

DYNAMIC STATEMENT

Towards a regenerative future for South Australia

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal peoples as the First Nations and Traditional Custodians of South Australian lands and waters.

We pay our respects to their elders - past, present, and emerging.

We honour their deep spiritual connection to the land and acknowledge we that we still have much to learn.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many of the challenges we face have a global genesis. We believe that South Australia has the capacity to overcome global challenges, locally. The skills, knowledge, and passion is already here - what we need is a clear, collective vision.

In June 2022, we hosted our inaugural Summit, bringing together diverse community voices to take stock of our current predicament. Our 130 attendees were divided across 12 tables and invited to discuss 12 'megatrends' impacting our state - their causes, and consequences.

Our conversations helped paint a detailed picture of where we are today, and began to form a vision of where we want to go.

This document provides a synthesis of our findings from these conversations.

FINDING #1

The megatrends provided a framework to compartmentalise the complexity of our world, and were a powerful tool to help define our vision for a sustainable future.

FINDING #2

The megatrends share common causes and solutions. We discovered remarkably similar conversations across the 12 tables, and identified three common themes:

- Unsustainable growth (of populations, economies and consumption)
- Widespread loss of connection between people and place
- An urgent need for adaptive systems of governance

FINDING #3

The megatrends are inextricably linked with one another. They can and should be tackled holistically, and not in isolation.

The conclusion of these findings is clear. To move towards a sustainable vision, we require guidance and mediation between the many active players driving change.

We require more co-operation and collaboration between groups, and above all, we must elevate the power of people and activate a strong community voice to co-create our future.

WHAT IS DYNAMIC STATE?

Radical change begins with vision, courage, and action. The starting point is to take stock of the scientific, industrial, and cultural resources we have at hand.

Dramatic heatwaves, unprecedented bushfires, loss of native species, and the slow degradation of our soil and water quality – these are our local symptoms of global megatrends.

But community resilience, action, and innovation are remedies that South Australia holds in abundance.

In these turbulent times, our communities are coming alive with ancient cultural wisdom, cutting-edge scientific know-how, and a willingness to find solutions.

Over the last two years, a group of people in South Australia have come together around a shared desire to enact solutions to the complicated challenges that confront the place we call home.

We invite you to join the movement. Head to www.dynamicstate.com.au.









DYNAMIC STATE EXISTS TO ENVISION AND FACILITATE A BETTER SOCIETY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

WE BELIEVE THAT SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAS THE INTELLECTUAL, COMMERCIAL, AND CULTURAL CAPACITY TO TACKLE GLOBAL CHALLENGES, LOCALLY.

OUR APPROACH

IS TO ELEVATE THE POWER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE AND TO HARNESS THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF OUR EXPERTISE, CREATIVITY, AND IDEAS.



OUR INAUGURAL SUMMIT

Our starting point was a workshop, held at the Ukaria Cultural Centre in the Adelaide Hills. Encircled by the beautiful woodlands of Peramangk country, our Dynamic State Summit of June 2022 provided a backdrop for the hearts, minds and voices from our community to come together and take stock of our past, present and future.

The Summit was attended by 130 diverse scientists, artists, and entrepreneurs, as well as community and local government leaders. The event was hosted by Professor Andrew Lowe, Director of the Environment Institute from the University of Adelaide, and financially supported by the Environment Institute, Mount Barker District Council, Nature Foundation, SA Food Systems Network, Ecoversity, AusOcean, Novo Wealth, Ecocreative, Ukaria, Ngeringa, and The Green Room.

We were welcomed to Peramangk country with a ceremony from David Booth and his family and words shared by Mandy Brown. We were then addressed (virtually, but intimately) by conservationist Dr Jane Goodall, Australian filmmaker Damon Gameau, and Deloitte's decarbonisation partner John O'Brien.



"If we carry on with business as usual, we're doomed. As a species, we've cut down forests, polluted rivers, emptied oceans, hunted and destroyed so many animals. But we have the capacity to care, and love, and restore, and look ahead to meet our children's needs. But, it's essential to take a long, clear look at what the future may hold."

