose of reflecting their relationship with their suggested strategies.



Figure 3.16. Action planners listening to the final results on the agreed strategies and actions

This combination of fun, dining and play created an atmosphere of tolerance, excitement and recognition of the teams' achievements. This atmosphere enhanced the level of goodwill in the room and enabled teams to actively listen to the suggestions from other teams in a positive and productive manner. The Integration Night also enabled the action planners to meet and partner with their local politicians who had agreed to work collaboratively with the teams with implementing the action plans. In closing the events of the Integration Night, the researcher was asked by an action planning team member about the next step for implementation of the action plans. In response to the question, the researcher proposed — with support from a local Councillor — to establish a Maroochy 2025 Vision Implementation Committee (MVIC). This was the first step in commencing Stage 4 of Maroochy 2025.

At the completion of the Integration Night, teams had agreed to accept over 60 strategies and more than 200 actions. The draft action plans were then submitted to the Maroochy 2025 Project Team, who finalised the drafts by copy-editing the plans. The role of the researcher in this step was to design, co-ordinate and facilitate the Integration Night and finalise the drafts by copy-editing the plans.

3.5.6.3 Community Survey No. 3

A third survey (Market Facts 2004b) was completed in November 2004 to validate the action plans developed by the action planners. The survey outcomes confirmed the extent to which a broad sample of the general community supported the strategies and action developed by the action planning teams. The random telephone survey comprised of 300 residents from Maroochy Shire. The researcher designed the survey questions for Community Survey No. 3 and managed the co-ordination of the data collection process with the Market Facts research company.

3.5.6.4 The Maroochy 2025 book — Maroochy 2025: A visioning journey

The researcher decided to document, as a book, all the stages of the Maroochy 2025 process. This would provide an opportunity to share the Maroochy 2025 story, the learnings of the Project Team and researcher, and to situate the results from the CTF visioning work in an official publication. As a result, volume one, sections two and three, volume three was prepared by the researcher, the second volume was co-authored with Dr Philip Daffara (see Figure 3.17, from Gould & Daffara eds 2005, cover).

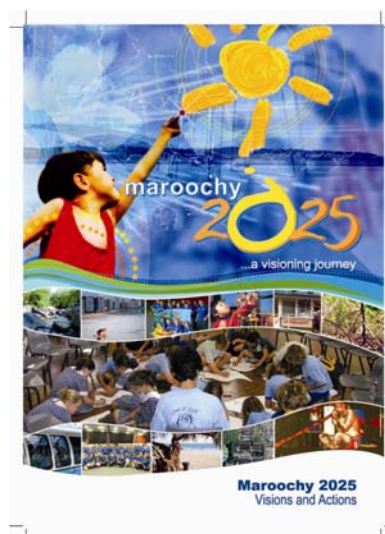


Figure 3.17. Cover of the Maroochy 2025 Book

Volume 1 (*Philosophies and Background*) documented the processes and theoretical concepts behind Maroochy 2025. Volume 2 (*Future Aspirations*) documented the results of Stage 2, namely the Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement and visions as developed by the CTF. Volume 3 (*Action Planning*) documented the results from the action planning stage, specifically the strategies and actions recommended to achieve the top thirty visions.

3.5.7 Stage 4: Are we getting there? Monitoring and implementation

During 2005, and post the development, printing and distribution of *Maroochy 2025: A visioning journey*, the researcher proposed that Maroochy Shire Council support and fund the commencement of Stage 4 of Maroochy 2025. This was to enable the researcher and Maroochy Shire Council to monitor and implement the five-year action plan. A key strategy for Stage 4 was the recruitment of a Maroochy 2025 Vision Implementation Committee (MVIC).

It was proposed by the researcher to Maroochy Shire Council that the MVIC would be structured using a three tiered approach to assist with the monitoring and decision making activities in Stage 4. The first level would be an MVIC steering group which would include the Mayor and Shire Chief Executive Officer and a sponsoring Councillor. The second level would be a Maroochy 2025 Project Team. The third level would be the MVIC community members.

The main aim of the MVIC community members committee would be to provide a regular monitoring and updating of the five-year action plan and manage the process of providing annual feedback to the wider community on progress. The specific goals of the MVIC would be to foster community and Council involvement through the following activities:

- Developing levels of community support, partnerships, and other networking opportunities through Maroochy 2025 activities;
- Monitoring the performance indicators developed for Maroochy 2025;
- Increasing community capacity to engage in future visioning processes;
- Celebrating the achievement of Maroochy 2025 strategies and actions by Maroochy Shire;
- Problem solving to overcome barriers preventing the implementation of Maroochy 2025 visions, strategies and actions;

- Developing a sense of community agency; and
- Facilitating community cohesion opportunities.

The MVIC would need to develop high-level means of measuring the success and efficiency of the strategies and associated action plans. The establishment of an MVIC would also enable Maroochy's communities to implement, monitor and report progress on Maroochy 2025 themselves. The Maroochy 2025 Project Team would need to focus on finding project champions and securing ongoing commitment, responsibility, and funding from lead partners identified in the Maroochy 2025 action plans. It was anticipated that an annual summit would be established to recruit and rotate community membership of the MVIC. Such annual summits would also provide opportunities to 'showcase' Maroochy 2025 achievements.

3.6 Methods of analysis: Triangulation in action

3.6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore whether local government community planning efforts, including the use of applied futures studies methods, within a framework of action learning contributes to the creation of alternate community futures. By recording and analysing the results from the Maroochy 2025 project, this study highlights whether applied futures studies methods can influence local government policy, planning and decision making processes to empower communities. Specifically, this study focuses on: the use of anticipatory action learning approaches within Maroochy 2025; how such approaches shape the choice of methods selected throughout Maroochy 2025; and their implications for shifting community attitudes towards the future.

As previously mentioned, the three research sub questions for this study are:

1. Does the use of applied futures studies shift community attitudes and increase the community's level of confidence to create alternative ways of learning, knowing and uses of the future?
2. Can local government politicians and planners improve community planning approaches to enhance the concept of anticipatory democracy?
3. Does foresight and community planning shift the power away from local politicians towards communities and planners?

To address the three research questions, a triangulated method of analysis involving three different approaches to analysis of the same phenomena was selected for this research thesis. The three methods used in the triangulation were:

1. Personal observation;
2. Qualitative and quantitative research; and
3. Critical futures approaches: Causal layered analysis (CLA).

The rationale for selection of the research methods in this thesis is three fold. Firstly, the use of personal observations provided the researcher with first hand exposure to the effects of using applied futures studies methods and techniques on individuals. This is especially so because the researcher was one of two main facilitators in the Maroochy 2025 project. The researcher developed and extensively used applied futures methods throughout the project. It seemed appropriate for the researcher to record and make reflections on the observable behaviours and project phenomena.

Secondly, a qualitative/quantitative approach explores and determines attitudinal shifts from the community's participation in applied futures studies, specifically, whether community visioning processes can build community foresight capacity. This approach enables the examination of whether it is possible for a community to think critically about the future, resulting in a feeling of being empowered with a sense of agency to act on creating alternatives.

Finally, a critical futures approach, specifically causal layered analysis (CLA) was selected by the researcher, for two main reasons. Firstly, CLA enables the 'unpacking' of the perspectives and assumptions of the key stakeholders. Secondly as the thesis is also situated in a critical futures framework. The value of using CLA as a method of analysis is highlighted by Inayatullah (2004, p. 1) who states:

CLA as a method, its utility is not in predicting the future but in creating transformative spaces for the creation of alternative futures and is likely to be useful in developing more effective, deeper, inclusive longer term policy.

Therefore, by using the CLA method, the researcher will be able to interrogate the results from the Maroochy 2025 project case study. This interrogation will determine whether the creation of transformative spaces and futures has occurred for the participants who were involved with Maroochy 2025. Another benefit of using CLA is

that it will enable the researcher to explore research questions 2 and 3. This enables the researcher to determine whether participation in anticipatory action learning workshops and applied futures studies methods assists local government planners, politicians and employees to enhance their understanding and use of anticipatory democracy practices.

3.6.2 Triangulation: A systematic comparison method of analysis

A systematic comparison means comparing incidents in the data with other experiences, methods or literature (Strauss & Corbin 1990). The purpose of a systematic comparison according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 95) is 'To sensitise the researcher to the properties and dimensions in the data that the researcher might have overlooked because the researcher did not know what they were looking for'. The researcher can then identify the properties of the concepts and how often they occur. Such systematic comparison is invaluable in the present research, considering the diversity, breadth and complexity of data collected for Maroochy 2025, in the context of local government and community engagement practices. Systematic comparison will greatly assist with identifying the myriad incidents in the data from a cluster of conditions. Triangulation strategy is broadly defined by Denzin (1978, p. 291) as a 'combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon'.

In its original intent, the triangulation metaphor was derived from navigation and military strategy that uses multiple reference points to determine the exact location of an object. The aim of triangulation is, according to Jick (1979), to provide a method of combining several research methods within a single study to increase rigour for the purpose of improving the validity of the discussion of the key findings. This methodology, adopted for the thesis, improves the legitimacy of the researcher's assessment of findings from Maroochy 2025 by collecting different types of data pertaining to the same phenomena. Triangulation was selected as it is a useful ratification strategy, and it increases the level of confidence in the results for the researcher as noted by Burns (1994, p. 309):

If, for example, the outcomes of a questionnaire survey correspond to those of an observational study of the same phenomena, the more the researcher will be confident about the findings.

Therefore, a triangulated method of analysis will increase the researcher's ability to interrogate the findings from a deeper and multi-dimensional and layered perspective.

3.6.3 Method 1: Personal observation

The first method of analysis was the use of personal observations. This method provided a regular source of data from an ethnographic perspective to the researcher through personal notes and Project Team discussions. Personal observations carried out by the researcher were viewed through an anticipatory action learning framework. This framework is based on observing the phenomena through five main perspectives. These perspectives, according to Inayatullah (2006, p. 1), are:

- Sensitivity to the environment, workshop dynamics and ways of learning and knowing of participants;
- Use of foresight questioning that leads to anxiety in the workshop participants;
- Identification of the learning as it happens;
- Identification and naming of the barriers and resistance to learning including ways to understand and transform; and
- The deepening of authentic understanding of the other (what we don't know, we don't know).

From an ethical point of view, the researcher made it clear to the CTF and public consultation participants that the Maroochy 2025 project was being recorded and studied as part of completion of academic studies. Throughout Maroochy 2025, three detailed volumes of data were compiled by the researcher to assist with the recording of process and phenomena.

3.6.4 Method 2: Quantitative and qualitative research

The second method of analysis was the use of qualitative/quantitative survey research approaches. This method of analysis refers to any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by simple statistics or other means of quantification. It is designed to uncover and understand further the cluster of conditions that seem to bear on the same phenomenon. Thus the interaction and effects of the clustering conditions may be uncovered from the data. This helps researchers to further explore their hypotheses by uncovering what lies behind particular phenomena (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 33).

The cluster of conditions that came to bear on the Maroochy 2025 phenomenon required the researcher to use a combination of quantitative/qualitative approaches as well as open and closed coding regarding questionnaire design. This enabled interplay of both quantitative/qualitative approaches in the one questionnaire. This interplay approach was used in the design of the four Maroochy 2025, quantitative/qualitative surveys (Market Facts 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c) and the researcher's quantitative/qualitative survey.

For the purpose of evaluating and measuring the attitudinal change from participating in an applied futures studies project, and as a means of collecting data for the research questions, the researcher designed and conducted an additional quantitative/qualitative survey alongside the fourth Maroochy 2025 quantitative/qualitative survey (Market Facts 2004c). This additional qualitative/quantitative survey sought to collect evidence pertaining to the research questions.

3.6.5 Method 3: Inayatullah's causal layered analysis, post-structuralism and critical futures

Developed by Inayatullah over many years, CLA has its origins (Inayatullah 2004, p. 1) in post modernism, macrohistory, postcolonial multicultural theory and in the works of P.R. Sarkar, Ashish Nandy and Edward Said. Through Inayatullah's use of applied futures studies in workshops in the field, in academic research and consultancy, CLA is embedded in the emerging discourse of futures studies (Inayatullah 2005). CLA is 'Less concerned with predicting a particular future and more with opening up the present and past to create alternative futures' (Inayatullah 2004, p. 2)

Through the use of CLA, the researcher aims to open up assumptions underpinning this research beyond simply a linear dimension, by moving towards the exploration of the research issues and questions using both linear and horizontal dimensions (Inayatullah 2004). This means the researcher attempted to move beyond his own level of expertise in futures studies, to find different ways of knowing the research phenomena from other variables. To achieve other ways of knowing the research phenomena, the researcher considered other variables as part of viewing and analysing the research case study and research questions. These variables included viewing the research findings from cultural, gender, political, genealogical, distance and alternative pasts and futures perspectives (Inayatullah 2004).

However, the researcher also remained aware that all futures studies research approaches are useful, as conceptual tools to deconstruct and reconstruct the future (Inayatullah 2002). Futures studies research approaches aim for a level of analysis that is layered, from both deep and shallow perspectives and, as a result, tends to be a transformative process for the individuals involved. In applied futures studies research, it was preferable for the researcher to use multiple approaches for the purpose of providing project participants with new knowledge, and capacity in strategy formulation and facilitation of memetic behavioural changes. Hence, the use of CLA according to is a valuable method of analysis as:

It uses all four perspectives; that is' it contextualises data (the predictive) with the meanings (interpretative) we give them, and then locates these in various historical structures of power/knowledge — class, gender, ethnicity, and episteme (the critical) along with the unconscious stories that express, and to a certain extent, define the episteme (Inayatullah 2004, p.5).

However, as Inayatullah (2005, p. 6) argues, the CLA process and the use of critical futures mapping schemes are more useful when applied to real world foresight case study analysis. This involves an analysis of how people see, think and create their future. In terms of poststructural critical futures approaches, the task is to understand the different meanings attached to the words and images so as to un-define the future and to question it (Inayatullah 2004).

Inayatullah goes on to note that the goal of critical research is to disturb the power relations of language and meaning used to define the future (2004, p.7). By challenging the categories we use to define the future, other possibilities can then be considered, thus creating the space for the development of alternative future scenarios. The issue, as Inayatullah (2004) notes, is less what is considered to be the truth, than who benefits or loses from such definitions of the truth. What this means in terms of the language is that language is not neutral; rather it can be argued as being part of the problem, especially language which defines the future. The future can be described and defined by those who are set to be privileged by such definitions of the future.

In the context of Maroochy 2025, the goal of the project was not simply predicting or anticipating the future; this was only the beginning of the process. Rather, the project was about creating alternative community futures. For the Maroochy 2025 project in Stage 1, this meant that it was crucial to establish a probable scenario as a means to

create the space and opportunity to un-define the future from the official versions of the truth. This provided participants with an opportunity to consider how the future might be different, if alternative units of analysis were used — or, in other words, other truths. Using other ways of knowing is a powerful way to create distance from the present. It greatly assists with creating the space needed for the development of alternatives to the future (Inayatullah 2004).

From the researcher's perspective, the use of critical futures as the key methodology for analysing Maroochy 2025 provides a further opportunity to interrogate the research findings. Specifically this allows for studying the different meanings that participants give to their words, language and images used to describe the Maroochy 2025 visions from a litany, social cause/systems, worldviews and myth/metaphor perspectives.

3.6.6 Post-structuralism as a method

CLA uses a post-structuralist futures toolbox to assist in the un-defining of language, meaning and units of analysis. According to Inayatullah (2004, p. 8) the poststructuralist futures toolbox consists of five concepts, as follows:

1. De-construction;
2. Genealogy;
3. Distance;
4. Alternative pasts and futures; and
5. Re-ordering knowledge.

Each concept enables the use of a suite of questions that can assist with the un-defining process. The first concept is deconstruction (Inayatullah 2004, p. 8). In deconstruction, objects are critiqued to find what is assumed to be visible and what is invisible. Research questions can include, for example, 'what is the politics of the truth?' or 'who is privileged by access to a level of knowledge?'. The second concept is genealogy (ibid), which explores the history of paradigms, and how these paradigms have been passed from one generation to the next generation. Research questions can include, for example, 'which discourses have been victorious in consulting the present?' or 'who might be the genealogies of the future?'. The third concept according to Inayatullah (2004, p. 8) is distance, which explores the link between poststructural thought and futures studies scenarios. Scenarios become not forecasts, rather the

realm of the possible and the preferred. Research questions can include, for example, 'which scenarios make the present remarkable? Make it unfamiliar? Or 'are these scenarios in present or future space thinking?'

The fourth concept Inayatullah discusses (2004, p. 8) is alternative pasts and futures, which explore the problematic nature of the past and how it could be influencing our future thinking. The past is seen as truth, yet the question is 'whose truth is it?'. Research questions can include, for example, 'which histories make the present problematic?', or which vision of the future is used to maintain the present status quo?'. The fifth and final concept (ibid), is the re-ordering of knowledge, which explores how the use of certain categories of language, for example stages in history, can determine the ordering of our knowledge.

The poststructuralist futures toolbox provides the required framework to question language, meaning and units of analysis for research phenomena. The researcher used the post-structuralist futures toolbox to assist with the un-defining of language, meanings and units of analysis from the findings of the research.

3.6.7 The CLA method

CLA, according to Inayatullah (2004, p. 10), is derived from all five post-structuralist futures toolbox concepts. As a method of analysis, it uses four levels of analysis to broaden the dimensions of the assessor. These levels are:

Level 1: Litany. At this level, issues analysis is based upon quantitative trends, empirical data and news media. Events and issues are not connected and appear discontinuous. The result is a feeling of helplessness to do anything about the issues (Inayatullah 2004, p. 12).

Level 2: Social causes or systems view. At this level issues are framed and analysed from systemic causation perspectives and include analysis from social, technological, economical, environmental and political perspectives. At this level the language of questioning does not challenge the prevailing paradigms (ibid 2004, p. 12).

Level 3: Worldview or paradigm view. At this level, analysis is concerned with discerning the deeper assumptions behind the issue. The issue can be explored through multiple discourses and worldviews and can include the cultural, feministic,

ethnical, civilisation (east versus west) and ideological perspectives. The use of contradictory scenarios, as a tool, is a useful method to dislodge assumptions underpinning issues (ibid 2004, p. 12).

Level 4: Myth/Metaphor. At this level the analysis aims to find the deeper stories, the sub-conscious and emotive view/s of issues (ibid 2004, p. 13).

CLA's ability to create new ways of knowing by interpreting and re-interpreting issues and their solutions provides an invaluable opportunity to the researcher. Through the use of the CLA process, the researcher will be able to integrate each of the two other triangulated methods of analysis.

3.6.8 Researcher's applied futures studies survey

3.6.8.1 Aim and purpose of the researchers survey

The main aim of the researcher's survey was to establish an initial baseline on community attitudes on the future after their participation in an applied futures studies workshop. The secondary aim of the questionnaire was to provide data for comparison with the findings from the Maroochy 2025 evaluation Community Survey No. 4 (Market Facts 2004c). The purpose was to determine whether community attitudes at the time of initial exposure to applied futures studies processes had shifted after a period of reflection. This comparative analysis then enabled the researcher to interrogate the findings of the comparative analysis in conjunction with the CLA findings to determine the three key research questions:

1. Does the use of applied futures studies shift community attitudes and increase the community's level of confidence to create alternative ways of learning, knowing and uses of the future?
2. Can local government politicians and planners improve community planning approaches to enhance the concept of anticipatory democracy?
3. Does foresight and community planning shift the power away from local politicians towards communities and planners?

3.6.8.2 Data collection

To collect the required data, the researcher gained permission from the Maroochy 2025 Project Team and the CTF to conduct a random survey of residents from Maroochy

Shire and employees of Maroochy Shire Council who had attended Maroochy 2025 activities.

Data collection for the researcher's survey commenced from the beginning of the community engagement activities in Stage 2 (Visioning) and continued throughout the Maroochy 2025 action planning stages. Surveys were made available to participants on completion of each community engagement activity. Individuals were invited to complete the researcher's survey while completing a session evaluation form. It was clearly communicated that completing the researcher's survey was optional and that the survey was only to be used for academic research purposes. The survey sample size was 285 participants, and included residents from each of the eleven Maroochy Shire electoral divisions. The researcher's survey contained fourteen key focus questions.

3.6.8.3 Researcher's questionnaire

A copy of the applied futures studies questionnaire is supplied at Appendix 8.6.

3.7 Data collection for the Maroochy 2025 case study

3.7.1 Introduction

The main types of data required for the completion the Maroochy 2025 Vision by the CTF included individual images and audio and written statements based around the key questions asked throughout the Maroochy 2025 project. The reason images and audio were included as a data source was because it was recognised that the individual uses multiple modes of intelligence to communicate. To access and stimulate these multiple intelligences, participants were provided with means to submit data as drawings, written words, artistic expression, audio, electronic mediums and personal stories.

