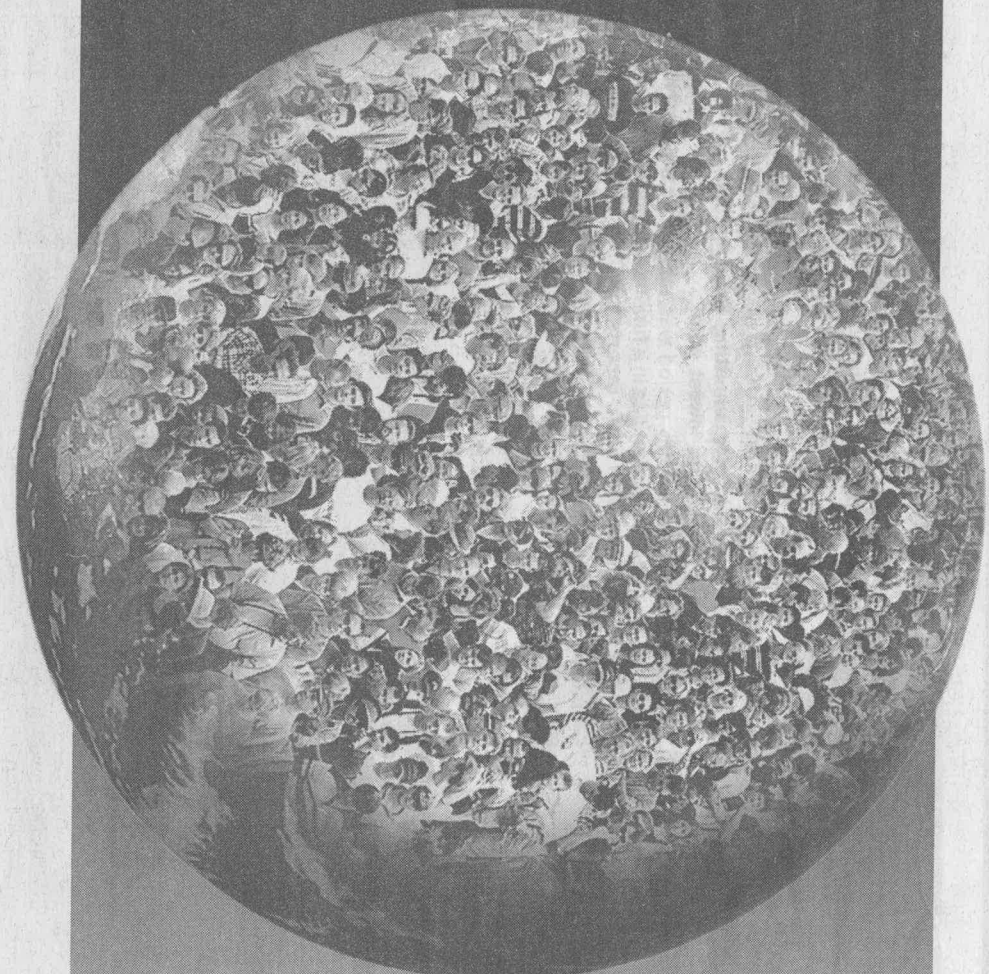


The northern hemisphere looks with pessimism towards the year 3000, humanity's next great landmark, but in Australia two futurists see promise for a thriving planet based on global co-operation and communication. SAMELA HARRIS reports.

TOWARDS THE YEAR 3000

One globe, one people



THE Apocalypse never need be nigh. So assert Australia's leading futurists Dr Peter Ellyard and Dr Sohail Inayatullah following gloom and doom predictions from futurists of the northern hemisphere. London School of Economics professor Ian Angel has written that there simply will not be a human race by the year 3000 because the world already is overpopulated.

Geoff Jenkins, head of Britain's Hadley Centre of climate predictions has offered the gloomy prospect of melted ice sheets flooding out whole countries if the world continues to use fossil fuels.

Dr Ellyard, Executive director of Preferred Futures, Melbourne, chairman of the Universal Greening Group, former Executive director of the Australian Commission of the Future and author of *Ideas for the New Millennium*, refuses to stoop to such grim prognoses.

"What's the point of being a futurist if you cannot be positive?" he asks.

He thinks that one day people will be taking degrees in futurism.

Meanwhile, this abstract occupation which melds economics, conservation, politics and philosophy, suddenly has found a footing in the world realisation that the future has arrived and it is called 2000. Perhaps the first sign of global cohesion emerged in the New Year's Eve celebrations of the world, beamed instantly through satellite communications to and from every corner of the globe.

Suddenly, it was the global village party.

ACCORDING to Dr Ellyard, such phenomena are just beginning and, if humanity plays its cards right, we can not only treat our global ills but create a new "planetary culture".

It will not be simple, but it is achievable. This now is "the century of the planet" - and it heralds the time for many major changes of the ways in which we do things.

"Dr Ellyard calls the new path "Planetism" which, he says, succeeds Post Modernism.