— Jane Goodall

"I like to think that historians, in a few 100 years, will look back at this time as an extraordinary moment for our species. Here we all are on the cusp of a complete energy, transportation, agricultural, and resource transition. We get to be alive and be a part of that right now."

— Damon Gameau





"More than anything, we need to stop telling people there's a right answer, and stop waiting for government, or anyone else, to act. Instead, we must create a vision that is so compelling that everyone will want to join the journey."

— John O'Brien





By mid-morning, all attendees were invited to take their place at one of twelve tables, each representing a different global megatrend. What followed was a day of inspirational and aspirational conversation.

The Summit was framed around an hourglass model of facilitated discussion. Starting at the top bulb, people at the tables began by describing and defining the overarching megatrends affecting our planet.

As the day progressed, the conversations filtered down the narrow neck of the hourglass, focusing on the impacts of these trends globally and in South Australia. By mid-afternoon, we had reached the base of the hourglass, zooming out to consider an alternative future vision for our state.

The Summit offered experiential as well as tangible outcomes. Many attendees were energised by the united sense of concern as well as hope for our future and a commitment to transforming our state.

The roundtable discussions were scribed by a cohort of Future Leaders, and their detailed notes of our collaborative analysis have provided the raw material for this Dynamic Statement.

Podcasters, photographers, artists, and filmmakers also documented the Summit. Their creative and intellectual interpretation of the day's events helped to weave a compelling story of what happens when diverse thought-leaders from across our community are invited to hold space, to speak, and to listen.