3.7.2 Data collection categories

Collection of individual visions required contact with as many Maroochy community residents as possible, over an allocated time-frame of nine months. Data set categories were determined to ensure groups or categories within a community could be identified and targeted for visioning activities. These categories were based on the demographic

profiles as identified in the Maroochy Shire Council's Community Profile. These profile categories included:

- People living with disabilities;
- Age groupings;
- Indigenous peoples;
- Gender;
- Education;
- Wealth
- Ethnicity; and
- Occupations

Data collection categories were specified so as to ensure a diverse selection of community voices or inputs. Some of these groups tend to be missed as represented in the community, however this project ensured that they could be heard and understood by the Community Task Force responsible for crafting the vision.

3.7.3 Data collection phases

There were six distinct stages of data collection in the Maroochy 2025 project. These were:

- Stage O: (pre Maroochy 2025) Priming Workshop data collected to determine if a visioning project was needed in Maroochy Shire;
- Stage 1(a) 'Where are we now?' Data collected through Survey No. 1;
- Stage 1(b) 'Where are we going?' Probable scenario data developed by the CTF;
- Stage 2 'Where do we want to be?' Visioning data was collected through public participation activities, Survey No. 2, and the visioning summits, along with the CTF's completion of the Vision Statement;
- Stage 3 'How will we get there?' Data was collected through action planning teams in the form of strategies and actions and validation data on the action plans were collected through Survey No. 3; and
- Stage 4: 'Are we getting there?' Data collected on proposed signature projects.

3.7.4 Multiple data collection strategies

Seven data collection strategies were adopted for Maroochy 2025. These were:

- Personal observation;
- Survey questionnaires;
- Visioning and action planning workshops;
- Website blogs;
- School futures program and summit;
- Scenarios;
- Visioning summit.

Four community surveys were undertaken for the Maroochy 2025 project. The statistical questionnaires were designed by the Project Team, except where the researcher designed Community Survey Nos. 3 and 4 to complement the objectives of this thesis. The data collection for all four surveys was undertaken by Market Facts, a Brisbane-based statistical research company. The aim of Community Survey No. 1 (Market Facts 2003) was to identify issues and community values. Community Survey No. 2 (Market Facts 2004a) was used to test the level of support for the vision ideas. Community Survey No. 3 (Market Facts 2004b) tested the level of support for the strategies and actions, and finally, Community Survey No. 4 (Market Facts 2004c) was used to evaluate the perceived success or failure of Maroochy 2025. The researcher's independent applied futures survey (discussed below) was used to assess attitudinal changes as result of going through applied futures studies and anticipatory action learning processes.

For the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 1, Market Facts was commissioned to conduct a random telephone survey of 484 residents from Maroochy Shire. The majority of respondents interviewed were full-time residents of the Maroochy Shire. Less than 1 percent, that is five respondents, were part-time residents, but nominated Maroochy Shire as their primary residence. A total of 44 respondents were interviewed from each of Maroochy Shire Council's 11 divisions, and the surveyors sought to match the surveyed sample to Australian Bureau of Statistics demographics figures for the Shire to ensure a representative sample of age groups was involved. Hence, the

following age group samples were achieved in each of the subsequent surveys (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Demographic statistics for Community Survey No. 1

| Age Group 2001 Census (ABS 2001) | | |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Age group | As proportion of Maroochy Shire's population in 2001 | As proportion surveyed |
| 0-14 | 20.5% | na |
| 15-24 | 11.6%* | 9% |
| 25-34 | 11.8% | 8% |
| 35-44 | 14.9% | 19% |
| 45-54 | 13.9% | 20% |
| 55-64 | 11.0% | 18% |
| 65+ | 16.4% | 26% |

* For legal reasons, the 15-18 age groups were not interviewed in random telephone survey.

For the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 2, Market Facts was commissioned to conduct a telephone survey of residents from across Maroochy Shire. This was to validate the top thirty visions developed from Stage 2 of the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project. Again, the random telephone survey comprised of a sample size of 484 residents. The majority of respondents interviewed were full-time residents of the Maroochy Shire. A total of 44 respondents were interviewed from each of Maroochy Shire's 11 shire divisions.

Three hundred residents of the Shire were surveyed in Community Survey No. 3, which was a random telephone survey conducted Market Facts. This survey sought to validate the outcomes of the third stage of Maroochy 2025.

For Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4, Market Facts was commissioned to conduct a benchmark survey which was to form part of a longitudinal study into measuring stakeholder perceptions about the personal and perceived community impact of Maroochy 2025. The survey was undertaken at the conclusion of the third stage of action planning of the project. For this first survey, a number of key internal and external aspects of the project were measured, including:

- Awareness and support for Maroochy 2025 Vision, strategies and action plans;

- Confidence in strategies and action plans developed to date;
- Importance of future involvement;
- The need to develop measures to evaluate implementation of M2025;
- Effectiveness of public participation methods used;
- Impact on the community (community cohesiveness);
- Personal Impacts of being involved in M2025; and
- Confidence in the future and community leadership as a result of M2025.

The methodology used to complete this survey involved telephoning a range of stakeholders who had been involved in the project. Maroochy Shire Council's Maroochy 2025 Project Team provided Market Facts with the Maroochy 2025 stakeholder database. From the 563 names, the statistical sample number of interviews required was 300; however the final number interviewed was 331 respondents.

3.7.4.1 Visioning workshops

During the public visioning workshops, visioning ideas and responses were collected through several methods. These methods were a structured questionnaire; the production of paintings and drawings; and the writing of key vision ideas on three coloured footprints that were pasted to a key focus area poster of choice. The final method of data collected was through sharing stories and passions. These stories were based on the work produced by the workshop participants and shared with other participants including the Maroochy 2025 Project Team members.

3.7.4.2 Maroochy 2025 website

The data collected from the maroochy2025.net website blog was added to the community visioning database. This data was then processed by the CTF using the Key Focus Area Sub Matrix (Appendices 8.1 and 8.3) to cluster the vision ideas.

3.7.4.3 Schools futures programs

The data required from the schools futures programs was based on students producing images, stories and cultural artefacts relating to the future of Maroochy in the year

2025. Data generated through the futures school program was presented for assessment to the CTF and the Maroochy 2025 Project Team. After completing their own school futures program, students had an opportunity to come together and share and present this data to other schools. The data from the Schools Visioning Summit was incorporated into a final 'Vision Statement' representative of the schools' and students' reflections and classroom data. This statement was presented at the main Visioning Summit given to the CTF to use in their crafting of the wider Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement.

3.7.4.4 Maroochy 2025 scenarios

To situate community thinking and focus for the future, the use of the futures landscape assisted the mapping of probable and alternative future scenarios. The Maroochy 2025 Project Team acknowledged the need to identify a baseline probable scenario. This baseline allowed for alternative scenarios to be developed and was a method to assist in clarifying alternatives and assisting the CTF in decision making processes pertaining to the creation of alternative futures.

The development of the probable scenario used existing CTF assumptions about the drivers creating Maroochy Shire's future and then projected these assumptions into the future. The probable scenario was developed from the futures landscape survival perspective. The probable scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025 was developed by the CTF using data derived from the Maroochy 2025 research paper (Sinclair Knight Mertz 2003) and presentations by planners from Maroochy Shire Council and the CTF members' own assumptions and knowledge about Maroochy Shire's future. The probable scenario data was then communicated to the community through newsletter no. 2.

It was decided by the researcher, Philip Daffara, and Sohail Inayatullah that the two uncertainties had the potential to affect Maroochy Shire's future. As previously mentioned on page 125, these were identified as being:

- How would the natural environment be valued by the local economy? and
- How would Maroochy Shire's leaders engage their community in foresight activities to enable the development of participatory leadership styles?

The inter-relationship of these two uncertainties was used to assist with the development of the four alternative scenarios. The use of a double variable method assisted with incorporating the uncertainties into the scenarios. Consequently, the four draft scenarios were developed in conjunction with the CTF, the researcher and Philip Daffara.

The next step was to present the four alternative scenarios at the Maroochy 2025 Visioning Summit in April 2004, to enable the community to vote on a preferred future by selecting their preferred alternative scenario. To assist the process of selection, the community was initially provided with information on the probable scenario and then asked to select one of the four alternatives scenarios as their individual choice for the future. Each of the four scenarios presented at the Visioning Summit had a specific colour code to assist with differentiation between the scenarios and with counting towards a final result.

3.7.4.5 Community Visioning Summit

The main requirement for data collection at the Community Visioning Summit was that the community determine which of the four alternative scenarios was their preferred scenario and which of the 124 vision ideas were their top 30 vision ideas. This data collection requirement was accomplished by asking all summit participants to choose their preferred scenario. Then, the Maroochy 2025 project facilitators, who were allocated to each of the 20 tables at the Summit, calculated the figures for each coloured card per table. A final tally of the results was then presented to all of the Summit participants so as to communicate the final result. The preferred scenario was then used to assist the CTF to draft a vision statement.

To collect the next piece of data, namely the top 30 vision ideas, the summit participants were issued with six coloured dots and asked to place a dot on their preference for particular vision ideas. At the end of the 'place your dots session', all dots were then totalled up and the top thirty ideas were identified and presented to all the summit participants as a closing activity.

3.8 Summary

This chapter outlined the futures studies methods used in Maroochy 2025, details of the Maroochy 2025 project case study, and the research methods of analysis. It was explained how the Maroochy 2025 project came into being, its context, and how the researcher became involved in Maroochy 2025. The chapter also detailed all stages of the Maroochy 2025 project and outlined the methods selected to accomplish each set of deliverables for the stages. The methods of analysis, data collection phases and details of the researcher's applied futures studies survey were explained. The research element in this project is the researcher's personal observations and the applied futures survey. It has been clearly communicated that the researcher's role, level of involvement and ability has included influencing, developing and integrating the use of applied futures throughout the project.

Chapter 4 begins to present the specific findings from Maroochy 2025 through the triangulated method of analysis. The CLA and its results are discussed separately in Chapter 5; CLA requires analysis and discussion from a critical futures point of view rather than producing findings per se, being from an empirical and interpretative futures perspective.

4. Case study and research findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is organised into seven sections and presents the findings from the data collected during the Maroochy 2025 project and the researcher's triangulated analysis. The first five sections relate to the findings from each of the five stages of Maroochy 2025. The sixth section relates to the findings from the researcher's applied futures studies survey. The seventh and final section relates to the findings from the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4 (Market Facts 2004c), which was aimed at assessing the project's effectiveness. Throughout each section, the researcher provides personal observation commentary within a framework of anticipatory action learning. Findings from each of the community surveys, undertaken by Market Facts, are presented from both a qualitative and quantitative research perspective. Findings from the researcher's applied futures study survey are provided together with graphs depicting aspects of the data, and respondents' comments. A description of the outputs from each of the Maroochy 2025 project stages is also provided. Findings and discussions from the CLA assessments are covered in Chapter 5.

The first section (4.2) presents the results of Stage 1(a) of Maroochy 2025 and includes the results of the researcher's personal observations, the Maroochy 2025 Survey No. 1 and Stage 1(a) outputs. Section 4.3 presents the results from Stage 1(b), including the Maroochy 2025 probable scenario developed by the CTF. The probable scenario was developed using a depiction of the 'present' Maroochy Shire in the year 2004. From an anticipatory action learning research perspective, the probable scenario was developed based on the learning, questioning and knowledge of the CTF. The current assumptions of the CTF were used to extrapolate the known data on key drivers shaping Maroochy Shire's future. This data was then extended using the CTF assumptions to create a probable scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025.

Section 4.4 presents the results from Stage 2 of Maroochy 2025 which includes firstly the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 2 (Market Facts 2004a). This survey measured the level of community support for the top 30 vision ideas polled at the vision summit. Secondly, the results from the public engagement activities are presented. Finally, section three details the results of the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision

Statement as developed by the CTF; including the final Maroochy 2025 visioning journey.

Section 4.5 presents the findings from Stage 3 of Maroochy 2025 which includes the results of the remaining Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 3. Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 3 (Market Facts 2004b) is the community's assessment of the visioning strategies developed by the action planning teams. Stage 4 is discussed in section 4.6. Section 4.7 then presents the results of the researcher's applied futures studies survey. In this section, the fourteen survey questions are discussed together with the findings using both text and graph formats.

The final overall evaluation of the Maroochy 2025 project and processes, Community Survey No. 4 (Market Facts 2004c), is examined in section 4.8. The survey sample included those who had participated at various stages or actively participated in an applied futures studies activity. The chapter concludes with section 4.9.

The four Maroochy 2025 community surveys were conducted by Market Facts, a Brisbane based statistical research company. The development of survey questionnaires no. 1 and no. 2 was undertaken by the Maroochy 2025 Project Team. The third and fourth community surveys were designed by the researcher.

4.2 Maroochy 2025 Stage 1(a): “Where are we now?”

The aim of Stage 1(a) was to meet four key objectives. Firstly, the Maroochy 2025 project required a position from which to commence visioning dialogue and discussion. By determining this position, Maroochy 2025 could then explore the alternatives. The purpose of this approach was to identify the current known assumptions held by those who were involved in Maroochy 2025. A second objective in Stage 1(a) was to identify what others were saying in the area of visioning; accordingly, a research paper was compiled using external and internal perspectives (Sinclair Knight Merz 2003). Thirdly, it was recognised by the Project Team that there was a need to find some common language. By providing definitions and meaning to the visioning dialogue and through identifying common language, the Project Team could manage contextualisation, purpose and meanings of conversation within agreed boundaries. The final objective of Stage 1(a) was the identification of the emerging issues and drivers of change that were shaping the future of Maroochy Shire. These drivers and issues need to be

managed into the future and it was important that the visioning process consider the level of influence that each driver and issue might have on the vision.

4.2.1 The role of the researcher in Stage 1(a)

The primary role of the researcher in Stage 1(a) was the achievement of Stage 1(a) outputs. Specifically, this included the development and design of processes for the implementation of CTF workshops. These workshops were co-facilitated with Dr. Philip Daffara, were approximately three hours in duration and utilised participatory engagement methods. The researcher's role also included the administering of Community Survey No. 1. The results of Stage 1(a) are now discussed.

4.2.2 Result and outputs from Stage 1(a)

There were several key outputs required from Stage 1(a), including:

- The recruitment of a community task force (CTF);
- Completion of the Maroochy 2025 emerging issues and scenario based research paper based on eleven key focus areas;
- Development of a Maroochy 2025 website for the purposes of communication, media and marketing;
- Completion of a community values and issues survey;
- Development of a baseline probable scenario for Maroochy in 2025. This scenario was developed by the CTF utilising the Maroochy 2025 (Sinclair Knight Mertz 2003).

These outputs were achieved by the end of Stage 1(a).

4.2.3 Personal observations Stage (1a)

During the facilitation of Maroochy 2025 Stage 1(a), the researcher observed the following. After the recruitment of the CTF, the first workshop convened between the CTF and the Maroochy 2025 facilitators was within the physical Council offices environs. Initial observations of this workshop highlighted that the CTF were displaying an increasing level of anxiety, antagonism and mistrust towards the facilitators as the workshop continued. This translated into the CTF becoming increasingly argumentative and challenging towards the facilitators, thus increasing the level of learning barriers

and leading to the resignation of several CTF members. **It was realised, that by using Council meeting rooms and buildings, the facilitators were unwittingly contributing to the perception that Council is controlling and directing. The lack of sensitivity to the learning environment impeded the workshop success and had negative consequences for group dynamics and ways of learning and knowing by the CTF.**

Through enquiry with several CTF members and the CTF chairperson, it was identified that by using a Council building for the workshop, we had heightened the CTF's level of suspicion of Council. The CTF's sensitivity to their environment and image of Council was being transferred into the learning environment. This led to limiting the ability to share dialogue, reflect and learn together, thus undermining the pathways to learning and getting to know and work with each other. Therefore, to improve the workshop dynamics and to increase the capacity for learning, it was decided by all that in future, a neutral site was to be used where both the CTF and facilitators could operate on equal terms.

4.2.4 Survey No 1: Community values and issues

Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 1 was completed by Market Facts (2003) in November, 2003. They conducted a random telephone survey of 484 Maroochy Shire residents. The majority of the respondents interviewed were full-time residents of Maroochy Shire. A total of 44 respondents were interviewed from each of the Maroochy Shire Council's eleven divisions. Age quotas were achieved in accordance with the 2001 Census data collection categories. Summarising the results of the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 1, Market Facts (2003) reported that:

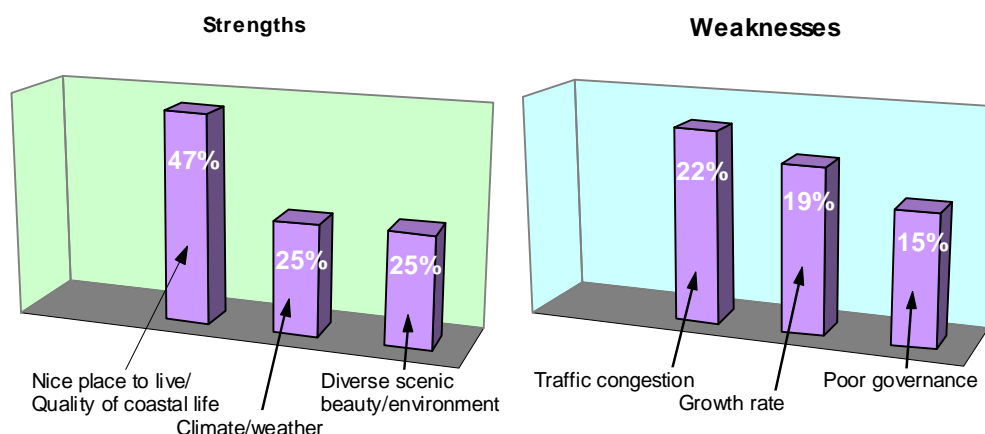
At the time of the survey in November 2003, more than twenty percent of respondents were aware of the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project. Awareness levels varied across Maroochy Shire divisions. Respondents chose to live in Maroochy Shire because of their jobs, a relaxed healthy lifestyle and the scenic beauty / environment. Respondents were asked to rate (from 1 to 5) the extent to which they agreed with the core value statements developed by the Sunshine Coast community in the 'Dare to Dream' project. The rating scale used was:

1. *strongly agree;*
2. *somewhat agree;*
3. *somewhat disagree;*
4. *strongly disagree; and*
5. *don't know/refused.*

Respondents generally agreed with the following core value statements:

- Practising ethics, integrity and respect in personal and public life (79%);
- Fostering community involvement and participation in decisions that affect our Shire (79%);
- Caring for and respecting our natural environment (74%);
- Belonging to a fair community that will improve our quality of life (67%); and
- Valuing our cultural heritage (53%).

The top responses to the current strengths and weaknesses of the Shire are shown in Market Facts' (2003) graph (4.1) below:



Graph 4.1. Strengths and weaknesses in Maroochy Shire⁵

Thirty seven percent said “yes” when asked if they believed Maroochy was a better place to live since they arrived. When asked about the future, forty one percent stated that they believed that Maroochy Shire would become a better place to live in the future, but ninety two percent agreed that Maroochy Shire needed a shared vision to create a better future.

In identifying the qualities required by a community, respondents were read a list of qualities used to evaluate communities and were asked to rate the importance of each quality. The following rating scaled was used:

1. very important;
2. somewhat important;
3. somewhat unimportant; and
4. very unimportant.

The same qualities were again read to respondents and they were asked to rate Maroochy Shire. The following rating scale was used:

⁵ Unless an alternative source is given, graphs and tables in this chapter are from Market Facts (2003, 2004a, 2004b, or 2004c)

1. excellent;
2. good;
3. fair; and
4. poor.

The following table provides a comparison of the highest rating response between a respondent's personal rating for each quality and their rating of that quality for Maroochy Shire. The majority of respondents stated that all these qualities were 'very' or 'somewhat' important. Respondents were then asked to rank these qualities in terms of current performance. Ratings varied from 'good' to 'fair'. The main divergence between importance and performance was in the area of 'quality of leadership', which was rated as poor.

Table 4.1. Community qualities from Survey No. 1

| Quality | Personal Ranking (% of responses) | Performance Rating for Maroochy Shire (% of responses) | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|-----|
| Quality of leadership | Very important (82%) | Poor | 45% |
| Accessible health care | Very important (82%) | Good | 57% |
| Fair and ethical decision-making | Very important (79%) | Fair | 38% |
| Protecting and sustaining healthy natural environment | Very important (69%) | Fair | 43% |
| Safe, crime-free neighbourhoods | Very important (69%) | Good | 54% |

In order to meet community expectations for a better future, respondents said that Maroochy Shire would need to:

- Control/manage growth;
- Improve leadership and increase wise decision-making;
- Protect and sustain our natural environment; and
- Improve public transport and mobility.

