**Creative Transitions to Sustainable Futures – The Centre**

Colin D Meurk

colinmeurk02@gmail.com

21st June, 2019

This is a concept conceived as a research proposal in 2005 with a view to engaging a trans-disciplinary team to explore the ‘wicked problems’ and multiple crises looming on our earthly horizons and in our consciousness. It was based on the hypothesis that:

* Business as Usual (BAU) is leading us to the cliff edge and is not a viable long-term proposition;
* We have an idealistic vision of what a sustainable future may look like, but that it is a mirage that eludes us as it requires substantial change in expectations and corresponding behaviour;
* Therefore, the great challenge of our time is to design transitional stepping stones that take us to a soft landing on that future steady state without ‘frightening the horses’; and this must address sustainability across all the measures of well-being.

As science, it was intended not to presume an outcome, but rather to develop models of likely scenarios, to track the social, cultural, ecological and economic trajectories that would determine which pathway we are on, BUT importantly, to have a **Plan B in our back pocket, of how to proceed away from imminent collapse** in the event this was required at short notice. What might be the **transitional steps towards a brighter outcome**.

In the absence of institutional support, the broad topic has been increasingly picked up by other commentators and thought leaders internationally across the fields of climate, ecology, psycho-socio-cultural condition, economics, politics, governance and cosmology.

We picked up this theme in the course we ran at the **Canterbury WEA** (<http://cwea.org.nz/> ) in May, 2018 – **Take 1** (see summary of notes and presentations at: <http://cwea.org.nz/lectures.php#topline> [go to Sustainability Series - the notes and write-up of discussions from this series are available at this [link.](http://cwea.org.nz/lectures.php#topline) Go to Notes from the Sustainability Course with Dr Colin Meurk].

The follow-up series of facilitated discussions took place during March 2019 (**Take 2**).

The raw materials from this last session are to be found at the following link [ xxxxxxx]. These include a summary of key messages from Take 1 by Anja as a kind of independent observers’ perspective; a general introduction to the current series (**Take 2**) and reference to representative slides from the 2018 ‘ecology/land management’ session (Theme 1); a brief introduction to the socio-cultural session (Theme 2); an introduction with representative slides to the economics session (Theme 3), with a wrap-up based largely on perceptively relevant cartoons; and an annotated and cumulative bibliography of the growing body of literature and references to these topics.

Please note that these materials and discussion notes are still to be fully collated and ordered into a more coherent form; with an intended further (**Take 3**) series later in 2019.

The **urgency for developing pathways** to a future sustainable state seem more acute than ever, and especially in Christchurch in the wake of the horrific Mosque shooting on March 15, 2019. Several cities around New Zealand have declared climate emergencies, and this is a start towards acknowledging that we may have an existential problem, and an impetus to actually design a ‘menu’ for digging ourselves **out** of a hole, rather than deeper into it.

Aotearoa-NZ and Christchurch perhaps have an even bigger role to play, not only in our own country but as an exemplar, or maybe even a beacon, beyond our shores. The world is likely to need such models to offer a kinder destiny.