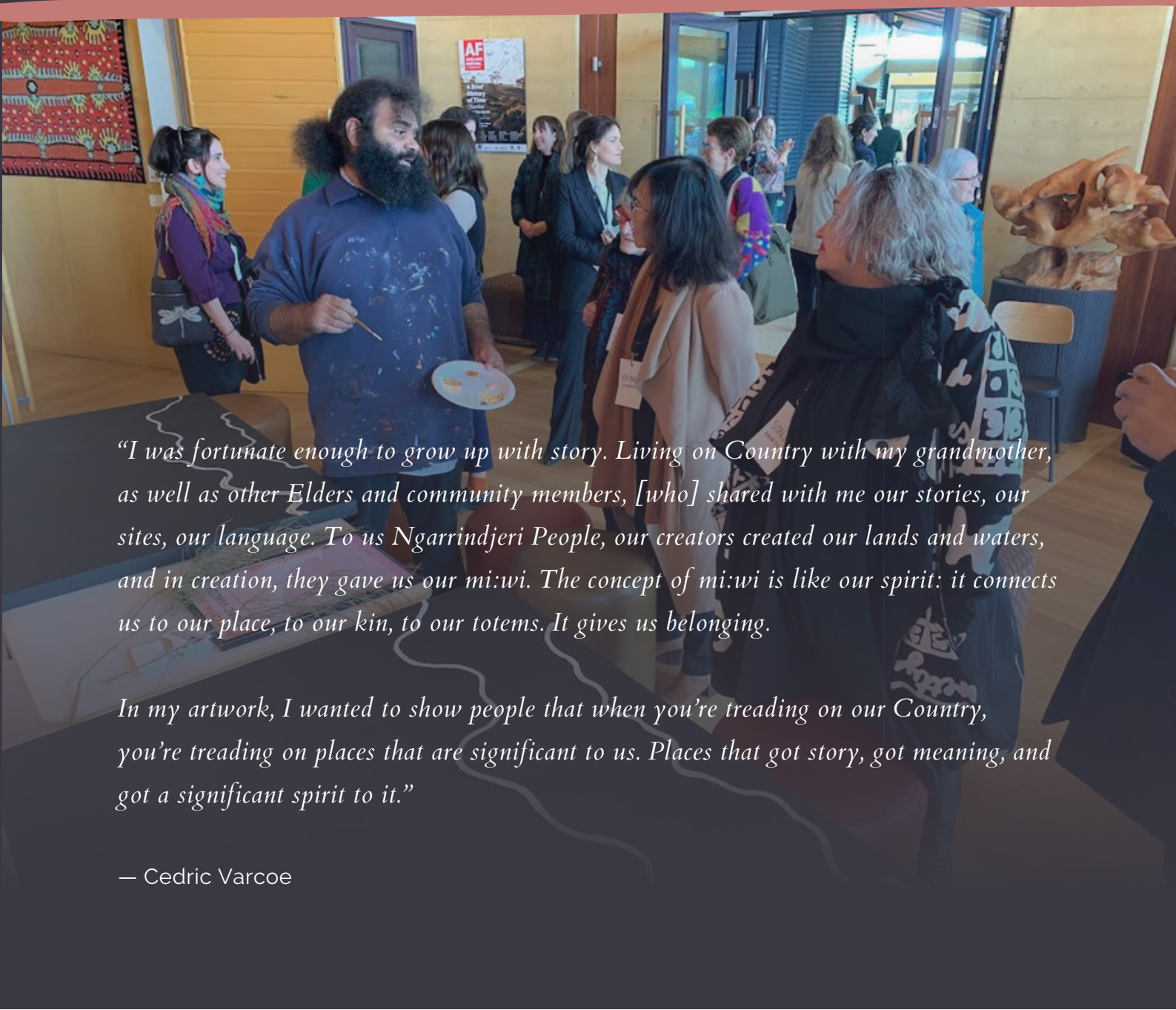




Ngarrindjeri Elder and artist Cedric Varcoe attended the Summit, sharing with us stories and insights from the body of traditional knowledge that his People have passed down over thousands of years.

He created an artwork throughout the course of the day, inspired by indigenous ways of relating to and caring for the land.





"I was fortunate enough to grow up with story. Living on Country with my grandmother, as well as other Elders and community members, [who] shared with me our stories, our sites, our language. To us Ngarrindjeri People, our creators created our lands and waters, and in creation, they gave us our mi:wi. The concept of mi:wi is like our spirit: it connects us to our place, to our kin, to our totems. It gives us belonging.

In my artwork, I wanted to show people that when you're treading on our Country, you're treading on places that are significant to us. Places that got story, got meaning, and got a significant spirit to it."

— Cedric Varcoe

TWELVE MEGATRENDS

The megatrends affecting our world are deeply interconnected. The exercise of neatly disentangling them was a challenge in and of itself. In doing so, we took inspiration from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Stockholm Resilience Centre's Planetary Boundaries, and CSIRO's 2022 report 'Our Future World' (1).

We also incorporated the State Government of South Australia's priorities, as well as topics that were trending in The Conversation in 2021 and 2022, to come up with a consolidated list of 12 megatrends. These were used to divide the roundtables and facilitate targeted discussion of the challenges facing South Australia.

One realisation following the Summit was that the megatrends could be thought of as either drivers (active forces with impacts on social and environmental systems), and symptoms (the response of those systems to Drivers).

DRIVERS:

- ENERGY & DECARBONISATION
- EVOLVING FINANCIAL SYSTEMS
- DATA & TECHNOLOGY
- LIVEABLE CITIES
- WORLD VIEWS
- PEOPLE POWER

SYMPTOMS:

- CLIMATE CHANGE & GLOBAL WARMING
- WASTE & POLLUTION
- SOIL, WATER, AND FOOD PRODUCTION
- BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM COLLAPSE
- HEALTH & WELLBEING
- HOPE & DESPAIR



ENERGY & DECARBONISATION

Worldwide, Australia has the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions from coal power (3). Political indifference has prolonged our high-carbon status quo, and year by year, the consequences for our ecosystems and energy security are growing more dire.

But South Australia is carrying the torch for our energy transition, having shifted from 1% to over 60% renewable sources in just 15 years (4). South Australia aims to achieve 100% net renewables by 2030; but this will require rapid technological innovation that doesn't harm biodiversity, and garners sustained cultural and political support.

"The current energy crisis is actually driving leadership at a local level as well as impacting the solutions. There are some brilliant technologies being developed right here, locally, and we can give them the scale they need."