When respondents were read a set of policy options facing Maroochy Shire, the following four options rated highest:

- Maintain low building heights (92%);
- Maintain current rate payer levels (80%);
- Provide resources to the community to build civic leadership and partnerships (70%); and
- Make coordinated decisions with our regional neighbours (63%).

Other high priorities were are show in Table 4.2 below (Market Facts 2003)

Table 4.2. Community priorities from Survey No. 1

| Top Four Community Priorities for Maroochy's future | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1 | Control/manage growth |

| | |
|----------|---|
| 2 | <i>Improve leadership and increase wise decision-making</i> |
| 3 | <i>Protect and sustain our natural environment</i> |
| 4 | <i>Improve public transport and mobility</i> |

The results from the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 1 suggest strong themes being communicated by the community around maintaining sustainability and sustainable development. These results provided the Maroochy 2025 Project Team and the CTF with a framework of themes to assist with the development of the probable scenario. This probable scenario is highlighted in section 4.3 below.

4.2.5 Baseline statement of Maroochy Shire in 2005

The statement below, taken from *Maroochy 2025: A visioning journey* (Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p. 10), depicts the current assessment of Maroochy Shire in 2005 as written by the Maroochy 2025 CTF:

Maroochy Shire offers rich, diverse natural habitats. It boasts of being one of the most biologically diverse Local government areas in Australia. However, 42 species of our local flora and 48 species of our local fauna are listed as rare, threatened, or vulnerable under the Queensland Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994. Some of these species are found nowhere else on earth. Environmental protection is one of the Shire's major community concerns, yet our natural enclaves are under constant threat from urban development and habitat clearing.

Surveys indicate 64 percent of us believe we enjoy good quality of life. The Shire is highly liveable. It offers a unique lifestyle. We enjoy ready access to many educational and lifelong learning opportunities. Our neighbourhoods are mostly safe and crime-free. In comparison to many other regions, we experience amicable relations between our ethnic components. We provide equitable health care. Access to our cultural arts is inadequate, but it is slowly improving.

We are aware of the need to strengthen and expand our sustainable communities. To achieve this, the greatest challenges we currently face are: increasing smart growth management; improving quality of our leadership; developing a

fairer, more ethical means of decision-making. Maroochy today is car-dependent. Traffic congestion is a major community concern. We are aware of the need to improve public transport to keep our distinct townships well connected and accessible. Our local economy is growing. It is heavily reliant on its retail and financial property services / development sectors. The agricultural sector is transforming. It is under continual threat from global markets and local development pressures. Opportunities for long-term employment and the range of jobs available to us are proving inadequate for our needs.

The statement recognises the unique bio-diversity across Maroochy Shire. There is an enjoyable and unique quality of life, yet there is also growing concern about the lack of transparency and levels of governance affecting the quality of decision making. The implications of urban growth on the economic, social and environmental sustainability dimensions are becoming an emerging issue. There is a growing level of awareness of the drivers of change and how these may become real issues.

4.3 Maroochy 2025 Stage 1(b): “Where are we going?”

The aim of Stage 1(b) was to build on from the current scenario and identify a probable scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025. From the starting point scenario, trends and drivers of change could then be extrapolated into a future trajectory, enabling an image of the future for Maroochy Shire to be created

The purpose of the probable scenario was to firstly highlight what Maroochy Shire could look like in 2025. This was based on the community doing very little to influence the drivers of change. A second purpose of the probable scenario was to create dissonance in the attitudes and assumptions held by the CTF. The aim of creating dissonance in the CTF was to challenge the ‘lock ins’ within the CTF thinking and deepen the CTF’s ways of knowing about the future.

4.3.1 The role of the researcher in Stage 1(b)

The primary role of the researcher in Stage 1(b) was to co-facilitate with Dr. Philip Daffara the achievement of Stage 1(b) outputs.

4.3.2 Outputs from Stage 1(b)

There were two key outputs required from Stage 1(b). These were:

- Completion of *community newsletter no. 1* for the purpose of marketing the Maroochy 2025 project, and the CTF's role and responsibilities; and
- Development of the probable scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025. This probable scenario was developed in conjunction with the CTF. It utilised the Maroochy 2025 emerging issues and scenario based research paper (Sinclair Knight Mertz 2003)

All these outputs were achieved by the end of Stage 1(b).

4.3.3 Personal observations

During the facilitation of Stage 1(b), the researcher's observations were as follows. The researcher designed a series of probing questions to reveal the assumptions held by members of the CTF. The researcher observed that by questioning the CTF participants' assumptions at every level regarding the future, Participants experienced increased anxiety. **The aim of the questioning was to challenge CTF assumptions in order to demonstrate to the CTF the effect of engaging in futures studies dialogues. The anxiety experienced was in the form of defensive behaviours displayed by individuals. This behaviour categorised individuals into three distinct patterns of response. The first response included individuals debating which escalated to an argumentative level and aggressive singling out of the researcher through attacking what was said; there was obvious anger without openness. The second category of individuals displayed anxiety through withdrawing from the discussion and remaining passive, and individuals in the third category resigned from the CTF.**

By reflecting on the CTF reactions, the researcher was able to highlight to the CTF ways to overcome such behaviours. The researcher relayed to the CTF that if they wanted to create an alternative to the probable future and to shift assumptions they needed to ensure that they considered and reflected on the many perspectives, assumptions and variables within their learning and on how to manage the anxieties evoked by questioning the future.

4.3.4 Scenario: Maroochy Shire's 'probable future', 2025

The scenario below depicts the current assessment of a probable scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025 as written by the Maroochy 2025 CTF (Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p. 11):

Projections of massive population growth proved correct. Through a combination of poor governance, limited regional cooperation, inadequate growth management and vigorous urban development, Maroochy is now a mesh of sprawling settlements, jostling to house even more people. Our community misunderstood sustainability. Short-term economic gains took precedence over environmental and social needs. Local government authorities continue to make decisions separately, each Shire working towards a quite different vision of the future. The result is an ad hoc patchwork of policies and regulations.

Our quality of life is deteriorating. Urban sprawl is the dominant landscape. Mere pockets of our natural environment survive. Even these are rendered squalid through the constant influx of polluted air, toxic waterways, and litter. Many people experience social isolation - public transport being unable to service such large areas of low-density residential development. Most residents simply can't afford the spiralling costs of owning a car. Others are simply too young or too old to be driving. Access to facilities and town centres is increasingly inequitable.

Urban sprawl doubled our travel times and travel distances. This, in turn, eroded our capacity to participate in community life. For the majority, life is stressful. Unemployment is rife. Cost of living is escalating. Local housing is unaffordable for most new families. Quality of life, safety, and any sense of community identity are fast disappearing. Consequently, our wider community is strongly disillusioned with, and disassociated from, government leadership. It is cynical about our processes of decision-making. In this climate of fear and self-preservation, volunteerism is vanishing, even though a

large portion of our community now consists of retirees (a quarter of all residents are over 65).

The knowledge economy has not bloomed. Other regions proved more attractive - offering better quality of life. “Bare-foot” executives and culturally creative talent moved elsewhere. In fact, our economic base - tourism and leisure, fisheries and the rural sector — is struggling to survive. Pollution, habitat fragmentation, and declining services are taking their toll on these industries. On the other hand, our ageing population is ensuring that health, community services, and education remain significant industries. Likewise, physiological wellbeing and learning are emerging as lifelong social pursuits.

The main themes presented in the probable scenario highlight the impacts from the drivers of change and explore their effects on the Maroochy community. This scenario assumed that the community was unable to change their future. Consequently, this scenario in terms of the futures landscape is about survival. It does not suggest that the community considers an alternative future. The community is a recipient of a future which it believes is impossible to stop or prevent.

4.4 Maroochy 2025 Stage 2: “Where do we want to be?”

The aim of Stage 2 from a futures landscape perspective was to find the alternatives to the probable future scenario. To achieve this, Stage 2 involved the collection of diverse and innovative ideas to assist the CTF in making informed and alternative choices when developing the visions for 2025.

4.4.1 Outputs from Stage 2

Outputs achieved in Stage 2 were as follows:

- Completion of all data collection phases for community engagement prior to the vision summit;
- Development of the four possible scenarios for Maroochy Shire in 2025;
- Delivery of a community summit for the purpose of identification of a preferred scenario for Maroochy Shire in 2025; this included the community poll to vote on the top 124 vision ideas with the intention of reducing them to the top 30 vision ideas;

- Development of the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement;
- Development of the Maroochy 2025 Vision Narrative by the CTF; and
- Administration of Community Survey No 2.

All of these outputs were achieved by the end of Stage 2.

4.4.2 The role of the researcher in Stage 2

The primary role of the researcher in Stage 2 was to facilitate and coordinate the community engagement activities using applied futures methods. These methods included emerging issues analysis, scenarios, anticipatory questioning and creative visualisation. Secondary roles included the continued facilitation of the CTF and the partnered development of the four Maroochy 2025 alternative scenarios.

4.4.3 Personal observations

Throughout Stage 2, and specifically during the community visioning workshops, there was participant resistance to thinking and imaging alternatives to the future. There appeared to be two reasons for this. Firstly, the weight of the past on thinking and feelings was observed as having a strong effect on the participants' comments, behaviours and reactions to the visioning process. **Secondly, because the project was being sponsored by Maroochy Shire Council and facilitated by Maroochy Shire Council employees, community members saw this as an opportunity to raise grievances with Council at the visioning workshops. To improve the process from an anticipatory action learning perspective, it was recognised that the resistance needed to be named, understood and transformed.**

At the completion of the first trial workshops, the Project Team and the researcher reflected and discussed ways to overcome the barriers of past and present thinking by modifying the facilitation process. The modifications to the workshops included designing them with artefacts which assisted in positioning participants in futuristic mental, physical and emotion space. This was achieved by exercises in visual narrative, creative visualisation, and the use of futuristic imagery.

Another modification included within the facilitation process was the allocation of time to capture immediate community concerns regarding Council. This was assisted by the

inclusion of a representative from Council's Customer Service team. This representative recorded and communicated the issues back to Council. By changing the process, the team was able to create the necessary environment to enable the community participants to respond in a transformed way. It enabled the participants to scan the future using all their ways of knowing. They were able to reach a deeper and more authentic understanding and appreciation of each others aspirations for the future.

4.4.4 Stage 2: Community engagement results

4.4.4.1 Community visioning workshops

The community visioning workshops generated over 3,368 vision ideas which included the identification of over 1,000 individual 'top three' vision ideas generated by most participants.

4.4.4.2 School futures program and vision summit

Schools that participated in visioning studies produced over 200 drawings, poems, story, artefacts and paintings for Maroochy 2025. At the Schools' Visioning Summit held in March 2004, 65 student delegates came together to share their vision ideas and to develop the students' vision statement for Maroochy in 2025. Students collectively articulated the following joint Youth Vision Statement for the Shire (Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.63):

Our Vision is to be committed to sustaining a balanced and positively energised way of life that is connected, ambitious, enthusiastic and determined to keep the community of Maroochy alive in 2025 and beyond.

4.4.4.3 Maroochy 2025 website

The hopes for a vibrant exchange of ideas and discussion on the Maroochy website were not fulfilled during the project. The small amount of data collected through this method was passed on to the CTF with the vision ideas. The poor results from the online engagement did not impact on the CTF's ability to develop a vision statement. It was later determined that a possible cause of the limited response was the low level or limited access of the community to Internet capabilities across the region. Only 33

percent of the Maroochy community had access to in-home broadband or dial-up Internet services.

4.4.4.4 Alternative scenarios for Maroochy Shire in 2025

There were four alternative scenarios developed in Stage 2 for the purpose of presenting four key alternative futures at the Community Visioning Summit. The details of the four scenarios are outlined in the following table (Table 4.3, from Maroochy 2025 project file, Sunshine Coast Regional Council).

Table 4.3. Maroochy 2025 scenarios

Maroochy Futures Scenarios

| Maroochy Futures | Maroochy by Decree | Maroochy's Connected Learning Villages | Maroochy Metropolis | E-Maroochy Cyber City |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Society | Social relationships vary depending on personal wealth, opportunity and town community. | Social relationships are strong and valued across most communities. Fair and equitable partnerships. | Greater wealth divides exist: Inequity in opportunities and social relationships. | Social relationships and public participation sporadic. People are connected in their separate e-communities |
| Technology | High Tech access to some and not others | Subsidised High Tech access to all | High tech user pays system | Subsidised High Tech access to all |
| Environment | Protected and Healthy | Nature and buildings in integrated healthy ecology | Urban and rural melded together. Nature Fragmented | Forgotten Remnants and rural wilderness |
| Value of the Environment within the Economy | Natural assets valued by Local Business. Green is Gold | Ecology deeply valued + protected by business and community as our way of life; at a profit | Nature is a resource for Growth | Nature is not a concern in the economy. Technology is. |
| Economy | Eco-tourism dominates; Construction curtailed by Regulation. Significant Commuting workforce. | Local Creative Industries & Arts exports globally; Showcase region for Sustainable development; Diverse job choice; Education & Health/wellbeing sectors dominate. | Cyclic construction industry; Few high value jobs available; Large Service Sector with low skills base; Retail and Tourism strong. | Small e-enterprise mecca with global reach via web. Large pool of semi-skilled technology workers; Little local business networking. |
| Politics | High Regulation for common good. Basic Community Consultation and feedback | Participatory & empowered Community decision making | Cosmetic Community Consultation | Empowered community e-polling; e-democracy and governance |
| Systems | Top down, expert and consistent | Learning Community – developing everyone's capacity | Top Down and Reactionary | Web-based learning communities |
| Values | Rules to save the environment before it is too late. Certainty is important. Eg Population Cap & no growth | Long term searching for deeper values. Honouring community grassroots involvement | Economic Growth is the only Good in a consumer's lifestyle. | Technology will solve all our problems and creates personal wealth and wellbeing |
| Our Story (metaphor) | Strong Fatherly Family: Firm but fair from the top. | Strong Family Partnerships: Everyone in the Family has an equal say. | Competitive Relationships: Keep up with the Jones. | Online Family: Virtual Relationships |

When the votes of the 310 Summit participants were tallied — including those polled prior to the summit (59 submissions from pre-polling booths at Nambour and Coolum libraries, and Maroochydore Sunshine Plaza Shopping Centre) — the results were as follows:

- 74 percent preferred the Maroochy's Connected and Learning Villages model
- 11.4 percent preferred the Maroochy by Decree model
- 9.8 percent preferred the E-Maroochy Cyber City model
- 4.8 percent preferred the Maroochy Metropolis model.

As three-quarters of those polled chose 'Maroochy's Connected and Learning Villages' as their preferred future, it was subsequently adopted as the basis for crafting the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement.

4.4.4.5 Visioning ideas

Participants were also polled on their top vision ideas for a preferred future in terms of social relationships, access to technology, the environment, the economy, politics, values and our deeper story or metaphor. A total of 3,368 vision ideas were collected from the community engagement processes and these vision ideas were clustered by the CTF using a Key Focus Area: Sub Theme Matrix (Appendices 8.1 and 8.3). This enabled the CTF to sort them into the top 124 vision ideas. The purpose of clustering the vision ideas was to reach a manageable number of visions for voting at the Summit by the community. The results of the voting enabled the community to identify the top 30 vision ideas. These top 30 vision ideas were then used by the CTF to create the Vision Statement.

Of particular interest to the researcher was discovering that the community had determined the top vision ideas under the focus area of leadership and foresight. The results (Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.47) are as follows:

Our responsible leadership and participatory decision-making and foresight: A Regional Council for the Sunshine Coast empowers our distinct local communities in managing their own places to achieve our community's regional vision;

As community leaders, we educate ourselves to be ethical, inclusive, informed, compassionate, transparent, collaborative, lifelong learners. We are better

communicators and accept that one persons model of the world will likely be different to our own;

and

In making decisions, we use a holistic, triple bottom line method of evaluating the impact on the community and environment. Our decision-making is based on achieving the community vision's long-term goals and action plans.

These results were important to the researcher, enabling him to compare and contrast the findings from the Summit with the results from the researcher's own comparative survey questionnaire.

4.4.5 Community Survey No. 2

In May 2004, a second survey was undertaken by Market Facts. The purpose of Community Survey No. 2 was to test the validity of the six Maroochy 2025 Key Focus Areas, key initiatives (30 vision ideas/goals) and priorities of Maroochy 2025 project against the views of the general public. According to Market Facts (2004) the results were as follows:

In this survey, (N=384) residents were interviewed by phone. Just over 30% of respondents interviewed were very confident /confident that the Maroochy 2025 community visioning process would become a way of life in the Shire and improve community governance in the future. The community positively endorses the vision yet the task force needs to do more work to refine it. The Key Focus Areas (goals) identified by the Task force address the community's needs and expectations for the future. Most Key Vision ideas are well supported by the community. A large increase in community awareness about the project has occurred between Nov 2003 and May 2004, 20% awareness to 69% awareness. The community is not confident about the vision becoming a reality or way of life in community governance. Overall, the survey results confirmed the extent to which a broader sample of the general community agreed with the thirty future visions and values formulated through the visioning summit.

4.4.6 The Maroochy's 2025 Community Vision Statement

The final Vision Statement crafted by the CTF was completed in June 2004. This Statement and the supporting community visions were compiled into a report which eventually became a volume in the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning series, titled *Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning* (Maroochy Shire Council 2005). The final Vision Statement presented to Maroochy Shire Council (Gould & Daffara eds 2005, p.86) is presented below:

The Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement

From the Mary River Valley over the Blackall Ranges to the Pacific Ocean, Maroochy Shire on the Sunshine Coast is a place that our connected community is proud to call home. We, Maroochy's residents, live in harmony alongside our clean waterways, beaches, and our diverse bush and farmlands. We respect and protect these natural places because they are home to our valued wildlife; they nurture our wellbeing, our physical and community needs and our economy. We are happy, healthy, safe, productive, creative and empowered. Learning, sharing knowledge and experiences, inspiring each other and together making decisions; is our way of life. Our leadership is responsive and is focused on building trust and a better inclusive future whilst holistically providing for our basic needs in the present. Maroochy's distinct towns and villages are designed to minimise energy-use, resource use, and environmental impacts. Our communities are connected by efficient public transport, and walk and cycle paths. Maroochy's viable rural and urban economies mutually benefit each other to protect our natural assets and provide diverse long-term employment. We have a unique 'Bush and Beach' culture — we know this and we actively care for it and for each other.

The researcher co-facilitated (with Dr. Philip Daffara) the synthesising of the top 30 vision ideas into a concise vision statement and vision narrative using the vision criterion concept framework.

From the researcher's personal observation, the final Vision Statement and Vision Narratives reflect an inclusive and sustainable image for the future. It demonstrated that communities can create robust, realistic and meaningful visions as part of creating a pathway for the creation of alternative and preferred community futures.

4.5 Maroochy 2025 Stage 3: “How will we get there?”

The aim of Stage 3 was the development of strategies and actions aligned to the top 30 vision ideas using a collaborative and participative process. This process involved the participation of community, Council, State Government and private sector stakeholders. These strategies were compiled into a strategic action plan.

4.5.1 Outputs from Stage 3

The outputs achieved in Stage 3 were:

- Development of 60 community strategies and 200 community actions for each of the 6 key focus areas;
- Undertaking Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 3, and Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4; and
- Development of a five-year action plan that included the final strategies and actions.

4.5.2 The role of the researcher in Stage 3

The primary role of the researcher in Stage 3 was to design, facilitate and coordinate the action planning teams, activities and processes. Secondary roles included the design of the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 3 and No. 4 questionnaires, the project management of Stage 3, communication of progress results to Maroochy Shire Council, and the preparation of the Maroochy 2025 book.

4.5.3 Personal observations

The use of Council facilitators proved to be very effective during the action planning stage. Firstly, it established champions within the organisation, thus increasing the level of buy-in among operational staff. Secondly, it increased Council’s capacity for using action learning approaches, especially when endeavouring to facilitate the work of a group of diverse stakeholders. Thirdly, it increased understanding within the facilitators of the use and principles of adult learning approaches and action learning techniques. Finally, the facilitators were educated in the use of anticipatory action learning questioning processes, which resulted in their ability to facilitate the development of the strategies and actions from a foresight perspective.

The involvement of Councillors in the action planning stage was particularly valuable in assisting the success of this stage. However, some of the Maroochy Shire Councillors who initially endorsed the Maroochy 2025 project were not re-elected for the period of the later stages of the project. This became problematic for the project when it was learned that some of the new incumbents did not specifically endorse the concept and aims of Maroochy 2025.

The results from the Integration Night demonstrated that when processes are designed and applied appropriately diverse groups can reach consensus and achieve their objectives. By using the world café approach, each of the six action planning teams, was able to integrate the inputs and strategies developed in other teams seamlessly into their own. This was possible because individual teams were given the space, flexibility and agency to use their different ways of knowing and learning. Consequently, each team were able to create a deeper understanding of what was being proposed and negotiated.

