



## Waikato Futures Symposium

15 July 2008

Wintec City Campus, Hamilton - **Record of Meeting**

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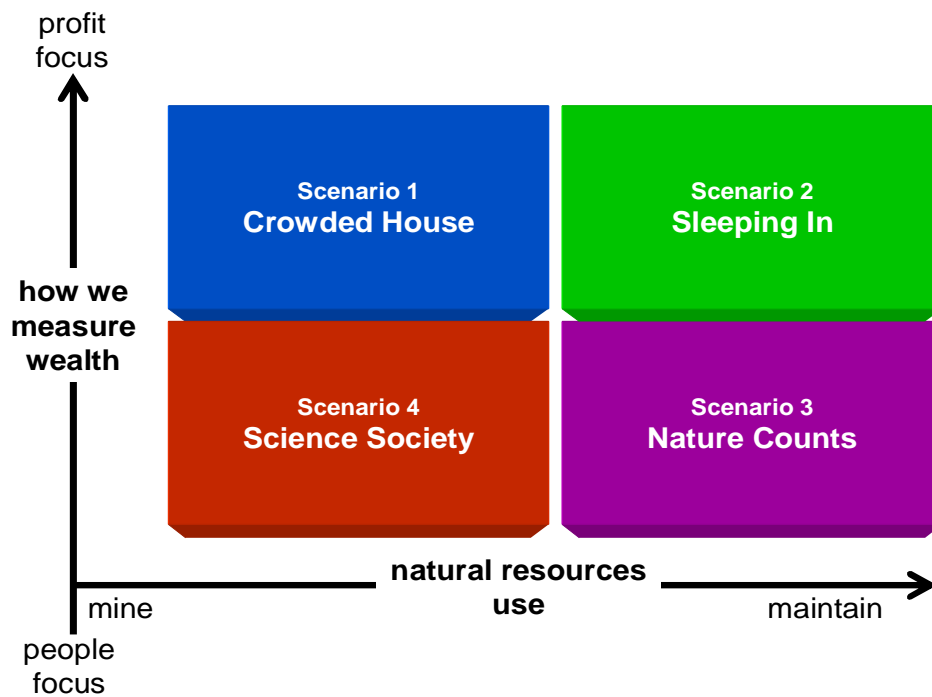
### **Purpose**

This note summarises the main points raised about the Waikato Scenarios by businesses and others at the July 15, 2008 *Waikato Futures Symposium: Creating a Sustainable Economic Future*.

### **What we discussed**

The Forum participants discussed four preliminary scenarios for the Waikato (figure 1). Scenarios are snapshots of different, plausible futures that might develop. They illustrate some of the many divergent ways that the events, trends, emerging issues and peoples' decisions might come together to create very different futures for the Waikato. Many of the phenomena that affect the Waikato no longer change in simple, predictable ways. Maybe they never did, but the world in the past seemed to be less complex, less interconnected, and more forgiving of mistakes and miscalculations.

Remember that the scenarios are not predictions about the future. Nor do they reflect what we want to happen. They are simply alternative pictures about what might happen. In reality, most Forum participants expected that the actual future will be a combination of some of the elements from all four of the stories. The scenarios are designed to help us to think about how we might cope with different circumstances on the path from today towards the future.



**Figure 1: Preliminary scenario matrix for the Waikato Scenarios**

## Participants' Views

Considering the scenarios, Forum participants drew attention to a number of concerns about how local and external economic developments might change the Waikato. They discussed:

- The need to increase the Region's economic diversity and wealth because of possible shifts in natural resources requirements, commodity prices, international markets, consumer expectations and business models.
- The possibility that businesses', governments' and peoples' behaviours and values might change dramatically including the way we measure how "well" we are doing to encompass a broader, more robust consideration of cultural, social, economic and environmental well-being.
- The Waikato's capacity to absorb shocks – which might be catalysed by a sudden increase in the number of people living in the Waikato or high climate variability (more extreme weather events, more often) or high costs or more restricted access to land, energy, water, food and housing.

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- The number, talent and skills that people living in or working for (but not necessarily in) the Waikato have and whether these match the needs of local businesses, government, educational and social or cultural institutions.
- The suitability and durability of the infrastructure that makes Waikato an attractive place to live and work – such as tertiary education, transport, communications, water and energy systems.
- The changes that people and resource cost increases or new approaches like a carbon neutral economy (greater “carbon productivity”) might bring to the way people live and the way businesses, governments, educational institutions and non-profit organisations operate, provide services and are perceived by people in the Waikato.
- The introduction of new technologies that might affect energy, communications, transportation, water and food markets, production and use, amongst other areas (and how disruptive this is).
- When changes occur will people, governments and businesses act early (to shape the directions of future changes) or late? Notably, from a “governance” standpoint, as our world speeds up, how much higher a premium might apply to our ability to provide early warning and how might businesses couple that with early and focused action.

## Where to Next?

The information we received and the views that we heard from the Forum will help the Waikato scenario team to re-write the preliminary scenario stories.

The revised scenarios will be presented and used for different purposes by Environment Waikato. For example, they will be used as one input when planners are thinking about the Long Term Council Community Plan.

## More Information

More details about the Waikato Scenarios can be found on the ‘Creating Futures’ project website (<http://www.creatingfutures.org.nz>) including:

- The full scenario report (*note: revised version available 15 August*)
- A summary document
- Narrative stories

# Creating Futures



Comments on these scenarios may be submitted to:

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**Additional resources from: <http://www.creatingfutures.org.nz/home>**