— Meera Verma

LIVEABLE CITIES

For the first time in history, most of humanity lives in cities. Around 90% of South Australia's total population growth occurs in Greater Adelaide (5). The future livability of our state will depend on our ability to create employment opportunities, provide affordable housing and equal access to green spaces, protect and restore biodiversity, develop sustainable transport networks, and adopt urban infill strategies.

"In future planning of cities, there's not going to be one correct way. Talking to people from all walks of life and having that information reach decision makers is really important so that we can go forward knowing we're doing things for the greater good of everyone, not just a particular group and whatever their investments are."

— Scarlett Graf





EVOLVING FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

Our global financial systems expect infinite resources and perpetual growth. By some accounts, Australia is already living outside the Earth's planetary boundaries (6), a reality shared by many other developed regions. These problems will only be exacerbated as the global population continues to rise. For a healthy and sustainable future, we must reassess and recalibrate our economic systems, such that they support balance between the needs of people and the environment.

"The system itself is really about growth... mega profits growing at the expense of people and the environment. We need to see ourselves in the context of the community and culture we live in... Kindness, nurturing [and] care being of value, and not just [growth]."
— Natasha Davis

DATA & TECHNOLOGY

The advent of the digital age has transformed communities and organisations across all sectors. Social media, artificial intelligence and surveillance technology each have the power to benefit society, and yet without conscientious policy to regulate their development, they are all insidiously capable of exacerbating existing injustices.

"We can harness the power of data to do a much better job of measuring the things that are important to [our] quality of life. For example, what exactly makes a liveable city? There's actually data at the core of it. We don't often join those conversations up."
— Alan Noble



WORLDVIEWS

The collection of attitudes, values, stories, and expectations about the world around us come together to form worldviews. As individuals, our worldviews inform our every thought and action. As a society, the task of reconciling, understanding, and adapting our collective worldviews will be imperative to enacting change and transforming our future.

"We are nature. We're not separate from nature, and 'place' exists. When we honour that we belong [to a place], we get a higher sense of service. How we measure that is almost irrelevant. It's a feeling... We feel it in our heart and our gut, not just our minds. We don't just think it."

— Trish Hansen





PEOPLE POWER

With diseases, inflation and geopolitical conflict dominating the headlines, it's easy for people to feel powerless and disheartened. But collective positive action is a fantastic antidote and fundamental to our future.

South Australia is well-placed to mobilise people power and develop a collective vision for how we want our state to be. We need to elevate the voices of our young people and bring communities together to design our common future.

"If you recognise and support strengths at the community level and nurture that, then actually, that power is amplified and distributed so much more effectively than when it's centralised."

— Kylie Ferguson



SOIL, WATER & FOOD PRODUCTION

As the population grows, pressure on our natural resources is mounting. Current production systems are not equipped to handle the increasing demand, nor the changing climate (7). South Australia is the driest state on the driest inhabited continent, making our natural resources particularly vulnerable to burdens such as periodic drought (8). Our ability to proactively adapt our local food production systems is paramount to achieving food security for future generations.

"One of the things that I find very stark is that 40% of the cropland that we have [globally] is degrading as we speak. So we're not creating new soil resources. The soil resources that we've got are finite. And so we are seeing existing cropland degrade and therefore, deforestation to create new agricultural land."
— Michael Garrod



WASTE & POLLUTION

Outdated linear economies and increased consumption per capita have created a relentless stream of waste and environmental pollution. The by-products are wreaking havoc on our lands and waters, causing irreversible damage to human health and the environment (9). But South Australia is a leading state in waste management (10). Opportunities exist to better curtail this trend by expanding recycling infrastructure, prohibiting single-use products, and developing regenerative systems.

"Globally, only 7% of what we are extracting is coming back into the value chain. So 93% is gone forever. This is a legacy of our linear economy which is "take, make, use and dispose" with nothing coming back."
— Hemant Chaudary



BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM COLLAPSE

Around the world, natural vegetation is being cleared away for profit. Up to 80% of our world's forests have been irreparably damaged, or destroyed completely (11). Less than 10% of South Australia's forested area remains (12). Since European settlement, 73 Australian species have become extinct, and there are currently 200 plant and animal species listed as threatened or endangered (12). As ecosystems collapse, we risk not only losing biodiversity with significant cultural value, but also losing out on ecosystem services that sustain our quality of life.