4.5.4 Community Survey No. 3

In November 2004, Market Facts completed a third survey for the Maroochy 2025 Project Team. This survey was undertaken in response to the question, “How will we get there?” (i.e. achieve our vision of the future). Community Survey No. 3 gauged the level of support for strategies developed in Stage 3 — Action Planning. Gould and Daffara reported the survey results (eds. 2005, p.76) as:

According to Market Facts (2003) a random telephone survey of 300 residents from Maroochy Shire was conducted. When respondents were asked about their confidence in achieving the strategies, (33%) of respondents were confident that they could be achieved, and an almost equal number of respondents (34%) or one in three, didn't know whether the strategies could be achieved. When respondents were then asked about their future involvement with implementation, 41% of respondents thought it were important, and (24%) of respondents didn't know if they would become involved.

Community Survey No. 3 demonstrated a high percentage of support for the strategies. The highest recorded support was (94%) for the idea of “Provide innovative solutions for our communities to reduce water and energy consumption levels”. The lowest recorded support was (67%) for “Build upon our existing foresight capabilities through applied learning projects.” However, the community is not

confident about the strategies being achieved. More than (60%) of respondents either didn't know, or (34%) were not confident that the strategies could be achieved.

In terms of responsibility to implement the strategies (57%) of respondents believe that they need to become involved in implementing the strategies. Less than 20% considered their role to be either not very important or quite unimportant. Community awareness about the project has declined slightly from the previous survey level of (69%) to (54%). Just a little more than half of the respondents interviewed were aware of the project.

The results from Community Survey No. 3 suggested a reasonably high level of ownership or sense of responsibility for the future with just over half of the respondents willing to participate with the implementation of the strategies. A key point from the results of Community Survey No. 3 is it was clear that Council had an opportunity to capitalise on a high level of community goodwill and volunteerism. Sadly, this opportunity was lost, due to Council's inaction or unwillingness to support or resource the implementation of the Maroochy 2025, five-year action plan, as discussed in the next section.

4.6 Maroochy 2025 Stage 4: "Are we getting there?"

The aim of Stage 4 was the development of implementation strategies for the five-year action plan. This process would continue to include the involvement of the community, Council employees, State Government and private sector stakeholders. The strategies would be compiled into an action plan. Stage 4's purpose was to take tangible action through the implementation of projects that would address the strategies identified in the action plan. Stage 4 would continue to be managed by the Maroochy 2025 project office (at this time the researcher was the only Project Team member left in the project), hence, early in 2005 it was proposed to establish a Maroochy 2025 Vision Implementation Committees (MVIC) to manage the implementation of the Maroochy 2025 Action plan. The role and responsibility of the MVIC was to:

- Develop levels of community support, partnerships, and networking through Maroochy 2025 activities;
- Monitor the performance indicators from Maroochy 2025;
- Increase community capacities to engage in future visioning processes;

- Celebrate the achievement of Maroochy 2025 strategies and actions achieved by Maroochy Shire;
- Problem-solve the overcoming of barriers preventing the implementation of Maroochy 2025 visions, strategies and actions; and
- Build a sense of social agency and community cohesion.

The primary role of the researcher in Stage 4 was to facilitate and coordinate the MVIC activities. Secondary roles being proposed included the facilitation of an MVIC Steering Committee, MVIC meetings, securing funding for signature projects from stakeholders and the delivery of a biannual visioning update summit.

4.6.1 Outputs from Stage 4

The proposed outputs to be achieved in Stage 4 were:

- Develop the implementation plan and obtain endorsement by Maroochy Shire Council;
- Secure necessary funding and resources for signature projects from Maroochy Shire Council and other public and private stakeholders;
- Recruit a Maroochy 2025 Vision Implementation Committees (MVIC); and
- Project management of the Stage 4 implementation activities.

However, the establishment of an MVIC did not eventuate due a decision by Maroochy Shire Council. This had a dramatic impact on the researcher's ability to progress the project further. At the Council election in March 2004, over 50 percent of the previous Councillor incumbents were not re-elected. The newly elected Councillors were not in favour of the MVIC model due to a view that all decisions about the future of the Shire from a local government perspective should be made by the Councillors and not the community. Hence, the new Councillors voted not to support or further fund the Maroochy 2025 project or the establishment of the Maroochy 2025 Vision Implementation Committees (MVIC).

The effect of this decision by the new Councillors meant that there was no political or financial support to continue with Maroochy 2025. The only remaining option left open to the researcher was to negotiate with the Councillors for an agreement to use the results from the Maroochy 2025 project as an 'advisory' or research document to inform the development of the next Maroochy Shire Council Corporate Plan.

Agreement was reached between the Council Executive Management Team, Councillors and the researcher to work with the 'Corporate Planning Team'. The researcher was to provide advice, where appropriate, on how the Maroochy 2025 visions, strategies and actions could assist in the wording of emerging outcomes, strategies and projects arising from the data being generated by the corporate planning process. Since this compromise was agreed to very late in the corporate planning process, the researcher's ability to influence the thinking of the corporate planning Project Team or integrate the Maroochy 2025 visions, strategies or actions fully into the Corporate Plan was severely limited. Consequently, only a small proportion of Maroochy 2025 project results were adopted into the Plan.

To facilitate this advice, the researcher used a mapping process between the Maroochy 2025 project results and the proposed strategies and projects within the draft Corporate Plan. As a result of this mapping exercise, some of the Maroochy 2025 visions and actions were to influence some of the wording on the strategies and projects being accommodated and incorporated into the new Maroochy Shire Council 2005–2009 Corporate Plan. This plan was completed and adopted by Maroochy Shire Council in November 2005.

4.6.2 Personal observations

The failure of Maroochy Shire Council to support the implementation of Maroochy 2025 Stage 4 was, in the view of the researcher, a tragic loss of opportunity, goodwill and innovation with its community. **This loss and disenfranchisement of the visioning results has, the researcher believes, increased the potential for greater activism against the council in the future. This can be attributed to a range of possible outcomes as a result of not implementing the results from the Maroochy 2025 project.** These are focused around areas of raised expectations within the community and include the following:

- Lack of buy-in by the community in future community participation activities resulting in disengagement and a reinforcement of past patterns that Council is 'never going to change' and consultation is seen as tokenistic with decisions already made;
- Disillusionment among the community who understood that Council planning and processes would become more participatory and inclusive of community input;

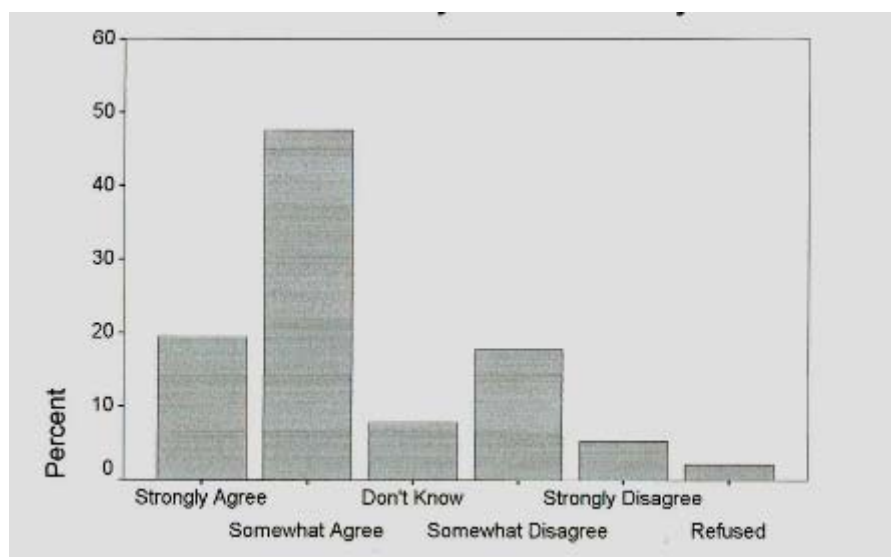
- A confirmation for the community that they cannot influence their future as it pertains to Council decisions;
- That the elected Councillors are not to be trusted and theirs is the vision that is the official version;
- That the individuals in the process of consultation are not valued, leading to a 'them and us' scenario; and
- That there are major issues impacting on the community which are best dealt with through partnerships is not recognised by Council.

4.7 Researcher's applied futures studies survey

The researcher's survey contained fourteen key focus questions. The sample size for the survey was 285 respondents. The results for the refused percentages were determined by the number of respondents who did not supply a response to the survey question/s. The questions and related findings are given here.

Q 1: Do you believe you have the power to influence your community's future?

Overall, 99 percent of participants (282) answered this question. As depicted in Graph 4.2 (Gould 2004), 19.5 percent, (190) of respondents strongly agreed and 47 percent somewhat agreed that they had the power to influence the community's future. However, fewer than 24 percent (68) of respondents somewhat or strongly disagreed that they had individual power to influence the community's future.



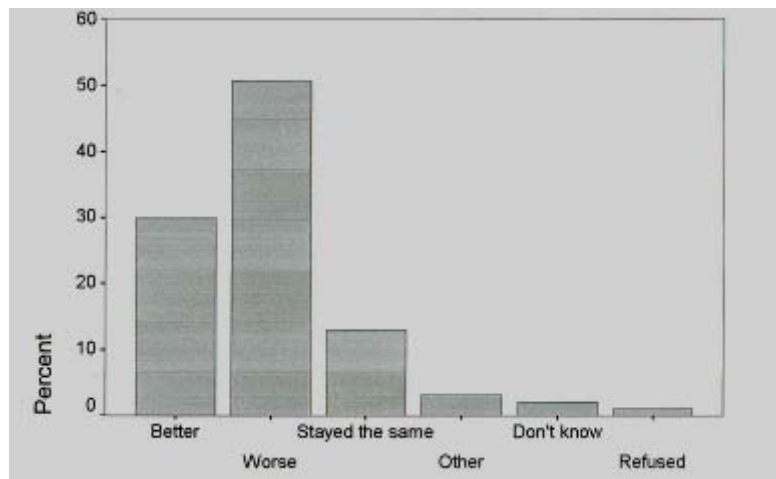
Graph 4.2. Q1. Power to influence your community's future

Q 2: In your opinion, what are the three most important issues facing the Maroochy Shire today that will affect its future?

Overall, 96 percent of all participants (273) answered this question. The highest percentage (51% of all respondents) stated that environmental protection was the most important issue. This was followed by 26 percent stating that traffic congestion was the most important issue, and 16 percent of respondents stating that affordable housing was the most important issue facing the Maroochy Shire today. These issues were deemed as continuing to affect Maroochy's future.

Q 3: In the time you have been here, do you think the Maroochy Shire area has become a better place to live, worse place or has stayed the same?

Overall, 97 percent of the participants (276) answered this question. The result, as shown in Graph 4.3 (Gould 2004) is that 50.5 percent (144 respondents) believed that since they have lived on the Sunshine Coast, Maroochy Shire had become a worse place to live. Thirty percent (85 respondents) believed that Maroochy had become a better place to live. Thirty percent (85 respondents) believed that Maroochy had become a better place to live.

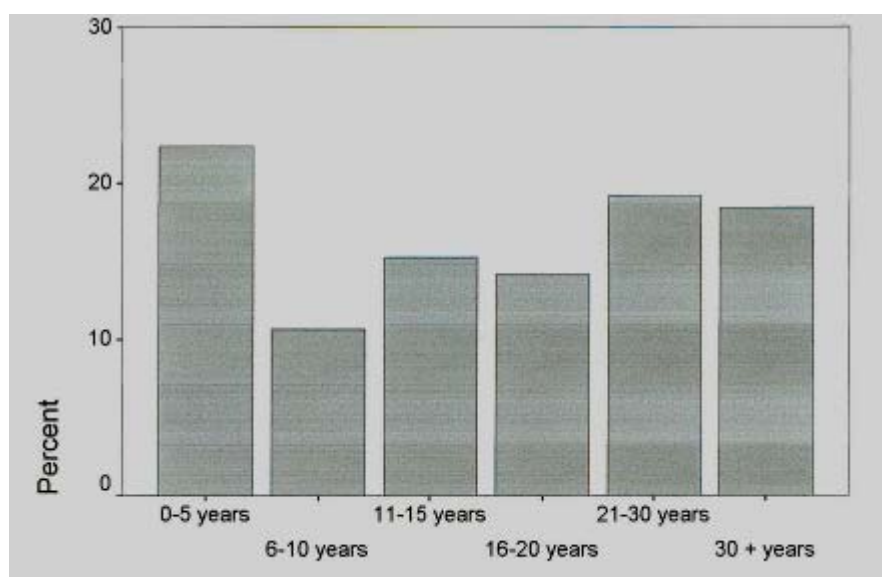


Graph 4.3. Q3. How has Maroochy changed?

Q 4: How long have you lived in Maroochy Shire?

Ninety-seven percent (276) of the participants answered this question. The results, as depicted in Graph 4.4 (Gould 2004), were that 22 percent (63 respondents) had lived in Maroochy for less than five years. Over 39 percent (111) of respondents had lived in

Maroochy for between 6 and 20 years. Over 37 percent (105 respondents) had lived in Maroochy for more than 20 years.



Graph 4.4. Q4. Length of time in Maroochy

Q 5: In the future, do you think the Maroochy Shire area will become a better place to live, a worse place or will it stay the same?

Two-hundred and sixty-seven participants answered this question (94%). As Graph 4.5 (Gould 2004) depicts, 50.5 percent (144) of respondents believed that Maroochy Shire will become a better place to live in the future. Forty-eight percent (139 respondents) believed that Maroochy will become a worse place to live in the future.

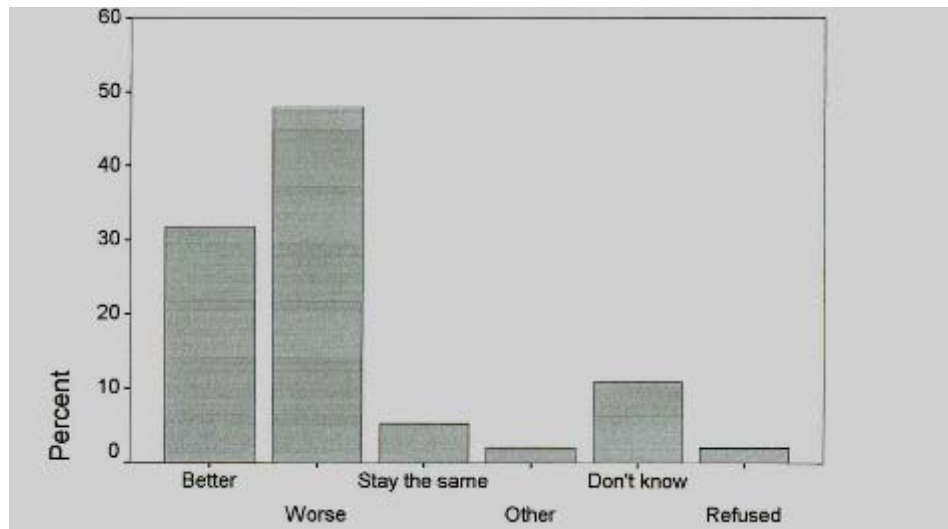
Supportive comments from respondents who believed that Maroochy Shire will become a better place to live in the future, included:

I wouldn't take part if I thought we couldn't improve

I am hopeful if our future can be managed correctly

Better because we are taking control of our future

I am only new to the Shire and from what I have seen going on to improve the Shire I believe it will be



Graph 4.5. Q5. How will Maroochy change in the future?

Some other comments from respondents who believed that Maroochy Shire will become a worse place to live in the future included:

You can vision all you want, but it will be what is 'politically expedient' that will prevail

Could become worse if we don't do something about transport, affordable housing and priority issues

Our future is precarious at this time

Our development is not being well controlled or thought out. It could become a worse place

Respondents who were unsure whether Maroochy Shire would become a better or worse place to live in the future made such comments as:

Depends on projects like this, whether we make it better or worse

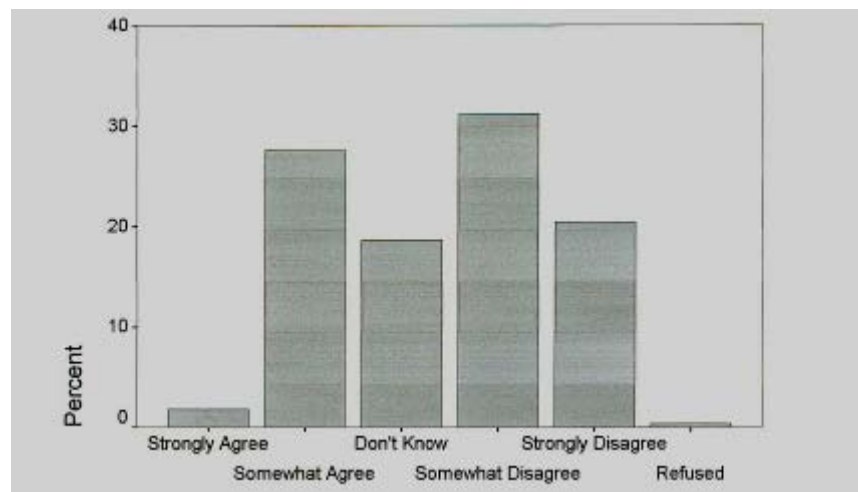
Depending on how problems are dealt with

Depends on development

Depends on the future of who runs Maroochy Shire Council

Q 6: Is Maroochy Shire a cohesive community, which operates co-operatively and with solidarity?

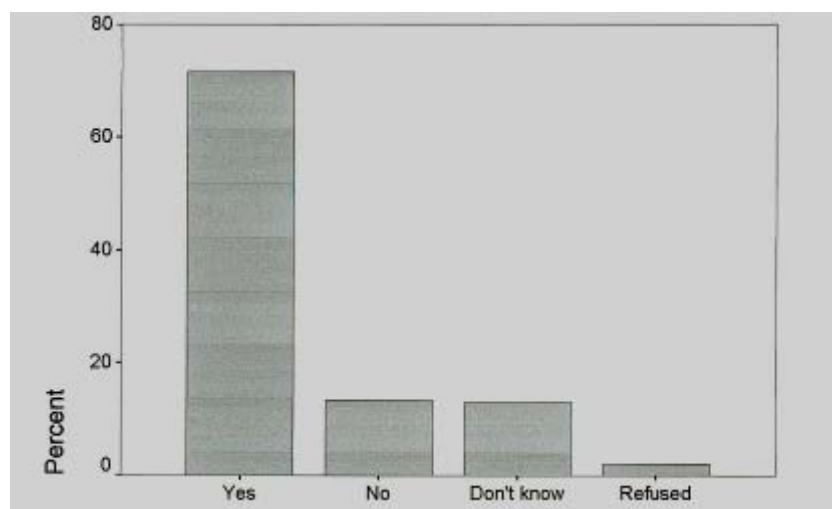
Overall, 99 percent of the participants (282) answered this question. Graph 4.6 (Gould 2004) shows that 30 percent (86) of respondents somewhat disagreed and 20 percent (57 respondents), strongly disagreed that Maroochy Shire was a cohesive community. Twenty-seven percent (77) of the respondents somewhat agreed, while 2 percent (6 respondents) strongly agreed.



Graph 4.6. Q6. Is Maroochy Shire cohesive?

Q 7: Do you believe engaging the community in the Maroochy 2025 project will influence a shift in community attitudes towards the future?

Overall, 94 percent of the participants (67) answered this question. Graph 4.7 (Gould 2004) shows that 72 percent (205) of the respondents said they agreed with the proposition that the Maroochy 2025 project will shift community attitudes towards the future, 14 percent (40 respondents) did not support this view.



Graph 4.7. Q7 Maroochy2025 will shift attitudes

Some of the comments from the respondents who agreed with the proposition were as follows:

As Maroochy 2025 gains momentum the rank and file community will get behind the vision and become a forge of our future

Collaborative inclusion of the community in the decision making is a forward step

Life has changed

The community needs to work towards a better future for itself and take more action following intelligent discussion

It will certainly raise awareness and give shire residents an opportunity to think about the future and have a say

Comments from the respondents who believed that the Maroochy 2025 project would not shift community attitudes to the future included:

Only a small number of people will influence the decision makers, so indirectly Maroochy 2025 will never be an influence

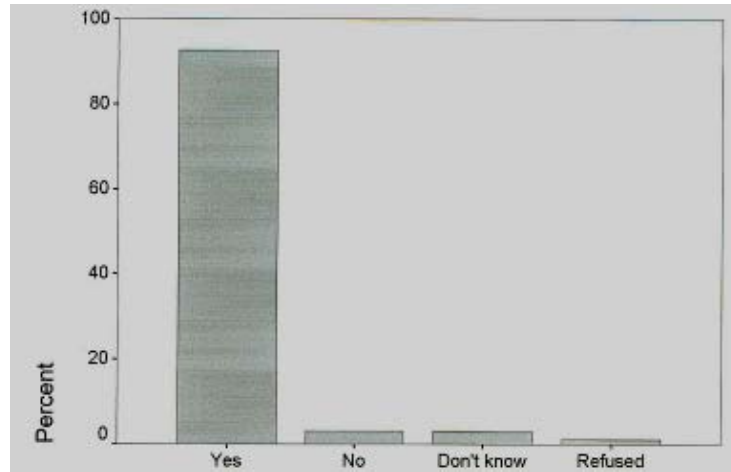
It will take a lot more than engaging the community for a short time and unless a lot of thought is put into a continued education then failure is guaranteed

Only if council look, learn and listen

But it could be a negative

Q 8: Does the Maroochy Shire need a shared vision?

