

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA

13. Australia 2020 – Quo Vadis?

Sara Cousins

From Monash University's National Centre for Australian Studies course,
developed in conjunction with Open Learning Australia

In the thirteenth and final week of the course, Sara Cousins outlines some future predictions for Australia: new methods of communication and information control, population levels and a sustainable future. As part of a youth forum, John Howard elaborates on his view of Australia in the post-September 11th world: 'the age of terrorism'.

Sara Cousins is a research fellow with the National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

[13.1 'A rough ride to freedom for information'](#)

[13.2 'Australia 2020: foresight for our future'](#)

[13.3 Population projections](#)

[13.4 Australia post September 11](#)

[13.5 Further reading](#)

In the light of your studies in the *Contemporary Australia* unit, think about what Australia might be like in 2020.

Consider:

- Population and demographics
- National identity
- Political policies and freedoms
- Social cohesion
- Environment and ecologies
- Technology
- Work and leisure
- Australia's place in the world

The following articles may help you in forming your own view:

13.1. A rough ride to freedom for information by John Quiggan. Article originally appeared in the Australian Financial Review. Posted on Australian Policy Online on 8-11-2002 <http://www.apo.org.au/>

The author looks at the impact of the Internet on information dissemination and the 'conversion of information and knowledge into "intellectual property"'. Quiggan reviews *The Future of Ideas: the fate of the commons in a connected world* written by Lawrence Lessig which argues against the spread of unfettered private intellectual property to what he terms the information 'commons'. How might these arguments relate to policy makers' desire to develop Australia into a 'knowledge economy'?

[Click here for the full paper.](#)

© National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, 2005. All rights reserved.

13.2 Australia 2020: foresight for our future by Matthew James, Science, Technology, Environment and Resources Group, Australian Parliament, Library, *Research Paper 18*, 2000-01. <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/>

The author uses the opportunity of the Centenary of Federation to raise questions about what the Australian people want for their future. Some of the issues raised include how we assess the positive and negative effects of new technological breakthroughs and advances. The article gives an overview of all the different agencies, past and present, which have been set up to engage in ‘foresight’ for Australia. [Click here for the full paper.](#)

13.3 Population projections by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Year Book Australia 2003*, Australia Now series, Population. <http://www.abs.gov.au>

The ABS has published a series of projections about Australia’s population to the year 2101 based on certain assumptions regarding migration, births and deaths. It is suggested that there will be a projected decline in the natural increase of the population due to declining fertility and more deaths as the population ages. The proportion of the population over 65 years will increase, as will the proportion of Australians living in capital cities. [Click here for the full paper.](#)

13.4 Australia Post September 11

For a discussion of the place of Australia in the post September 11 world, see [Radio Australia](#) program 13, ‘Australia and the World’. Study panellists in Canberra and Washington put their questions to the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable John Howard, about Australia and the world since September the 11th and the bomb attacks in Bali and Saudi Arabia.

13.5 Further reading

Ideas at the Brisbane Powerhouse 2003
A festival of ideas, innovation & invention
<http://www.ideasatthepowerhouse.com.au>

Foresight International – Richard Slaughter
<http://www.foresightinternational.com.au/>

Who’ll be home alone in 2021 Australia Now. Australian Demographic Statistics, 2002, Population. *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, special article.
Search: <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

Australia 2030 – Investigating the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
Commonwealth Government
<http://www.australia2030.gov.au/>

The Future Weekend
Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Radio National
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/future/>

© National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, 2005. All rights reserved.

Future of Space Travel

ABC Radio National, The Science Show

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/ss/stories/s728905.htm>

Australia's Science Future, a symposium 2000

Australian Academy of Science

<http://www.science.org.au/future/>

Future Dilemmas

Options to 2050 for Australia's population, technology, resources and environment

CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems

<http://www.cse.csiro.au/research/Program5/futuredilemmas/>

[Back to Top](#)