"Water purification, clean oxygen, and all those benefits we get from nature are being lost by removing native vegetation. It becomes then a much broader problem than just species extinction, it starts then to threaten our livelihoods."

— Andy Lowe

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Like most developed countries, Australia is experiencing an ageing population (13). Pressure on our healthcare system is mounting, and our aged care institutions are failing to meet the needs of our people and exacerbating social inequality. Meanwhile, COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of fostering connectedness to counteract mental health crises. Our challenge is to develop a more equitable and preventative care system for both health and well-being.

"We need to decouple our health systems from our economic systems. To determine the success of a health system, we still use dollars and numbers instead of wellbeing as an indicator."

— Chris West



CLIMATE CHANGE & GLOBAL WARMING

Globally, greenhouse gas emissions are at an all-time high. Our planet's temperature is predicted to rise by 1.1 to 5.4 ˚C by 2100 (14). Changes of this magnitude will disrupt every pillar of our civilisation. The cumulative warming of our atmosphere is already expressing itself locally - South Australia's climate is becoming hotter and drier, and extreme weather events are on the rise (15). Our future will be largely defined by our ability to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate.

"There's not a single [megatrend] that's not affected by climate change. There's not one table here today that could say their issue is not impacted now, or will not be more impacted in the future. [On the other hand], every table here can also say that [addressing their megatrend] can help adapt and mitigate climate change."

— Anna Pannell





HOPE & DESPAIR

In line with Dynamic State's ethos of delivering change with the head, hands, and heart – we included this megatrend to create space to explore the sense of despair, hopelessness, and eco-anxiety that is on the rise in our community. Reconciling our despair with the need for collective, radical hope will be critical to activating our communities for change.

"How do we create spaces for people to experiment with how to connect with nature or how to connect with themselves? How do we create space for people to feel the grief, anger, sadness, or emotions that they need to feel as an embodied person?"

— Christy Spier



SYNTHESIS

The Summit created an opportunity to "zoom out" and see the bigger picture. Although the roundtable discussions focused on distinct topics, common themes emerged across all twelve tables.

These themes were:

- Unsustainable growth (of populations, economies and consumption);
- Widespread loss of connection between people and place; and
- An urgent need for adaptive systems of governance.

UNSUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Unsustainable growth at systemic and local levels was identified as a root cause driving many symptoms. That includes the unbridled increase in the human population, consumption per capita, waste per capita, and relentless economic growth.

The symptoms are excessive pressure on our planetary systems (including biodiversity and ecosystem collapse, soil degradation, and overuse of freshwater), climate change, and negative impacts on health and wellbeing.

"We keep talking about climate change [and] loss of habitat for animals... Yet the fundamental thing is growth. We've got to grow the economy. Therefore, we've got to get the building industry really ticking along... and [therefore] we've got to cut down trees and put roads in and everything else... It's fundamentally ludicrous."

— Paul Ryan

Many roundtables reached the conclusion that their megatrend could not be addressed without first transforming our economy to a more "steady state" - finding a balance between the needs of society, and the needs of our planet.



LOSS OF CONNECTION

Another root cause that seems to underpin the megatrends is the widespread loss of connection between people and place. Many conversations noted a need to rebuild the kind of connection with nature that is based upon intergenerational wisdom and stewardship, such as that of our First Nations people.

This kind of connection - valuing nature for its intrinsic worth - is perhaps distinct from valuing it merely for the ecosystem services on which human life depends. Many conversations suggested that our society requires a shift in values, to go beyond 'consuming' nature, and to see ourselves as deeply embedded within it

There also appears to be a parallel between this disconnect between humans and nature, and the disconnect. between humans and each other. Just as natural systems are being destroyed, our inner ecosystems are crumbling as we live more individualistic and materialistic lifestyles. Many conversations focused on the power of community, and the need to foster it.

These conversations contained sorrow about the erosion of something so fundamental to the human experience, but also, hope. Many believed that re-establishing a strong connection between people and nature is an attainable solution with tangible flow-on effects on the megatrends.