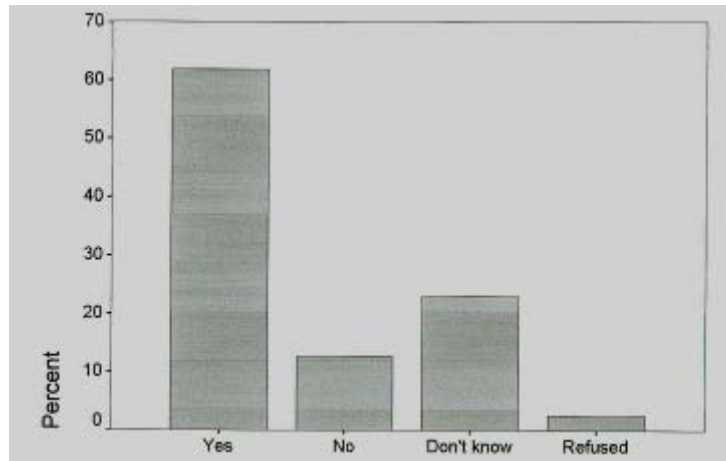
Overall, 97 percent of participants, that is 276 people, answered this question. Graph 4.8 (Gould 2004) shows that 93 percent of the respondents (265) agreed that Maroochy Shire needed a shared vision, while 3 percent (9 respondents) disagreed.



Graph 4.8. Q8. Need for a shared vision

Q 9: Do you believe the Maroochy 2025 project will make a difference to the future of local government planning and policy making?

Overall, 93 percent of participants (265) answered this question. Graph 4.9 (Gould 2004) shows that 61 percent of respondents (173 people) believed that the Maroochy 2025 project will make a difference. Over 22 percent (63 respondents) did not know if a difference could be made to planning and policy making, and 13 percent (37 respondents) did not think it would make a difference.



Graph 4.9. Q9. Maroochy 2025 influencing local government planning and policymaking

Some comments from the respondents who said they believed the Maroochy 2025 project would make a difference to the future of local government planning and policy making included:

Will create benchmarks for policy

Planning and policy making are essential for the long term, not just the length of a particular council

Should if feedback is properly used

Yes, but I am a dreamer

Respondents who did not believe the Maroochy 2025 project would make a difference to the future of local government planning and policy making commented:

Politics will prevail

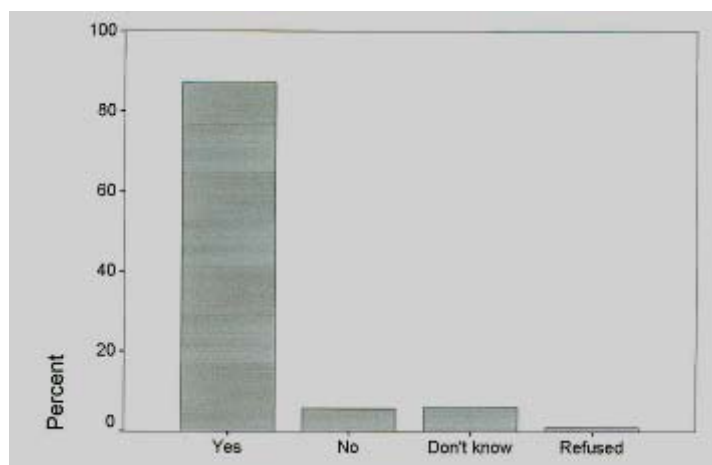
I hope so but I have my doubts

Need written commitment

But it could be inward looking and for the worse

Q 10: Do you believe the Maroochy Shire Council's Corporate, Town Plan and Land Use Plans need to reflect the 2025 visions?

Overall, 97 percent of the participants (276) answered this question. Graph 4.10 (Gould 2004) shows that 85 percent (242 respondents) stated that the Council plans needed to reflect the 2025 visions, while 6 percent (17 respondents) stated that the Council plans did not need to reflect the 2025 visions.



Graph 4.10. Q10. Do local government plans need to reflect Maroochy 2025 visions?

Q 11: What do you think is required to enhance community cohesion and attitudes towards the future?

Overall, 97 percent of the participants (276 people) answered this question. The following is a sample of the comments regarding what the respondents think is required to enhance community cohesion and attitudes towards the future:

The ability to listen, hear and implement the vision of the community

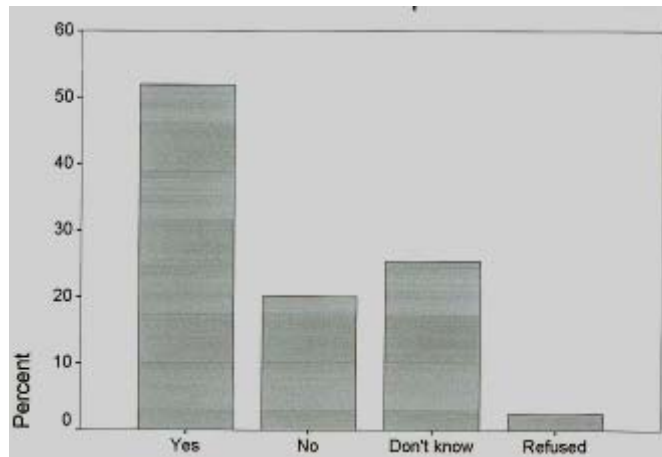
Regular opportunities for all community members to participate in sculpture their environment

More opportunities for the public to be part of the planning and working together rather than having policies imposed on a generally better informed electorate

To have people think about their future and be responsible for the outcomes

Q 12: Do you have confidence that the Maroochy 2025 process will positively influence the direction of the future for the Shire?

Overall, 93 percent of the participants answered this question. Graph 4.11 (Gould 2004) shows that 52 percent (148 respondents) stated that they had confidence in the Maroochy 2025 project and that it would be a positive influence for the Shire. Twenty percent (57 respondents) said that they did not have confidence that the Maroochy 2025 process would positively influence the direction of the Shire, and 25 percent (71 respondents) did not know if the Maroochy 2025 project would make a difference.



Graph 4.11. Q12. Do you have confidence that Maroochy 2025 will be a positive influence for the Shire?

Comments from the respondents who said they have confidence that the Maroochy 2025 process will positively influence the direction of the future for the Shire included:

Yes guys, I told you I am positively hopeful

The model used has the capacity to produce positive results

Can't see any potential negatives unless no follow through?

I am an optimist

Comments from the respondents who stated that they have no confidence that the Maroochy 2025 process would positively influence the direction of the future for the Shire included:

Waste of time

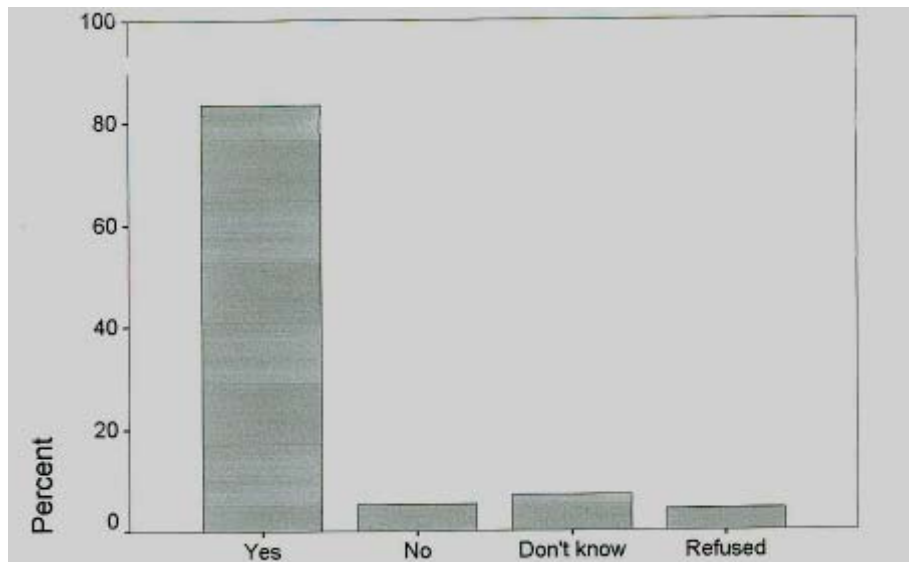
Committees of the past have been set up with no result

Only if council adopts 2025

Provided the public participation programme is done properly and opportunities provided for review

Q 13: Do you think a process of ‘Questioning the Future’ creates alternative ways of learning and thinking about the future?

Overall, 88 percent of the participants (250) answered this question. Graph 4.12 (Gould 2004) shows that 83 percent (236 respondents) agreed that questioning the future creates alternative ways of learning and thinking about the future, while 5 percent (14 respondents) did not agree that questioning the future changes our thinking about the future.

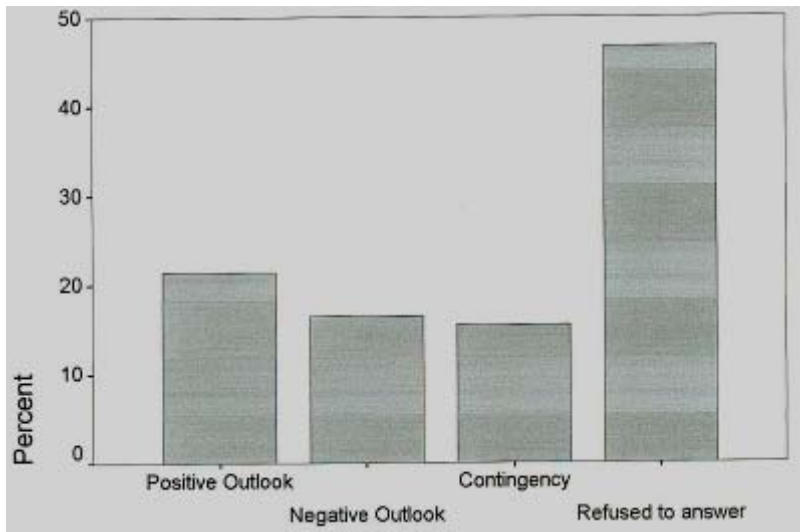


Graph 4.12. Q13. Do you think questioning the future creates alternative ways of learning & thinking about the future?

Q 14: If you were to describe the future of the Shire as a metaphor (e.g., the future is like a star, ever bright) what would your metaphor be?

Only slightly more than half the survey participants (53%) answered this question. As Graph 4.13 (Gould 2004) shows, 21 percent (59 respondents) reported a positive outlook for the future in Maroochy Shire in terms of a expressing this outlook as a metaphor. Sixteen percent (45 respondents) used a negative metaphor for the future in Maroochy Shire. Fewer than 15 percent of respondents (42) supplied a metaphor that

was based on contingency conditions being present to support their metaphor statement.



Graph 4.13. Q14. What is your metaphor for the future?

Some comments from the respondents who supplied a metaphor included:

The future of Maroochy Shire is like a warm handshake — firm (guidelines) and welcoming

The future of the Maroochy star is like a teenage girl reaching maturity. She realises her potential and grows more beautiful

A dream that is realised by effort and belief

A young mother with her first new born in her arms

Comments from the respondents who supplied contingency connotation metaphors included:

A split pea — eventually there will be recognition that the coast has different needs and aspirations to the hinterland — perhaps to the extent that the shire will split in two

A child who has plenty of potential if led in the right direction

A flower bud: you've nurtured the plant, fed and watered it, got the best advice available but you are still not sure how it will turn out until it blooms

The future for the Shire is like a 3 legged race, the intention is to move forward but we will have to work together to make it happen

From the researcher's observations, the use of the word metaphor in the survey was problematic given that it is a word not widely known or understood by the general population. On reflection, this particular word needed to have been described or changed to a more commonly used phrase such as "what does the future look like?".

4.8 Evaluation of Maroochy 2025

In November 2004, a fourth and final survey was undertaken. The aim of this survey was to evaluate the success of the Maroochy 2025 project. Community Survey No. 4 targeted the Maroochy Shire residents who had experienced or participated in the Maroochy 2025 project. The goal of the survey was to determine whether their attitudes towards their future had changed. This survey also reviewed and evaluated of the methods utilised. Market Facts was commissioned by the Project Team to complete a final evaluation of the Maroochy 2025 project. The researcher designed the questionnaire to be used in Community Survey No. 4.

The Maroochy 2025 Project Team provided Market Facts with the stakeholder database. From this database of 563 respondents, 331 interviews were conducted. The range of ages, length of residency in Maroochy and location (rural/coastal, etc.) was much the same as in the third survey. The main aims of the survey included the measuring of community levels of the following:

- Awareness and support for Maroochy 2025 vision, strategies and action plans;
- Confidence in strategies and action plans developed to date;
- Importance placed on future involvement;
- Need to develop measures to evaluate implementation of Maroochy 2025;
- Effectiveness of public participation methods used;
- Impact on the community (community cohesiveness); and
- Personal impacts of being involved in Maroochy 2025.

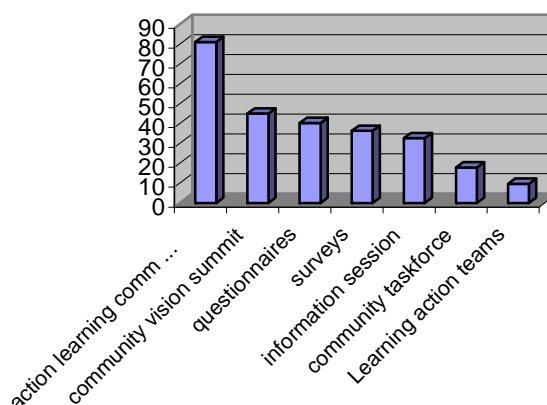
According to Market Facts (2004c) the results from Community Survey No 4 are as follows:

Amongst the participants in the Maroochy 2025 project, there was a high level of awareness and confidence in the implementation (over 60%) of strategies and action plans. Respondents often felt it crucial to become involved in implementing Maroochy 2025 plans. The respondents showed strong agreement (over 80%) regarding the need for a range of measures to manage, evaluate and report progress in executing Maroochy 2025 plans.

Personal impact from the project was viewed as generally positive. The majority of participants described their experience as “enjoyable” (32%) a “learning experience” (32%) or “empowering” (18%). Less than a quarter (22%) found the process “frustrating”. Respondents remarked on how Maroochy 2025 improved their critical thinking (69%) changed their attitude towards the future (57%), or made them feel empowered to change their future (50%).

81% of respondents had been involved in action learning community workshops. The main methods respondents were involved in are summarised graphically below in graph 4.14.

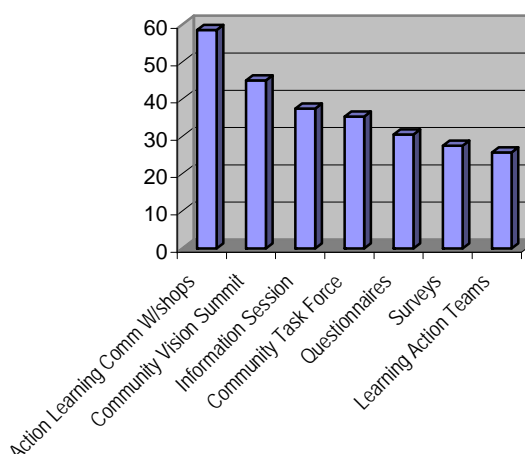
Public Participation Methods: Level of involvement



Graph 4.14. Maroochy 2025 level of involvement in different methods.

Of these, nearly 60% found the workshops methods as “very effective” or “effective”. The most successful public participation methods as determined by respondents was the anticipatory action learning workshops as shown below in graph 4.15:

Most Effective Public Participation Methods



Graph 4.15. Assessment of the Maroochy 2025 public participation methods.

There was optimism (83%) about Maroochy 2025 influencing the future of Local government planning and policy-making, but less than (40%) of respondents believed their community had become more cohesive as a result of Maroochy 2025.

Even so, respondents generally wanted the impact of Maroochy 2025 to be assessed. Respondents were almost unanimous (94%) that measures should be developed to judge the level of impact of Maroochy 2025 strategies and actions on communities. They also strongly believed (91%) that it was important to assess the influence of Maroochy 2025 on Local government planning and policy-making. Even the lowest level of agreement - on establishing measures for the number of people engaged in discussions about alternatives to their future — was still relatively strong (81%).

Particularly notable was a shared confidence in the future. Over 90% thought Maroochy Shire would become a “better” place to live in if the community worked together to achieve a shared vision. Even so, respondents were not convinced that Maroochy 2025 would become a way of life or would improve leadership. Only 45% of respondents were either “very confident” or “confident” that this was possible. Cynicism about Local Government politics, and generally a lack of confidence with Maroochy Shire Council’s track record with regard to controlling development were the main reasons for this. Some comments were:

“Too many political influences and developers”

“Politicians get their own agenda”

“Maroochy has never embraced what the community wants”

“Because they suffer from short term greed and not long term plans”

There was consensus (92%) that the Maroochy 2025 Community Project had been worthwhile. The following comments are indicative of the range of positive responses given.

“Anything that makes people think about the future is important”

“It has generated a lot of ideas and energy from different people. It has bought people out of their bubbles and got them thinking on a broader basis”

“It gives hope for the future — guidance for future and gives us a sense of being heard and valued for our future”

“(The project supports) the voice of the community. Maroochy Shire Council are now required to listen to the community”

“Hopefully they will take notice of the community”

By the end of Maroochy 2025, it had:

- Received input from more than 3,840 people who directly participated in the visioning and action planning stages;
- Collected over 40,208 public responses (written, emailed, phoned, etc.);
- Employed more than 32,514 hours of volunteered community representatives' time;
- Developed over 3,368 community vision ideas/goals (from which the Community Vision Statement was created);
- Developed just over 60 community strategies and 200 community actions as a means to implement the Maroochy 2025 visions; and
- Utilised over 1,728 hours of Council employee time to facilitate the visioning and action planning workshops.

These results are important for many reasons. Maroochy 2025 is known by the foresight community as setting a benchmark in applied futures studies. The researcher observed that these results have assisted in increasing the Maroochy 2025 participants', the CTF and the Project Team's self efficacy. Efficacy was developed in terms of group participation and empowerment as individuals by the project and the ability of participants to view their future from a different perspective allowing them the ability to create alternative futures had improved. The results have assisted the researcher in applied futures studies through increasing competence, understanding complexities of application and the use of futures studies in political environments. This

increased competence has led the researcher towards applying and sharing this knowledge across a range of settings. The researcher is recognised and sought after as a speaker and facilitator in community and commercial visioning.

4.9 Summary

This chapter has presented the results from two parts of the triangulated method of analysis from the five sections of the Maroochy 2025 community visioning and action planning project. It presented the personal observations of the researcher throughout these stages and the findings of the Maroochy 2025 community surveys completed by Market Facts and the researcher's applied futures studies survey. The Market Facts community survey results were provided in this chapter to assist the reader with gaining an understanding of interpretative contexts between the Maroochy 2025 survey and the researcher's survey. This will assist the reader to understand the comparative analysis discussions in Chapter 5. The inclusion of the more detailed findings from the final Maroochy 2025 Community Survey (No. 4), have been included in this chapter for the purpose of creating a more detailed understanding of the overall successes and limitations of Maroochy 2025.

In many ways, the Maroochy 2025 project has provided valuable insights for local government planners and politicians undertaking community visioning. It has also identified some of the implications of deploying applied futures studies methods within community engagement activities.

From the data collected, a number of key learnings became evident. Evident was the use of anticipatory action learning processes during the community engagement phases which created the opportunity for the community to initially learn how to question the official version of Maroochy Shire's future. This process enabled other futures to be explored so that alternative community futures scenarios could be developed.

It is also evident through the extensiveness of the community engagement process for the Maroochy 2025 project that the resulting perception by the community and media is of Maroochy 2025 as one of the most extensive consultation projects ever undertaken on the Sunshine Coast.

Evident from the results of the Maroochy 2025 evaluation Community Survey No. 4 is that the Maroochy 2025 project had a profound effect on those who participated. It created a shift in participant attitudes and feelings towards empowerment and their belief in the possibility of creating alternative futures. The researcher survey also showed that by questioning the future alternative ways of learning and thinking about the future are created.