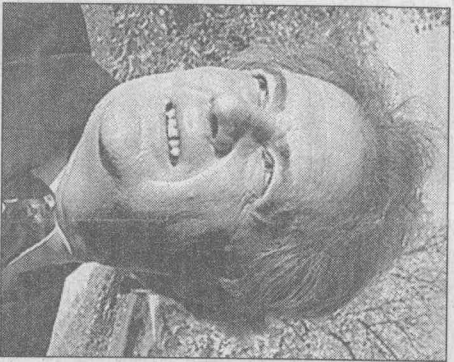
"The Earth is becoming more interdependent and co-operative," he asserts.

"This new planetary culture is being moulded by a combination of political, economic, technology

cal and ecological forces of great power which are all working synergistically to create it. "My grandparents grew up identifying themselves with Western Australia and New South Wales rather than Australia. My grandchildren will identify themselves with their planet as much as their nation."

Thus does Dr Ellyard, former director of the South Australian department for the Environment and director of the State's now defunct Ministry of Technology, speak of a global trading system, one which has learned from the protests of Seattle's World Trade Conference. He sees a positive in the United Nations which, while still imperfect, has potential in the role of planetary peacemaker and peacekeeper.

"The world is also being united by ecologically driven fear - fear of global ecological disaster," he



POSITIVE: Dr Ellyard.

says. "For centuries fear has divided humanity, now is beginning to unite it... fear of unpredictable climatic change and an ozone-depleted atmosphere is forcing people to think 40 years ahead, and to co-operate on an unprecedented level."

Dr Ellyard, who has worked as a senior consultant to the United Nations Environment Program, says Australia's stand on emissions has been shameful - and that priorities should move away from working with the coal industry to developing alternative energy. He thinks the world has been too much concerned with survival and not with what he calls "thrival" - which has higher aspirations. "We are a means-to-an-end

society but we must really focus on our destination - because if you know the destination you may find other means of transportation."

Dr Ellyard believes in the division of an old "Cowboy Culture" of individualism, independence, autocracy, patriarchy, unsustainable lifestyles, conflict resolution through confrontation, reliance on defence and a sense of humanity against nature and a new "Spaceship Culture" which is based on communication, interdependence, democracy, sustainable lifestyle, gender equality, conflict resolution through negotiation and reliance on security.

We must leave Cowboys behind and board the Spaceship for a successful transition to 3000.

Author Dr Sohail Inayatullah, of Tankang University and a visiting academic at Queensland University of Technology, sympathises with such thinking, commenting that while the year 2000 represents hope because humanity has survived nuclear accidents, biological warfare and asteroids, it also has been an era of immense growth, albeit with failures in distribution which have the world's richest 225 people with assets exceeding the combined income of the poorest 47 per cent of the world's population. Both futurists look to solutions based on education and communication - lifelong learning as opposed to the pressure cooker education of children being just one strategy.

BOTH believe that some form of world governance is likely. Dr Inayatullah sees four possible structures for future governance - a world empire run by one national or civilisation, a dominant religious system creating a world temple, church or mosque, a world economy or localist mini-systems devoted to retaining regional language, culture, environment and economy.

"A world economy, in a nation state context, is more likely," he says. "However, since the nation-state is increasingly porous, the world economy/nation state model is now unstable. It appears that the latter alternative, a world government with mini-cultural systems, is quite possible in the mid-term." Dr Inayatullah notes that with the USA set to become the second largest Spanish speaking nation in the world and with im-

migration the only likely savior to the rapidly ageing West, multiculturalism appears to be here to stay.

"The US Army also will be dramatically muslim in 30 or 50 years (and with many senior US government posts coming from Army leaders, we can well imagine a shift in US foreign policy around 2025," he says.

"The long-term net result of multiculturalism may be an entirely new set of identity arrangements." While information technology is offering us a single, highly-networked world, everyone on earth soon will be able to participate in global events.

"Teleconferencing, e-mail, multi-media workstations and faxes are only some of the new tools of planetary co-operation and dialogue," says Dr Ellyard.

"New computer software is now assisting cooperative dialogue and decision-making independent of space and time."

"We know more about what is going on all over the planet than ever before. John Donne's famous *Devotion* of the year 1620 has never been more true."

Donne wrote: *No man is an Island, entire of itself.*

Every man is part of the continent, a part of the main; If a clod be washed away by the sea,

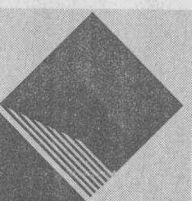
Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, As well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were;

Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

DR Inayatullah cites future images wherein genetic engineering and human cloning may be things of great beauty and achievement, correctly applied. He cites a world where not only humans and animals roam, but also chimeras, cyborgs, robots and possibly even biologically created "slaves".

The future, therefore, is not so much "given" or created by God or nature, but made by human intervention in evolution and in the creation of new forms of life.

Reflects Dr Inayatullah: "Our future generations may look back at us and find us distant relatives, and not particularly attractive ones."



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