"We have evolved as creatures among many millions of other species to live in this place. And we are now being called to do that in a way that is in complete relationship with each other."

— Trish Hansen

SYSTEM CHANGE

The 12 megatrends appear not only to share common root causes, but also, a common solution. Across the tables, many people identified an urgent need for a change to our governance systems.

Regardless of the megatrend, many conversations recognised that our current "business as usual" governance system creates barriers for the kinds of innovative solutions required to drive change. Undoubtedly, we are far more likely to transition to a "steady state" economy and a deeply connected community, if our governance structures support this transition.

There were many deliberations on whether we need to adapt existing systems, or perhaps, overhaul these systems altogether.

But overall, people agreed it possible (and indeed, necessary) to adapt our existing systems. A number of actionable solutions were proposed, such as:

- Adopting non-financial reporting;
- Embracing Kate Raworth's framework of doughnut economics
- Favouring procurement of circular and regenerative production of goods and services;
- Facilitating cooperating business models;
- Encouraging participatory democracy by increasing the role of grassroots organisations; and
- Promoting adoption of a 4-day work week.



"The mega challenge is to try to transition from our current model of 'business as usual' to a sustainable civilisation and planet. And that may happen through a managed process, or it may follow on from some level of collapse and a need to deeply adapt. The idea of megatrends is a very positive one... they [are] pathways.... a way of asking 'How can we transition?'."

—Rob Fowler



CREATING A STATE OF TRANSITION

The megatrends provided a framework to compartmentalise the complexity of our world. By focusing on megatrends, the conversations at the Summit painted a clear and holistic picture of the current predicament in South Australia. This was a picture of unsustainable economic growth, a loss of connection between people and nature, and lack of transformative action in our governance systems.

Similarly, the megatrends provided a powerful framework to help define our vision for a sustainable future. They served as a tool for imagining a better world - one in which the root causes, drivers, and symptoms are reversed.



ROOT CAUSE	CURRENT STATE	FUTURE STATE
GROWTH	Unsustainable increase in global population and consumption per capita	Steady economic state and controlled consumption
CONNECTION	People disconnected with their communities and natural environments	Strong sense of community, as well as stewardship of nature
GOVERNANCE	Business as usual with focus on growth, hierarchy, and power	Transitionary system change and crisis response

	MEGATREND	CURRENT STATE	FUTURE STATE
DRIVERS	Energy and decarbonisation	Continued dependence on fossil fuels	Decarbonisation and renewable energy
	Evolving financial systems	Financial systems benefit corporations	Financial systems benefit society and environment
	Data and technology	Tech advances benefit corporations	Tech advances benefit society and environment
	World views	Tribalism and disregard of nature	Compassion and respect for people and nature
	People power	Apathetic, inequitable communities	Passionate, empowered communities
	Urbanisation	Urban sprawl, removal of safe and natural spaces	Liveable cities
SYMPTOMS	Climate change and global warming	Accelerating climate change and global warming	Reducing our local contribution to climate change
	Biodiversity and ecosystem collapse	Damage to biosphere and increased extinction of species	Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and recovery
	Soil, water, and food production	Vulnerable food systems, ailing soils and waters	Healthy and resilient crops, soils and waters
	Waste and pollution	Pollution and wasted resources	Circular economies and reclaimed resources
	Demographics, health and wellbeing	Ageing and increasingly isolated population	Improved mental health, better care and connection for the vulnerable
	Hope and despair	Widespread grief and despair	Hope and engagement