By participating in the Maroochy 2025 project, the community increased their levels of expectation of becoming involved in the decision making processes of local government. They also increased pressure and expectation on Maroochy Shire Council to follow through with the implementation of the results from Maroochy 2025.

The data compiled to this point also forms the basis for critical analysis and response to the three core research questions. Answering these questions entails the exploration of the impacts of a local government undertaking a community visioning project and the resultant expectations to implement the results from creating a vision in partnership with the community to create alternative community futures.

5. Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussions on the data collected during the Maroochy 2025 project and the researcher's application of triangulated analysis methodology. This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section provides analysis and discussion on the results of Maroochy 2025 from the researcher's personal observations. The second provides analysis and discussion on the researcher's applied futures studies survey in comparison to the results from the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4 (Market Facts 2004c). The final section presents the results from a causal layered analyses of both Maroochy 2025 and the research thematic problem areas. The chapter concludes with a summary of the analysis and discussion of the CLA results.

The central intent of enquiry in this thesis was to examine the main hypothesis question: 'Can local governments empower their communities with the opportunity and capacity to create alternative futures?'. This research investigated the affects of applied futures studies in a community planning/visioning case study undertaken by Maroochy Shire Council. This key themed question has been broken into the three sub research questions around which this research is organised. These were:

1. Does the use of applied futures studies shift community attitudes and increases the community's level of confidence to create alternative ways of learning, knowing and uses of the future?
2. Can local government politicians and planners improve community planning approaches to enhance the concept of anticipatory democracy?
3. Does foresight and community planning shift the power away from local politicians towards communities and planners?

Initial responses to these research questions are provided in this chapter and a further summary of critique provided in Chapter 6.

5.2 Analysis and discussions on Maroochy 2025 project

There was a great deal of learning from the Maroochy 2025 project, both for the researcher and the Project Team as well as ultimately for the community and Maroochy Shire Council. These Maroochy 2025 learnings has been summarised into six key areas of learning:

- What the Project Team learned;
- What did not work so well;
- What the community learned;
- What were the tensions;
- What were some of the unexpected outcomes; and
- Results from the Maroochy 2025 surveys.

Each of these six key areas of learning is summarised in the following sections based on the researcher's personal observations throughout Maroochy 2025 and post the project.

5.2.1 What the Project Team learned

The first key learning is that the community is highly responsive to anticipatory action learning (AAL) practices. This was demonstrated by the results from Community Survey No. 4 which highlights that AAL workshops were the most effective method of community engagement for the Maroochy 2025 project. The community was very responsive to this method of engagement and valued the notion of being challenged with methods that:

1. Questioned their assumptions at every level, the mission the goals, the product, core competencies;
2. Built capacity for scanning the future by using all their ways of knowing, all their senses; and
3. Enabled them to be involved in a process the was inclusive, including the opportunity to mix with others who normally would not be consulted, and being able to recognise and acknowledge that non-inclusion of one variable can change the outcomes in unanticipated ways.

The AAL workshops involved the use of applied futures studies methods and these methods greatly assisted with the community's ability to reframe their understanding of what they think and feel about the issues driving their future. There was also a positive personal impact of Maroochy 2025 for respondents in terms of critical thinking, changed attitudes towards the future and increased sense of empowerment regarding their future. What this mean in terms of community empowerment, as Tonn (1999, p. 349) has noted, is that individuals need to be given the opportunity to:

develop a heightened state of consciousness about [their] community based responsibilities and a substantial broadening of [their] concept of community and sustainability that encompasses all people and life into the very distant future.

A second key learning is that there are gaps in the intent of the current local government policies that supported or affirmed the use of foresight or community visioning and resolution of sustainability issues. Local governments require a paradigm shift from their inherently conflict-focussed, regulatory based response to the future to a more participatory and partnered response if they are to avoid the consequences of past, current and future decisions that result in community non-sustainability. This learning is further supported by Elgin (2000), who argues that using futures studies as a means to develop foresight based policies has never been so vital, given the need to discover sustainable solutions to pending local and global issues. Hence, there is a pressing need to develop futures orientated policies for local government Policies or strategies that support the use of community visioning as a means to inform the planning and decision making processes will greatly increase the emergence of anticipatory democracy.

A third key learning is that there is potential to be creative with methods of engagement. Although it is recognised in the results from Community Survey No. 4 that information sessions delivered by local government are still very much valued, what this research highlighted was that the issue with information received from local government was that it was often short term focussed (on recent or emerging events) and did not necessarily align with community aspirations for the future. The development of future orientated information was highlighted from Maroochy 2025 participants who valued the idea of local government keeping the community informed on matters that have the potential to dramatically impact on the future.

A fourth key learning was that the Maroochy 2025 participants wanted the opportunity to participate in inclusive and participatory long term planning processes. The success of the Maroochy 2025 project, Community Task Force and Community Action Planning Teams was highlighted by the level of community participation, number of responses generated and quality of material produced.

A final key learning was that the use of futures studies methods can facilitate improved community planning approaches as these methods assist with changing the assumptions made by planners, thus increasing anticipatory democracy opportunities. This was apparent in their transformational effect on the local government planners who were involved as Maroochy 2025 project leaders. The planner's design of the Maroochy 2025 project is indicative and reflective of an anticipatory democracy based project. The ability of the Project Team planners to progress through the futures studies method of anticipatory action learning highlighted the value of such methods and their ability to encourage the planner to challenge their own worldviews.

At the beginning of the project, many planning assumptions were based on the idea that local government planners and politicians had to be the experts and that there can only be one master plan or vision for the future. The Maroochy 2025 project highlighted that this does not have to be the case. The design of the Maroochy 2025 processes is indicative of how local government planners can transform themselves and their planning process by creating opportunities for anticipatory democracy. In other words as Toffler (1978, p.81) stated, anticipatory democracy is 'a process that combines citizen participation with future consciousness that supports the fusion of freedom and futures'. Maroochy 2025 aligns with the main aims of an anticipatory democracy. These aims, according to Glenn (1978, p. 252), were to create processes or opportunities that are:

- *future orientated;*
- *purposeful;*
- *contextual;*
- *participatory;*
- *include depth of study; and*
- *integrity based.*

Foresight and community visioning/planning does have the ability to change the planner's worldviews by providing the freedom to create alternatives.

5.2.2 What didn't work so well

From an alternative perspective there were a number of failures in the Maroochy 2025 project. These failures tended to arise from issues surrounding the level of engagement, and from local government decision making processes, the use of power and the concept of representative democracy.

Firstly, the Maroochy 2025 Project Team, did not consistently involve key opinion holders or decision makers throughout the process. The reason for this was overconfidence by the Project Team that the project did not need further ratification from the project sponsors (Maroochy Shire Council), and it was assumed that after the initial support and commitment had been secured this would ensure ongoing support. This assumption eventually became problematic for the Project Team, as there was a large and abnormal amount of change in the makeup of the Shire Council in the middle of the Maroochy 2025 project and the new Councillors did not necessarily agree with the outcomes or purpose of the project.

Instead, the new Council incumbents believed that the role of the community was to advise Council only and that the idea of an empowered community was a threat to the process of representative democracy. This issue became even more problematic as the Maroochy 2025 project was engaging the community at an empowerment level and the delivery methods designed for the Maroochy 2025 project re-enforced the initial promise from Council to the community that they were to be empowered in the development of, and the final decision on, the community vision.

A second failing was the Project Team's inability to manage the politics of communicating a consistent message to the bureaucracy regarding the project design and action learning updates. As the Project Team adapted the initial design and planned processes, these changes were not communicated to the project sponsors (being Councillors) and bureaucracy. Consequently, when presentation of the results from each stage in the Maroochy 2025 project took place, the project sponsors and bureaucracy were surprised, as the results did not match expected outcomes.

A third failing is linked to the second failing of the Project Team. The initial project plan for Maroochy 2025 did not elaborate sufficiently on the implications from the selected level of community engagement and the implications of using applied futures studies methods. The decision by the Project Team to select an engagement strategy that would actively empower the community resulted from an intuitive and values driven process via Project Team discussions on social planning and foresight planning. However, what the Project Team failed to confirm with the Maroochy Shire Council Councillors was whether they understood the implications of situating the Maroochy 2025 project in a context of empowerment. What would eventually become a major issue for the project in the later stages, was that the Councillors assumed the project was being managed and the community engaged at the consultation level and not the collaborate/empower level. In this, the Project Team failed to satisfactorily manage the key stakeholders.

The project sponsors were quick to interpret the results from the Maroochy 2025 project as pre-ordained or fanciful outcomes determined by others; the results were seen as a significant threat to their own rights and legitimate power to determine the official images of the future. This interpretation was initially identified when the four alternative scenarios were present to the community and sponsors at the Community Visioning Summit. On reflection, the researcher and the Project Team identified that it was a mistake to develop the alternative scenarios without including the project sponsors and bureaucracy. Ironically, the Project Team had aimed at ensuring that all anticipatory action learning processes would be inclusive of the community, yet failed to extend this inclusivity to the project sponsors and bureaucracy who were such a significant part of the process. This error would prove a key point in creating future disharmony between the community and Maroochy Shire Council after the project was completed and eventually led to the withdrawal of support and funding for the project.

A fourth failing of the project was the failure to establish a Maroochy 2025 Visioning Implementation Committee (MVIC). It was assumed by the Project Team that Council's decision not to support the establishment of the MVIC was the result the Project Team's failure to include the project sponsors' worldviews and that the MVIC would be a challenge to representative democracy processes. In a meeting with Council, it was made clear to the researcher as the project manager, that the Councillors were not in favour of the MVIC model and that all decisions about the future of the Shire from a local government perspective

would be made by the Councillors and not the community. This shift in Council's policy position for engagement from that at the beginning of the project, suggested that the role of the community in the future would be to give advice to Council and then only through feedback, not empowerment processes. Hence, the new Councillors voted not to support or further fund the Maroochy 2025 project or the establishment of an MVIC.

However, this decision had several impacts on the bureaucracy and the Sunshine Coast community. Initially, there was disappointment and a loss of community goodwill to Council from those who participated, as evidenced by informal feedback to the researcher. Secondly, it affected the intent and application of Council policies associated with community engagement and Council's own engagement framework. The new policy position was that engagement would take place at information and consulting levels and funding for empowering engagements was subsequently not approved. The policy position of Council would also slow down Council's prior commitment to progress processes of sustainability education, sustainable development strategies and capacity building for civic leadership.

Thirdly, it represented a lost opportunity for other regional stakeholders to secure alternative funding to support Council with implementation of the visioning strategies and actions. Hence, Council would miss out on developing partnered and funded solutions with the private sectors to address sustainability issues from a regional perspective.

Finally, probably the most significant mistake for the Maroochy 2025 project was the lack of formal implementation. The consequences of the non-establishment of an MVIC and a formal implementation process are multiple and consequentially have the potential to create major issues of mistrust and increase levels of activism across the Sunshine Coast long into the future.

Maroochy 2025 project Community Survey No. 4 highlighted that there was generally a high level of awareness and confidence in the Maroochy 2025 participants (over 60%) with the implementation of the strategies and action plans. The Survey also found that there was recognition by the Maroochy 2025 participants that it would be crucial that they become involved in the implementation; that the level of positive personal impact in terms of increased critical thinking had improved (69%); that attitudes towards the

future changed (57%); and that participants felt empowered about their future (50%). Perhaps of most lasting benefit, 60 percent of Maroochy 2025 participants believed that their community had become more cohesive as a result of M2025.

All these results reflect the level of expectation, hope and opportunity for Council and community to work together in creating alternative community futures. Council's decision to not meet community expectations for the future has squandered the high degree of optimism (83%) among participants, who believed that Maroochy 2025 would influence the future of local government planning and policy making. This will make it very difficult to re-engage and secure the community's enthusiasm for Council's attempts to create collaborative responsibility for the sustainability of the region.

5.2.3 What the community learnt

There were many individual learnings for the many community participants in Maroochy 2025. (Detailed comments of the learning can be found in the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4 on the Maroochy 2025 website, www.maroochy2025.net.au.)

However, for the purpose of this chapter, there were four significant areas of learning. Firstly, applied futures studies can significantly enhance and compliment the principles and concepts behind capacity building, social planning and community development. Secondly, futures studies can greatly assist the community to learn that the future does not need to be feared, or perceived as a foregone conclusion; alternatively futures studies can create opportunities for understanding that there are many futures and that communities can create a collective sense of agency to co-create preferred futures.

Thirdly, community participants in Maroochy 2025 realised that they did possess the capacity to create or influence local government decisions. They were not empowered at the necessary levels and recognised that levels of engagement from an information and consultation perspective had a contextual purpose and specific limitations. This learning was highlighted in a conversation between a participant in an anticipatory action learning workshop and the researcher. During the workshop, a sugar cane farmer who was facing the collapse of his industry was overjoyed and hopeful after a paradigm shift that highlighted his capacity to think in terms of alternative futures and that the 'business as usual' future was only one option for his community. The discovery of this new capacity within him was enough to provide new hope and new motivation for sharing the futures studies concepts.

Finally, communities today already contain immense capacity, civic leadership and foresight. Projects like Maroochy 2025 can and did create the spaces for this capacity to be observed, valued and utilised.

5.2.4 Tensions

The Maroochy 2025 project evoked many tensions for stakeholders. This was initially observed by the researcher as a facilitator of the CTF. As the researcher took the CTF through the concepts of applied futures studies, the emerging awareness of moving beyond the concept of anticipated futures and creating alternative futures created significant angst among the CTF; it challenged their own assumptions on the future. It was apparent, as futurists have long recognised that there are many barriers that prevent people from adopting alternatives to the future. These barriers, as noted earlier, are recognised as:

- *People tend to follow patterns;*
- *Routines are stronger than laws and reason;*
- *So few legislations dare challenge established patterns;*
- *Routine is stronger than reason;*
- *Education changes patterns slowly;*
- *People and their routines make the present and the future; and*
- *Futurists collude with patterns by the avoidance of making recommendations that put people in conflict with their routines (Amara 1981, p.67).*

To overcome the barriers, the researcher and the Maroochy 2025 Project Team would need to design a visioning process that was innovative and provocative. By situating the futures studies discourse in frameworks of critical futures and action learning, there was an opportunity for the community and the CTF to become innovative with their development of vision ideas and the crafting of the Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement.

A second tension observed by the researcher was the increasing display of advocacy and leadership from the CTF, the action team planners and ultimately the community itself. These behaviours were displayed when opportunities arose throughout Maroochy 2025 to interact with Council planners and experts and with Councillors. As clarity surrounding the choice of an alternative worldview and future for Maroochy Shire grew, these stakeholders displayed increased confidence to question, challenge and

debate the merits of the versions of the future offered by the key opinion holders, decision makers and advantaged stakeholders.

Finally, there was a high degree of tension between the Maroochy Shire Council bureaucracy and the Councillors around the adoption of the Maroochy 2025 project results into the local government planning scheme. A local government planning scheme is the main instrument for local government to manage and control sustainable development issues. The Maroochy Shire Council bureaucracy recognised the value of the project results to improve and add innovation to council's planning policies. Yet the later withdrawal of Councillor financial and political support for Maroochy 2025 project meant that the Maroochy Shire Council bureaucracy was left with few options to integrate the results into the planning scheme, since all planning scheme amendments are approved by the Councillors. As a consolation, the researcher was given permission by the Maroochy Shire Council bureaucracy to act as a consultant, providing the Council Corporate Planning Team with information and advice on the Maroochy 2025 project results. The aim of this consultation was for the researcher to align — where possible — the Maroochy 2025 project results into the wording of the outcomes and strategies in the 2005–2009 Maroochy Shire Council Corporate Plan.

5.2.5 Unexpected outcomes

There were many surprises and unexpected outcomes for the Project Team during and after Maroochy 2025. These outcomes provided an opportunity for the Project Team to use action learning processes to shift their own worldviews. It was initially assumed that the many community participants in Maroochy 2025 would not value or accept easily the challenging of their worldviews. What was observed by the researcher was quite the opposite: many individuals valued the opportunity to be challenged and questioned when it came to their assumptions about the future. This effect can be attributed to the design of the anticipatory action learning workshops. These workshops included the provision of contextual background to futures studies, followed by an exercise in creative visualisation, facilitated discussion and stimulation and utilisation of all their ways of knowing the future.

A second unexpected outcome observed by the researcher was the demonstrated high levels of motivation, capacity, passion, intensity and leadership from the community, the task forces, and the action planning teams. Further, a rise in community localism,

advocacy and a desire to become involved in dialogue pertaining to alternative futures has also been observed by the researcher and Maroochy 2025 participants.

These behaviours may be attributed to the fact that Maroochy 2025 was designed using the principles and standards of anticipatory democracy. We are reminded that the simplest definition of anticipatory democracy according to Toffler (1978, p. 7) is: 'A process for combining citizen participation with future consciousness ... anticipatory democracy is, to put it another way, the fusion of freedom and futures'. Maroochy 2025 was a project and a process that combined community participation with future consciousness and was very much about an empowered community who had been given the freedom to experience the affects of an applied futures studies process.

A final unexpected outcome observed by the researcher was how easily a region /shire /community could agree upon one collectively preferred scenario (74% at the visioning summit) for their future. The results from the Maroochy 2025 Visioning Summit in relation to how readily the community was able to select their preferred scenario was astounding. The four scenarios had been developed using community input with the identification of the four major uncertainties (although these scenarios were developed by the Maroochy 2025 Project Team, the foundational data used to construct the scenarios came directly from Community Survey No. 2). It was striking to observe how the community's collective consciousness was able to make a clear and decisive decision on their preferred scenario.

5.2.6 Maroochy 2025 project surveys

There were four Maroochy 2025 community surveys completed. Each survey had a specific purpose, providing sets of results that would inform and update the next steps associated with the project design, project decision making and participant assumptions.

5.2.6.1 Community Survey No. 1

The purpose of Community Survey No. 1 was to identify the community values, as well as perceived emerging issues and uncertainties about the direction of the Shire. The results highlighted four main themes or areas of uncertainty. These were: control/manage growth; protection and sustainability of our natural environments; improvement of public transport and mobility systems; and the need to improve

leadership and increase wise decision-making. The results of the survey are indicative of a community that recognises the need for innovative leadership to manage issues which relate to sustainability. Maroochy 2025 would compliment and align with the aims of the Agenda 21 Initiative (Agenda 21, Chapter 28, Local Authorities Initiatives In Support Of Agenda 21, Sections 1-7¹), which were to develop actionable steps at a local level. To assist with the establishment of boundaries for the actions, three key inter-connected principles were identified for the Agenda 21 Initiative and included:

- effective democratic decentralisation;
- good governance; and
- co-operation and solidarity.

These principles form a basis for the development of actions to resolve sustainability issues, and acknowledge a key point: that representative community involvement through a democratic process will provide an effective means to contribute to the sustainability solutions (Tonn 1999, p. 345). Maroochy 2025 engagement processes were designed to empower the community through effective use of democratic decentralisation of the decision making process, thus increasing the community's capacity for future community governance models to emerge. The use of empowerment methods and futures studies facilitated the co-operative creation of a shared vision.

5.2.6.2 Community Survey No. 2

The purpose of Community Survey No. 2 was to confirm with the community their endorsement of the vision, key focus areas and the top 30 vision ideas identified at the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Summit. The Survey found that all visions and focus areas were well supported by the community. In fact, the community stated that these visions and ideas addressed the community's needs and expectations for the future. The results from Survey No. 2 highlight that the use of applied futures studies is a very effective way for communities to create alternative futures with a sound level of consensus on the final product. However, Community Survey No. 2 also highlighted that the community was not confident (in fact, it was cynical) about the vision becoming a reality, way of life or new form of community governance.

This lack of confidence at this stage of the project could be attributed to the lack of detail information available at the time Survey No. 2 was completed. The results highlight the need for visions to be translated into actionable strategies and actions; that it is necessary to make clear how an abstract vision can become reality by linking the vision to day-to-day actions. Thus, it seems crucial that a community visioning project must be accompanied or followed up by an implementation action plan, so as to enable communities to align their hopes with the more concrete implementation activities.

5.2.6.3 Community Survey No. 3

The purpose of Community Survey No. 3 was to confirm with the community their endorsement of the Maroochy 2025 implementation strategies and actions. Only 33 percent of respondents were confident that the strategies and actions could be achieved, and an almost equal number of respondents (34% or one in three), did not know whether the strategies could be achieved. When respondents were then asked about their future involvement with implementation, 41 percent thought it was important, and 24 percent didn't know if they would become involved. **The results from Survey No. 3 highlight the importance of action learning experiments to build a community's capacity and confidence with creating the future. Local governments traditionally have extensive capital works, social, environmental and economic projects being delivered on an annual basis. If the results from community visioning project are integrated and aligned to such projects, local governments can achieve the implementation of the vision through the normal course of delivering a balanced sustainable project program. Problems occur when local government projects are in conflict with the community vision and community vision action plans. In the case of Maroochy 2025, these survey results mean the community 'got it right' as to what is required for the Maroochy Shire's future.**

5.3 Discussion of the findings from the researcher's survey and Community Survey No. 4

The purpose of the researcher's applied futures studies survey (Gould 2004) was to capture the attitudes of Maroochy 2025 participants after they had been through an anticipatory action learning experience. Results from this survey would then be

compared with the Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4 to determine whether the use of applied futures studies processes shifted community attitudes and increased individual levels of confidence to create alternative ways of learning, knowing and using the future.

