

## SCHOOLS

# Classrooms of the future

Renowned futurist to address Kawana High on education choices

**I**MAGINE kids blocking hallways marred with violence caused by deep class and ethnic divisions.

It sounds like something that could only happen in America, but it's the future waiting for Sunshine Coast schools if they don't move now to establish an alternative, renowned futurist Dr Sohail Inayatullah warned yesterday.

"Corridor Jam" is how the World Futures Studies Federation fellow describes one of the four likely school "futures" he will present to teachers at Kawana State High this afternoon.

"There's so much growth, and when the schools keep on growing, you'll basically get the American model where you get violence and kids picking on each other," he said.

"That's the likely scenario if we do nothing."

That scenario takes into account class divides, which already exist on the Coast, ethnic divides and a new division Dr Inayatullah calls the "digital divide", or discrimination based on access to digital technology.

And that division will feature heavily in another possible future where cyber-celebrities such as Lara Croft will replace regular teachers.

"Education used to be (about) teaching your kids how to get a good job or teaching them how to be human; now it's become a commodity," he said.

A privatised education system would see multinational compan-

ies call the shots in the curriculum stakes, the vehicle for which would be the world wide web.

Of course, virtual education would bring a raft of problems, including health issues associated with spinal development.

But natural problems would be no match for genetic technology, the driving force of the third "future".

In this future (which is about 30 years down the track), students with money would have access to "enhancement" in the form of gene technology or medication, which is proven to improve intellectual performance.

The fourth future is one where the state no longer controls the purse strings of the schools.

The principal would have hir-

ing and firing powers, diminishing the strength of the unions.

So which future should schools be shooting for? It's probably a mix of some or all, but it's up to teachers to choose which one and in what proportions. But no matter which future the Kawana teachers choose, they have already taken the crucial step and asked about the future, he said.



**LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:** Dr Sohail Inayatullah will talk about the paths our schools will go in the future.