CURRENT STATE

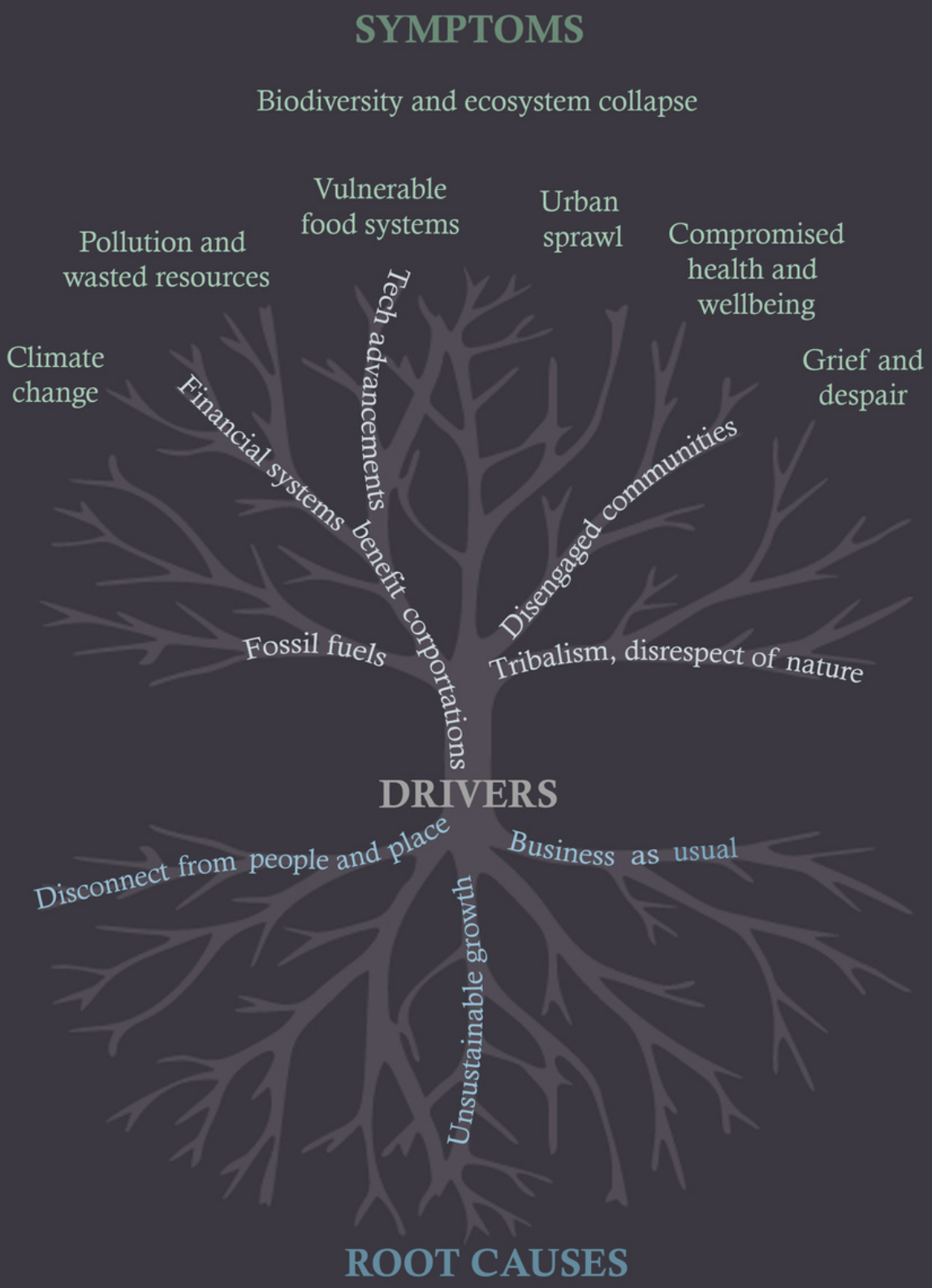


Figure 1. Graphic representation of South Australia's current state, framed in terms of three root causes and 12 megatrends (including both drivers and symptoms).