To determine if such change had taken place, the researcher developed a qualitative / quantitative survey questionnaire that would align a number of key questions to Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No. 4. This mirroring would help answer the research questions. Discussion of the comparative results follows.

In question 1 of the researcher's questionnaire, participants were asked about whether they believe they have power to influence their community's future. When the Maroochy 2025 participants were first surveyed, 20 percent of the respondents strongly agreed and 47 percent somewhat agreed with this question; by the time of the completion of Maroochy 2025, just over half of the respondents felt empowered as a result of participating in Maroochy 2025, and there was strong agreement (92%) among respondents that Maroochy 2025 had been worthwhile.

Over 80 percent of respondents believed that it was either important or crucial that they become involved in implementing the strategies and action plans over the next five years. This result highlights how through the use futures studies, foresight methods and community visioning methods, communities can and want to be given the power to be empowered with creating visions and actions for their future. These results also suggest that power over decisions on the future needs to be shifted away from being the exclusive right of local government politicians and shared with the communities and local government planners to jointly decide the official version of the future.

In question 5 of the researcher's questionnaire, participants were asked about their level of confidence that their community would become a better place. When the Maroochy 2025 participants were first surveyed only 50 percent of the respondents felt that Maroochy Shire would become a better place, whereas by the time of the completion of the Maroochy 2025 project over 90 percent of respondents thought that Maroochy Shire would become a better place to live if the community works together to achieve a shared vision. This nearly 40 percent increase in community confidence levels could be attributed to an increased level of hope and sense of empowerment. Elgin (2000) argues that 'we cannot build a future consciously if we have not imagined

it first, [since] without a hopeful future to work towards, people will tend to focus on the short term and withdraw into protected inner worlds'. The challenge for community visioning practices is to encourage communities to move beyond their immediate focus on roads, rates and rubbish and away from 'politician' perspectives. By not having a sense of being planned *on* or *to*, but rather a sense of being planned *with* and real support with achieving their vision, confidence levels can increase to create focus and hope to create better worlds.

In question 6 of the researcher's questionnaire, participants were asked about whether they thought that their community functioned co-operatively, and with solidarity. When the Maroochy 2025 participants were first surveyed only 27 percent of the respondents somewhat agreed with this question, whereas by the time of the completion of the Maroochy 2025 project over 38 percent of respondents thought that their community had become more cohesive as a result of the project. This result signifies an increase in levels of cohesion, demonstrating that community visioning as a process can heal broken or dysfunctional communities and increase the likelihood of growing levels of community cohesion. Community visioning can also support the aims of community development which are to create structures that facilitate democratic participation in the decision making process (Kenny 1999, p. 8). Community development is based on a commitment to empower people so that they have real options for their futures. Community development can involve new ways of viewing and organising social relations. Local governments have traditionally used community development to build the levels of community social capital. As both are future related, the use of applied futures studies methods in community development applications can greatly assist the transformational development of community development concepts.

Methods that were identified as being useful to increase community cohesion were those that empowered, created spaces for understanding, and increased opportunities to actively participate in future orientated actions. However, if community visioning results are not implemented, or there is little action by the sponsoring organisation, community cohesion could be adversely affected and a reverse of cohesion could come about through the loss of trust, confidence and the disempowerment of the community.

This effect could potentially contribute to a rise in community activism. The key learning for local government is that if local governments engage their communities in

community visioning with methods that are highly empowering, but fail to implement the results, it will make it increasingly difficult to get 'community buy-in' on future collaboration. Methods suggested by survey participants in question 11 recommended that local government create opportunities to listen, actively engage their communities in collaborative planning processes, and empowering the community to take responsibility for the implementation of the vision.

In question 7 of the researcher's questionnaire participants were asked whether they believed the Maroochy 2025 process would shift community attitudes to the future. When Maroochy 2025 participants were first surveyed, 72 percent of the respondents agreed with this proposition, whereas by the time of the completion of the Maroochy 2025 project the percentage of supporters had dropped to 57. While this decline in confidence could be attributed to past engagement practices by local government, the result signifies that there is still some way to go with building community confidence that processes like the Maroochy 2025 project would become a way of life and improve local government leadership. The lack in confidence from the community was primarily due to political cynicism, and generally a lack of confidence with Maroochy Shire Council's track record with development control. Some of the respondent's comments implied that local government does not align day-to-day service delivery with visions or simply lacks foresight.

In question 9 of the researcher's questionnaire participants were asked whether they believed the Maroochy 2025 project would make a difference to the future of local government planning and policy making. When the Maroochy 2025 participants were first surveyed, 61 percent of the respondents agreed that it would make a difference; by the time of the completion of Maroochy 2025, 83 percent of respondents thought Maroochy 2025 would influence the future of local government planning and policy making. In question 10 of the researcher's questionnaire, participants were asked whether local government plans needed to reflect the 2025 visions; 97 percent agreed with this statement. These results highlight that community planning approaches can be enhanced through such anticipatory democracy processes.

In question 13 of the researcher's questionnaire participants were asked whether they thought a process that enabled them to question the future created alternative ways of learning and thinking about the future. When the Maroochy 2025 participants were first surveyed, 83 percent answered 'yes' to this question, whereas by the time of the

completion of the Maroochy 2025 project, 69 percent of respondents thought the Maroochy 2025 project had made them think more critically about their future, and 92 percent of respondents thought the Maroochy 2025 process had been worthwhile. This result supports the benefits of using anticipatory action learning approaches in the achievement of innovative and intuitive outcomes to transform individuals, organizations and society through a unique style of critical questioning on the future. The use of anticipatory action learning approaches greatly assisted those directly affected by issues to play an active, participatory and more empowered role in defining and creating alternatives solutions to the issues and in creating their images of the future.

In question 14 of the researcher's questionnaire participants were asked to describe the future of the Shire using a metaphor. Just over 21 percent supplied a positive metaphor, 16 percent a negative and 15 percent a contingency metaphor. A large proportion of participants refused to answer this question (47%). Even though an example of a metaphor was supplied with this question, it was assumed by the researcher that participants did not understand the concept of metaphors. However, of those results recorded, a positive metaphor was still the highest recorded result, possible signifying a deeper story of hope for the future within the community.

5.4 CLA and discussion

This section presents the causal layered analysis and discussion of Maroochy 2025 and thematic problem areas. The analysis is displayed in the following Table (Table 5.1).

From the researcher's personal observations and a poststructural toolbox perspective, the following assumptions are considered:

It seems that the elected officials are privileged by a level of knowledge and decision making powers which provide them with the power to determine much about the future. The elected officials are therefore influencing the future based on their set agendas and assumptions, creating the official and preferred version of the future.

From a genealogy perspective, it seems that the discourse of representative democracy has been responsible for the present structures of deciding upon the future.

Given the prevalence and emphasis on representative democracy, other forms of democracy — for example, anticipatory, participatory, and e-democracy — struggle to have a presence in contemporary discourse.

Table 5.1. Maroochy 2025 CLA

| <i>Levels of Analysis</i> | <i>Citizens</i> | <i>Elected Officials</i> | <i>Bureaucracy</i> | <i>Researcher</i> |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Litany | They ask me for a vote every 4 years. | I am equipped with the right knowledge, power and expertise to create the vision for the people. Ask me and I will tell you what the future will be....! | We have a great town plan; See how successful we have been or how much we have failed from our outcomes. | This is an opportunity to demonstrate our improved strategic planning processes with supporting tools to address sustainability issues. |
| Social/Systemic Causes | I want to influence the future through being involved in the planning and decision making process. | I am following the legislative framework. | We are following the planning and policies set down for us. | Creating systemic changes so that anticipatory democracy is possible, i.e., e-democracy, futures visioning |
| Worldview | I think as a citizen that I should be able to contribute to decisions of the future through new democratic processes that involve the people not just elected officials. Worldview — Inclusion | Feudal structure with elected representatives at the top, and people at the bottom. | We are the experts and know what we are doing. Hierarchy and expertise. | People need to be equally empowered. Peer to peer networks. |
| Myth/Metaphor | I matter, I count Include me in conversations about my future. | Its my empire and I rule the people. | We can solve the problems of tomorrow, today. | Shifting the power to the people. |

From a distance perspective, the Maroochy 2025 preferred scenario was developed with a future orientated intent, whereby unfamiliar and new assumptions, new metaphors and possibilities were redefined. This perspective provides new ways of thinking about the future. Distance perspectives differ from the deconstructive and

genealogy perspectives in that those perspectives are situated in the present and influenced by the assumptions of the past and present. Hence, any scenarios or images of the future developed within these contexts are designed using assumptions which have not been challenged and thus will tend to reinscribe the past and present into the future.

From an alternative, past and futures perspective, Maroochy 2025 highlighted that it is the elected officials' version of the future that is used to maintain the present and set the future.

Finally, from a reordering of knowledge perspective, Maroochy 2025 provided an opportunity for the roles of — and relationships between — elected officials, bureaucracy and the community to be redefined. The redefining could reorder the knowledge by diffusing it from the bureaucratic domain into a collective community domain. Unfortunately, the Maroochy 2025 project has not achieved this.

5.4 Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the researcher's personal observations and key learnings around Maroochy 2025. The researcher compared and contrasted relevant surveys that measured community acceptance of the Maroochy 2025 project. Additionally, this chapter focussed on the researcher's observation of Maroochy 2025 through a CLA and discussion applying a poststructural toolbox approach to the four primary stakeholders. The chapter highlighted particular insights that are beneficial to any local government that is considering undertaking community visioning or using applied futures studies.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings related to the main research question and subsequent three sub research questions. It presents the researchers reflections and learnings with suggestions for further areas of research. These reflections signify an opportunity for local government considerations to avoid replicating the pitfalls and dangers experienced in Maroochy 2025 prior to embarking on the promotion of visioning collaborations for communities futures.

6.2 The main aims and implications of the research

This research intended to identify past, current and emerging discourses pertaining to sustainability, sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities. The results achieved from the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project have highlighted the limitations of current Queensland local government approaches to solving the sustainability issues through community visioning and the use of applied futures. As this thesis has shown, Maroochy 2025 project was a community futures tragedy: a valuable opportunity that achieved a significant level of community buy-in to the creation of a sustainable future in partnership with the local government was squandered. Sadly, for reasons of representative democracy and the weight of the past (assumptions by the community and by some elected officials that it is the government's responsibility to plan the future and make it happen), the possibility of empowering the community and creating alternative futures was lost.

The newly legislated (2008) local government entity in the region, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, will find it hard to recover lost levels of trust, perceived integrity and respect from the community. However, memories can be short, and in the long term some of the project's learnings may have impact. Insights and perspectives gained by undertaking community visioning actions, the significance of this research and lessons learnt — especially through applied futures studies and anticipatory action learning methods — could provide local governments with a framework for transformational change in an era in which it has become imperative to create sustainable community futures.

This research explored the current planning responses of local government, with their use of concepts such as social capital, community development and community engagement and the need to create sustainable communities. However, such responses, when compared with the results of Maroochy 2025's community visioning, highlight the tensions and potential gaps and barriers.

By comparing and contrasting the findings from the researcher's applied futures studies survey and the Maroochy 2025 project evaluations, it is clear that — through the use of applied futures studies methods — community visioning that includes these methods has the potential to have a significant positive personal and community impact in terms of:

- improving the levels of critical thinking in communities;
- shifting attitudes towards the future;
- enhancing levels of community cohesion; and
- increasing levels of agency and a sense of empowerment with a communities preferred future.

Therefore, projects like Maroochy 2025 can greatly assist in the creation of sustainable communities if the community is given responsibility and empowered with appropriate tools and skills. In discussing the beneficial concepts of community visioning and applied futures studies, several key learnings for local governments have been identified. The use of applied futures studies as a means for creating a sense of agency within community individuals, elected officials, and local government bureaucracies is recommended. It can enable fruitful challenging of the discourses of planning and create new spaces in planning conversations for alternatives. Communities that are engaged and empowered become a key driver of social change, redefine the meaning of community and create new processes by which we arrive at our choice for sustainable futures.

The researcher's personal observations highlight that there is still a great deal of resistance to community visioning amongst local government planners and councillors. There is scope for greater investigation and opportunities for further research by local government planners, futurists and other social science researchers. The CLA maps the perspectives and helps local governments understand why there is a problem, and what can be done.

The researcher's personal observations also identify a number of major points from an action learning perspective that require special mention and consideration by other future local government community visioning practitioners. These are:

1. Be sensitive to the environmental and physical settings of visioning and futures studies workshops or there may be a risk of unwittingly contributing to the myth that Council is controlling and directing the solutions.
2. Know how to deal with the anxiety from participants when challenging assumptions and questioning the official versions of the future. Endeavour to improve the visioning process using an anticipatory action learning perspective and methods, as these methods will greatly assist with the recognition of barriers. Resistance needs to be named, understood and transformed for the visioning process to move ahead.
3. If your visioning project is being sponsored by a local government and facilitated by Council employees, anticipate that community members will see this as an opportunity to raise general grievances with Council. Establish systems and processes to manage this effect at the visioning workshops.
4. To avoid the loss of community leadership, goodwill, and innovation, ensure that there is a commitment, funding and strategies to support the implementation process. Manage the anticipated reactions to the visioning results and identify the potential saboteurs to the implementation process or there will be a need to manage the consequences of a disenfranchised community and increased activism against the council in the future. These implementation dangers can be minimised through:
 - i. The development of implementation scenarios and strategies;
 - ii. Continued engagement of all stakeholders during and after the community visioning project;
 - iii. Finding those groups that have disengaged and challenging their assumptions about past patterns (that Council is never going to change and consultation is seen as tokenistic with decisions already made);

- iv. Ensuring that all significant Council policies and planning processes become more participatory and inclusive using community input;
- v. Inviting the community to participate with the implementation of other local government projects as a means of demonstrating to the community that they can influence their future as it pertains to Council decisions;
- vi. Communicating that the elected officials' versions of the future can compliment the community's preferred vision and is equally legitimate;
- vii. Challenging the 'them and us' scenario; i.e., finding a new myth;
- viii. Ensuring that the major issues impacting on the community which are best dealt with through partnerships are embraced as part of Council's philosophical and policy position for community engagement; and
- ix. The development of new models of community governance that support the mutual concepts of anticipatory and representative democracy accordingly.

The researcher believes that the Maroochy 2025 project has left an indelible mark on the thinking patterns of the Maroochy Shire community about their futures and a confidence that individuals are not as powerless as they may have believed. From a personal observation perspective, Maroochy 2025 was highly successful as a model of social change for communities and for other local governments to learn and adapt to their own community visioning applications. However, it was also a significant failure from a participatory democracy perspective. This was simply due to the fact that the project did not remain true to its foundational principles and philosophies. These were situated in a context of inclusive and participatory processes. This failure was highlighted in the researcher's comments regarding the issue of not keeping the key decision makers involved with the action learning results from each stage of the project. A significant failure was the Project Team's ignorance and consequent decision to leave Councillors out of the scenario development process; this is a key point considering that they are the key democratic decision makers. It was at this moment that the Project Team lost all support buy-in opportunities and the chance to achieve a collective success in a system of representative democracy. Ironically, the researcher did flag this issue with the Project Team early in the project; however, his late entry into the Project Team meant he lacked the level of influence needed to persuade the other Project Team members.

6.3 Responses to each core research questions

This section presents the researcher's comments in response to the main and sub research questions.

6.3.1 Main research question:

Can local governments empower their communities with the opportunity and capacity to create alternative futures?

Maroochy 2025 did not live up to its stated goals because of the strategic mistakes made by the Maroochy 2025 project team. These mistakes were made because of three key reasons. Firstly the project team failed to adapt and respond to the emerging project issues, especially the shift in political goodwill. Secondly the team failed to constantly check and re-check each others assumptions and agendas. Especially about the Maroochy 2025 planning process, desired project outputs and levels of understanding with futures studies methods. Thirdly, the excitement and sense of empowerment was not only the project team's excellence, it was also the fatal flaw, as the use of power given to the project team, and CTF became a means to believe in our own myths of self and controlling selves, and eventually these myths came into direct conflict with other powerful myths and selves associated with representative democracy. The project team and the CTF thought that we were smarter than the Councillors when it came to knowing the preferred community future. The point here is that every voice or image for the future is just as legitimate.

Based on the results from the Maroochy 2025 project, local governments in their role of managing issues and planning for the future can empower their communities and staff with the opportunity and capacity to create alternative futures. The issue here is that empowerment is still about power. Power needs to be shared and managed in a context of clear expectations, capability and capacity. Local governments need to work with its bureaucracies and communities within an environment of shared power and balance tension to co-create alternative futures, especially, given the need to create sustainable futures. No one entity can solve the myriad of sustainability issues alone, it will require the collective wisdoms of the governments, businesses and the whole community if local governments are to create alternative futures. Effective, inclusive and participatory problem solving processes makes for better long term solutions.

The results from the Maroochy 2025 project highlight some very important key learnings for local governments when undertaking community visioning. This thesis was written so that others may learn from the Maroochy 2025 opportunities and mistakes, however the mistakes should not scare other local governments from participating in similar community visioning projects. Local governments should and can empower their communities with the opportunity and capacity to create alternative futures, as long as everyone is clear about their role, use of power and responsibility in the futures process and most importantly a commitment to explore other alternative futures.

6.3.2 Sub research Question 1

Does the use of applied futures studies shift community attitudes and increase the community's level of confidence to create alternative ways of learning, knowing and uses of the future?

Using applied futures studies method within community planning and community engagement processes can provide greater opportunity for active buy-in and re-engagement by all types of stakeholders or opinion holders to determine their images of the future. Engaging the full community in the identification of emerging issues, trends, change drivers, possible, probable and preferred scenarios and visions, can create a more representative articulation of collective images, meanings and actions for the many possible and alternative community futures.

This research highlights that there is much to be gained by the use of applied futures studies for governments, organisations and communities. The value and worth of futurists and futures studies is best summarised by Inayatullah (2006, p.666) who states that 'organisational, social, environmental, cultural and spiritual innovation is one of the most important potential contributions of futures studies'. These innovations are becoming more crucial given the global and local crisis for sustainable futures.

In the long term, insights and perspectives gained by undertaking community visioning, especially through anticipatory action learning methods, are expected to provide local governments with a contemporary framework for transformational change.

6.3.3 Sub research Question 2

Can local government politicians and planners improve community planning approaches to enhance the concept of anticipatory democracy?

In essence, Maroochy 2025 was about creating long term, future-orientated policy options and consultation frameworks for emergent communities, elected officials and local government planners. The Maroochy 2025 project aimed to be a means of empowering the many while creating energy and space to consider the alternatives for Maroochy Shire. The project has given the Maroochy community a way of recognising significant actions or milestones along the way to its preferred future.

Maroochy 2025 has been lauded as one of the 'best-practice case studies' in the arena of community planning by the Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport & Recreation (Grogan, 2004). One of the many pivotal events of Maroochy 2025 was the bringing together of more than 400 residents who were then able to reach consensus on a preferred scenario for their future. This was a landmark event in anticipatory democracy, which highlighted the inherent potential and existing capacity and leadership that communities have in articulating common futures.

A community can actively influence the planning and policy-making decisions that directly affect it, hence contributing to the concept of anticipatory democracy. Communities no longer want local government to do it *to* them, but *with* them when it comes to planning their futures. However, there are many Maroochy 2025 participants who remain sceptical as to whether Maroochy 2025 will change local government planning and policy, while also recognising that the Maroochy 2025 project experience has had a positive personal impact in terms of the development of critical thinking, changed attitudes and empowerment.

Local government politicians and planners can improve community planning approaches by listening, engaging and embedding the community's aspirations in their own aspirations for the future. Local government politicians and planners do not have to take the full responsibility for these decisions or assume that they are the experts or chief annalists who have to know the future. At the same time, even though the community has a responsibility to local government politicians and planners through

the voting system, it does not need to remain passive in simply accepting the first option or vision presented by the local government politicians and planners. Communities have a shared responsibility to check and challenge the futures being offered, even if they are simply being informed about the official version. Otherwise, we have little right to complain.

6.3.4 Sub research Question 3

Does foresight and community planning shift the power away from local politicians towards communities and planners?

The Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project happened as a result of a growing and emerging localisation of planning and new forms of community governance models being developed across Australian communities. The need to own the decisions that determine a community's future and to share the responsibility for creating such a future highlights the arrival of sophisticated, intellectually savvy, and cohesive communities that are no longer prepared to be recipients of faceless, professionalised bureaucratic decision making. The effectiveness of a 'community task force' model, as seen in Maroochy 2025, indicates a growth in community leadership and groups of individuals who identify with deeper core values for a sustainable community. These people are eager and willing to engage, participate and co-create a futures discourse or foresight projects that offer participatory opportunities and empowering experiences.

Applied futures studies, foresight and community visioning can shift the power for the future as they challenge the assumptions and worldviews of individuals defining the issues and solutions, thus creating the 'ah ha' moments to check ourselves when pushing a line of argument for the future. The transformational results from experiencing applied futures studies create a renewed sense of agency within the individual and a sense of empowerment to create and take responsibility for creating alternative futures. This effect was apparent to the researcher when observing Maroochy 2025 participants who have displayed a resurgence of personal power and willingness to question, challenge and take responsibility for their future. Change of this sort gives great hope for a re-balancing of power so that those who would be disadvantaged become equally advantaged in the official image of the future.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

This research has evoked for the researcher many thoughts about further areas of possible futures studies research. There is, of course, a requirement for time to pass to see how much of the vision for Maroochy is implemented indirectly and to investigate why and how this occurs. There is also a need to explore applications of futures studies other than community visioning within local government planning.

Another avenue for future investigation is to compare and contrast the success or failure of the myriad community visioning projects that are already complete or currently being completed in Queensland. This research could compare the assumptions, methods and consequences and evaluate if and how the results of these community visioning projects will be imbedded or enshrined into local government planning legislation.

6.5 Conclusion

The Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning project was a worthwhile undertaking as it achieved a significant level of community buy-in with to the creation of a sustainable future in partnership with the local government. However, the ongoing value of this opportunity was sadly lost through lack of implementation. Representative democracy and the weight of the past assumption by the community and some local councillors that it is the government's responsibility to plan the future and make it happen, meant a vital opportunity for the community to become empowered and create alternative futures was missed. The newly formed Sunshine Coast Regional Council will find it hard to recover lost levels of trust, perceptions of integrity and respect by the community. However, memories can be short, and in the long term the insights and perspectives gained by undertaking community visioning actions, the significance of this research and lessons learnt — especially through applied futures studies and anticipatory action learning methods — are expected to provide local governments with a framework for transformational change. This could be invaluable in an era in which the creation of sustainable community futures is imperative.

6.5.1 Researcher's end note

After the 2008 local government elections, the Maroochy Shire Council councillors who were the main antagonists and critics of the Maroochy 2025 project either did not seek re-election or were defeated at the polls. The researcher believes the Maroochy Shire and Sunshine Coast community finally got it right about who would create their alternative community futures.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Key Focus Areas Matrix: Sub themes and principles



Community Task Force's Draft Key Focus Areas

Balance is the overriding principle for all the key focus areas

Our principle of balance or sustainability is recognising that the health of the Environment (natural system) is the over-riding priority, followed by the wellbeing of our social and cultural systems to enable a creative economy.

| KFA | Sustain the Natural Environment | Create healthy, vibrant, inclusive, learning communities | Improve transport infrastructure and mobility | Promote Responsible Leadership and Decision Making to achieve our vision | Smartly Manage our rural & urban growth | Create an Innovative and Diverse Economy |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| SCOPE/ Sub-themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting and managing the habitat, landscapes, natural systems (air, water and soils) and diversity of plants and animals. Climate change Water quality Biodiversity Waste management | Community well-being is concerned with quality of life and with the common good of all community members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, Healthy Communities Create a Culture of Creativity Sense of identity Affordable housing | 'Getting around' (or mobility) considers transportation to, from and within Maroochy Shire and the infrastructure that supports it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better Public transport Traffic calming Walkable towns | Consistent, coordinated Governance, directing resources and human capital to achieve the community's vision and objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships Community involvement Regional Cooperation | Balance the population growth, and its impacts on nature, society, land use, infrastructure and the quality of urban and rural lifestyles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population capacity Nature's Limits Character of development | Develop sustainable diverse business and work opportunities that provides for our wellbeing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge Economy Leisure, Health & Nature Access to Technology Renewable Energy | |
| Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability; Precautionary; Intergenerational Equity | Inclusion and equity; Creativity; Life long learning | Equitable access; People before cars; Alternative ways of travel | Ethics, foresight, public participation Responsibility | Smart Growth Liveable Viable Memorable | Economic Development is not Economic Growth. | |

Community Task Force

10th December 2003

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8.2 Community visioning worksheets

Visionary Ideas for Maroochy 2025

Instructions:

Step 1: Give us your visions of Maroochy's Future by answering the following questions about the 6 key focus areas

Note: *If you don't want to answer any questions and want to contribute in another way, go to Step 5.*

Step 2: Prioritise your answers by choosing your TOP 3 responses from all your answers to the questions. Write your selection onto the 3 colour feet supplied.

(Red being your No 1 Preferred Vision, Orange being your No 2 Preferred Vision & Yellow No 3 preferred vision)

Step 3: Peel the back of your feet and stick them under the Key Focus Area in the center of the room.

Step 4: Hand-in your answers to the Vision Questions into the Maroochy 2025 Post Box at the Workshop OR mail the worksheet using a reply paid envelope to Council available at the workshop's reception desk.

Step 5: Contribute other ways, by drawing, write a story, tell a story, fill out a Questionnaire.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

Draft Key Focus Areas

By 2025, we have successfully ‘Sustained the Natural Environment’.

Q.1. What sort of natural environment do you imagine enjoying in 2025?

Priority -

Q.2. What ONE IDEA did we specifically do, to sustain the natural environment?

By 2025, we have successfully created a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning communities.

Q.3. What does our healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning community look like in Maroochy in 2025.

Priority -

Q.4. What did we specifically do to create a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning community in Maroochy for us to proud of in 2025?

AND

Q.5. What did we specifically do to make Maroochy a place in which people are creative personally, and culturally by 2025?

By 2025 we have improved Transport Infrastructure and Mobility.

Q.6. What ways of moving around are we using in Maroochy in the year 2025?

Priority -

Q.7. What did we specifically do to create a Maroochy that is easy for people of all ages to move around, by the year 2025?

By 2025, we have Responsible Leadership and Decision Making to achieve our future vision.

Q.8. How should we make important decisions about our environment, local communities and industries (economy) in Maroochy in the year 2025?

Priority -

Q.9. What did we specifically do to change the way we make decisions about our environment, local communities and industries (economy) in Maroochy by the year 2025?

Q.10. What does responsible leadership look like in 2025?

Q.11. What did we specifically do to develop responsible leadership?

By 2025 we have Smartly managed our Rural and Urban growth

Q.12. What do our urban and rural environments look like and how do they relate to each other in Maroochy in 2025?

Priority -

Q.13. What did we specifically do to plan our rural and urban environments so that they are balanced and viable into 2025?

By 2025 we have created an Innovative and Diverse Economy

Q.14. What sort of work is commonly available and important in Maroochy in 2025 for our personal and social wealth and well-being?

Priority -

Q.15. What did we specifically do to create the sort of work and balanced economy we wanted in Maroochy by the year 2025?

Other Opportunities

Q.16. What else is important to creating the future you imagine for Maroochy in 2025?

Priority -

Q.17. What metaphor (*word picture*) would you use to describe your vision of Maroochy in 2025? (*limit your word picture to around 5 words or less*)

Thank you, very much for your time.







AND

Please fill out a workshop evaluation to help us improve the processes

8.3 Cluster theme worksheets

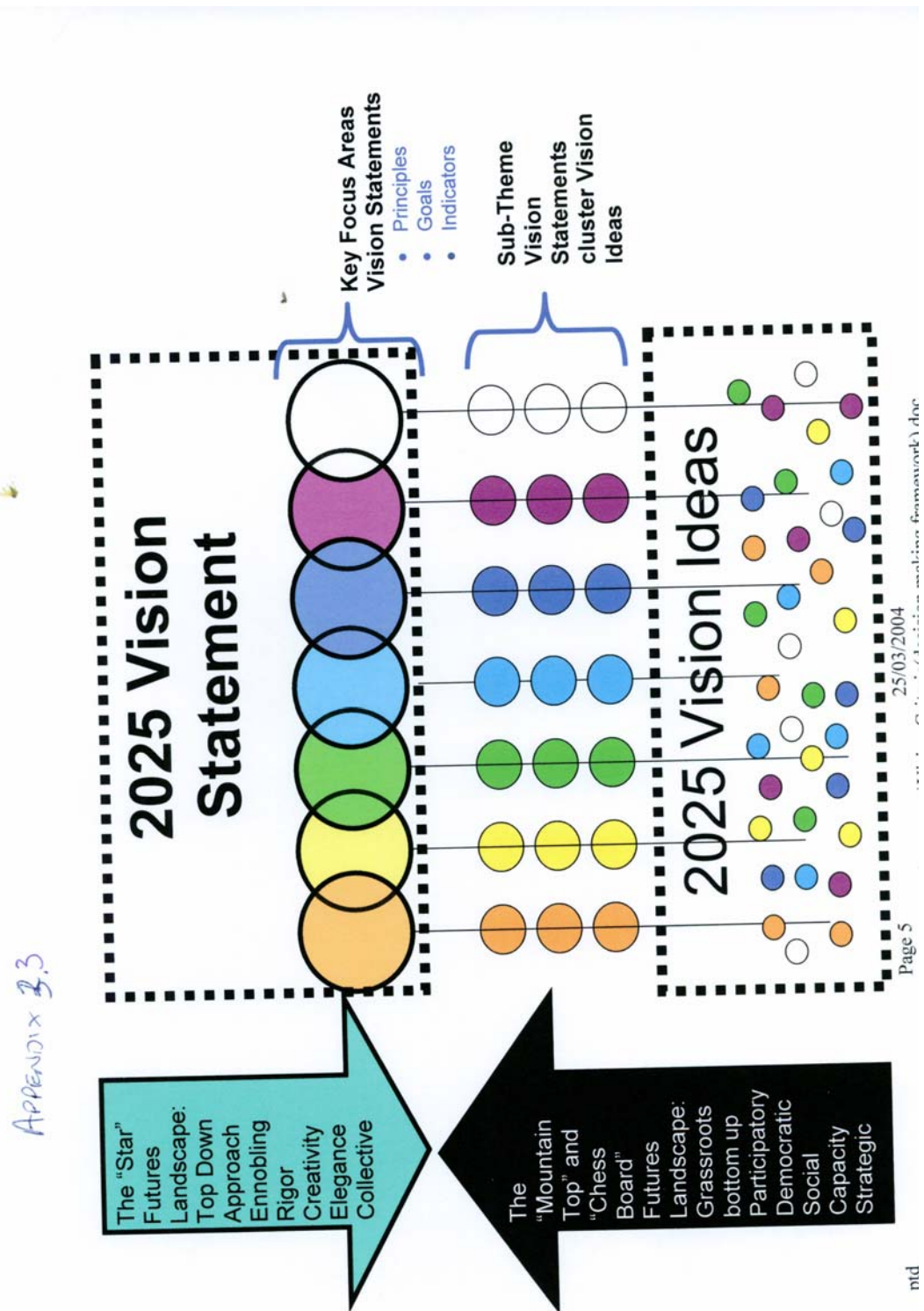
APPENDICES
2025

KEY FOCUS AREAS & supporting cluster themes

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
|  <p>Sustain the Natural Environment</p> |  <p>Create healthy, vibrant, inclusive, learning communities</p> |  <p>Improve transport infrastructure and mobility</p> |  <p>Promote Responsible Leadership and Decision Making to achieve our vision</p> |  <p>Smartly Manage our rural & urban growth</p> |  <p>Create an Innovative and Diverse Economy</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Making • Development of Urban Containment Boundaries • Eco Education • Eco Enhancement • Ecological Enhancement • Protecting Green Spaces/Corridors • Sustainable Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable habitation • Aged & Youth philosophies • Community Politics • Creating community connections • Engaging in lifelong learning & education • Finding new and emerging jobs/enterprises/employment opportunities that support this KFA • Opportunity to experience community • Preserving our health • Providing opportunities for artistic and cultural expression • Social Infrastructure • Sustaining community spaces & services infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and equity to mobility solutions • Alternative transport solutions (new forms) • Creation of clean, alternative and renewable energy sources • Enhancing park and ride networks • Expanding cycle pathways and walkways • Improve and better utilise existing modes of transport and infrastructure • Improve and better utilise existing modes of transport and infrastructure • Long term planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Community Governance Models • Community Awareness • Community Vision Based Leadership • Empowered, informed, accountable, educated Councillors • Long Term Planning Partnerships • Polling Issues - Community Initiated Referenda Reform • Regional Cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Consultation • Density Variation • Distinct Urban Villages • Enhancing Rural Areas • Environmentally Sustainable Development • Housing Diversity • Manage Natural Resources • Planned Development to Value Surroundings and Regional Character • Population capacity • Smart Growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Industries to Support Lifestyle and Liveability • Developing A Diverse Workforce • Developing Industry Diversification • Enhancing Coast Specific Business • Implementing Work Skills Education • Promoting Rural Businesses • Provide opportunities for the sale of local produce in the Maroochy Shire and throughout QLD & Australia • Tourism - Promote rural towns through highlighting current tourist attractions. |

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8.4 Maroochy 2025: Futures landscape model



8.5 CTF Vision Criteria

Appendices 3.2.



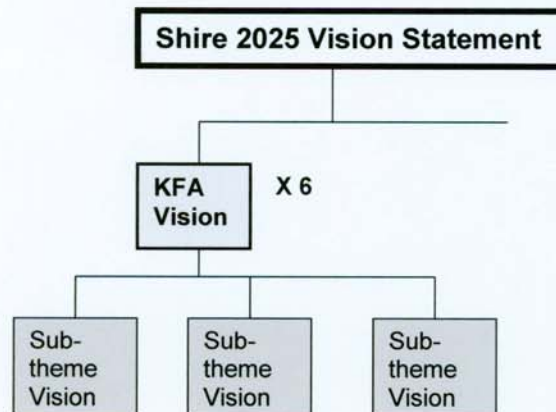
Vision Sorting – to Cluster Vision Ideas into sub-themes under each Key Focus Area

Maroochy Shire Council M2025 Project Team:

Facilitating Community workshops and CTF workshops
Compiling Database

M2025 Community Task Force Objectives for Visioning Phase:

1. Sorting/Clustering Vision Ideas from Database
2. Titling (Naming) the Sub-themes in each Key Focus Area from clusters
3. Validating Key Focus Areas and Sub-themes
4. Filtering Vision Ideas post Visioning Summit
5. Draft Tiered Vision statements (refer diagram below)
6. Craft Preferred Maroochy 2025 Scenario



Method of Sorting/Clustering

- A. Individually read through list of vision ideas and write down name of 4-6 themes / sub themes (identify with colour or code)
- B. Compare with other team members & agree common 'Cluster Theme Titles'
- C. Read/scan following ideas until the end of the list for matches (identify with same colour or code)
- D. Go to the next top most un-coded vision idea (identify with colour or code)
- E. Re-scan list for matches (identify with same colour of code)
- F. Repeat process until last vision idea in list is coded
- G. Cluster Vision Ideas and Name sub-themes



Vision Criteria – to Filter Vision Ideas

(Integrating CTF Values and guiding principles)

Filtering Vision Ideas post Visioning Summit - Qualities of a Vision

1. **Legitimacy** (ownership) amongst its community;
2. Impact upon the **physical** world in which we live. (goods & services)
3. It must have some bearing on the **conventional view** of what is real, even challenge our views of what is real.
4. It must **ennoble** a people
5. It must be neither **too far** into the future (and appear unreachable) nor **too near** (thus be fraught with emotional ego politics) a 20 year timeframe works well
6. It must redefine the role of **leadership**, and
7. it must be **mythical**

Sustainable Vision

The Individual Vision Ideas achieve the Collective Vision (preferred Scenario).

Helps achieve the Key Focus Area Objective:

1. Sustain the Natural Environment
2. Create healthy, vibrant, inclusive learning communities
3. Improve transport infrastructure and mobility
4. Promote responsible leadership and decision making to achieve our vision
5. Smartly manage our rural and urban growth
6. Create an innovative and diverse economy

Implementable Vision (Doable)

Social (same as 2 above) and CTF Values of:

Inclusiveness, caring, useful and meaningful – (Frequency and Summit Priority)

Technological

Economic - financial

Environmental

Political-

Credible

Passionate – inspirational and ennobling (aligns with preferred Scenario)

Causes Change

Stakeholder to take ownership and deliver (is there someone out there to make it Happen?)

(Steep and Impact/Ease Tools can be used during Action Planning)

Inclusive Vision (participatory and multi-source)

Community workshops

Stakeholder Interviews

School Visioning

ptd

Page 2

25/03/2004

R:\Maroochy 2025\11. Community Task Force\PP_documents\Vision Criteria(decision making framework).doc

8.6 Researcher's applied futures studies survey

MAROOCHY 2025 STAKEHOLDER/ OPINION HOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Maroochy Stakeholder /Opinion holder

Thank you for participating in the visioning workshop today.

We are doing a research survey as part of the Maroochy Shire's Community Vision 2025 project; we would like to hear your opinions on a range of topics that affect the Shire's future and the Maroochy 2025 Project. The survey will only take 10 – 15 minutes.

Regarding proprietary & confidentiality questions:

Maroochy Shire Council does not seek confidential information, and or other proprietary information. This survey is primarily aimed at understanding your views on the future.

All of your answers will be confidential and will only be reported as part of a group response; after starting the survey, you may decide not to continue at any time, and you may refuse to answer any question if you choose.

Please do **NOT** include confidential information. Do you agree to participate in this survey YES/NO_____

Do you agree that this information in the questionnaire may be used for academic research purposes? YES / NO_____

If YES: Thank you.

May I ask your first name only, please?_____

Thank you for your participation.

(Note please return complete answers to workshop facilitator)

Or

Post to:

Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force, PO Box 76, Nambour. C:- Questioning the Future Survey.

MAROOCHY 2025 QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1

1) Do you believe you have power to influence your community's future?

| Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Don't Know | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Refused |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 9. |

2) In your opinion, what are the **three most** important issues facing the Maroochy Shire today that will affect its future? **Please circle only three answers**

1. Environmental Protection/ Conservation
 2. Affordable Housing
 3. Cultural development
 4. Livability
 5. Tourism
 6. Diverse employment opportunities
 7. Balanced (green-clean) urban development
 8. Education
 9. Crime
 10. Green space and rural land protection
 11. Managing Population Capacity
 12. Development character and building height limits (eg not the Gold Coast)
 13. Traffic Congestion
 14. Public transport and other forms of mobility - accessibility
 15. Social and Health Services
 16. Community identity and cohesion
 17. Coordinated Regional decision making on Sunshine Coast
 18. Other _____
-
19. Don't Know
 20. Refused

3) In the time you've been here, do you think the Maroochy Shire area has become a better place to live, a worse place, or has it stayed the same?

1. Better
2. Worse
3. Stayed the Same
4. Other
5. Don't Know -----> SKIP TO Q.4
6. Refused -----> SKIP TO Q.4

Comments:

4) How long have you lived in Maroochy Shire?

- 1) 0 – 5 years
- 2) 6 – 10 years
- 3) 11 – 15 years
- 4) 16 – 20 years
- 5) 21 – 30 years
- 6) 30 + years

5) In the future, do you think the Maroochy Shire area will become a better place to live, a worse place, or will it stay the same?

1. Better
2. Worse
3. Stay the Same
4. Other
5. Don't Know -----> SKIP TO Q6
6. Refused -----> SKIP TO Q.6

Comments:

6) Is Maroochy Shire is a cohesive community, which operates co-operatively and with solidarity?

| Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Don't Know | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Refused |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 9. |

7) Do you believe engaging the community in the Maroochy 2025 project will influence a shift in community attitudes towards the future?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know
4. Refused

Comments:

8) Does the community of Maroochy Shire need a shared vision?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know
4. Refused

Comments:

9) Do you believe the Maroochy 2025 project will make a difference to the future of local government planning and policymaking?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know
4. Refused

Comments

10) Do you believe the Maroochy Shire Councils' Corporate, Town Plan and Landuse Plans need to reflect the 2025 vision/s?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know
4. Refused

Comments

11) What do you think is required to enhance community cohesion and attitudes towards the future?

12) Do you have confidence that the Maroochy 2025 process will positively influence the direction of the future for the Shire?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) Don't Know
- 4) Refused

Comments

13) Do you think a process that by 'Questioning our future' creates alternative ways of learning and thinking about the future?.

- 1) Yes
-

- 2) No
- 3) Don't Know
- 4) Refused

Comments

14) If you were to describe the future of Shire as a metaphor (eg the future is like a star. ever bright) what would your metaphor be?

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