FUTURE STATE

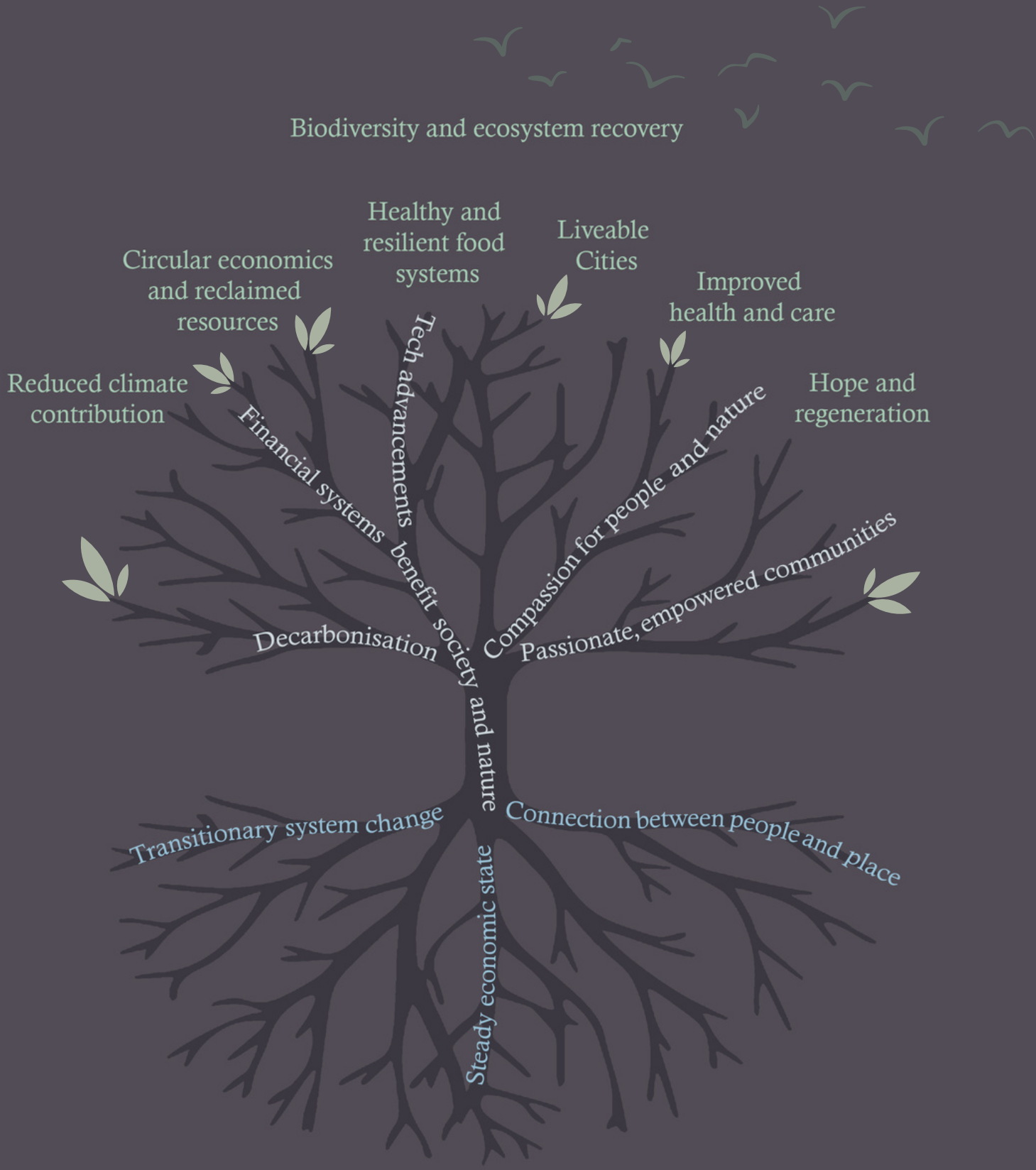


Figure 2. Graphic representation of a holistic community vision for a sustainable South Australian future, as developed throughout the Dynamic State Summit of 2022.

CONCLUSION

The Dynamic State Summit enabled targeted community discussion about the challenges affecting South Australia. By disentangling the root causes, drivers and symptoms of our current state, we were able to form a unified vision for a potential future state.

> *We believe that South Australia has the collective resolve and capacity to tackle global challenges locally, and ensure a thriving South Australian society and state for future generations.*

The challenge facing us now is to enter a dynamic, transitional state, using the resources already available to us. We recognise that there are already many local initiatives and organisations equipped to enact this transition. However, to unlock their potential to transform South Australia, these many active players must find new ways to collaborate, communicate, and mediate amongst themselves.

We believe that to fully harness the power of the South Australian community, we need a platform that promotes collaboration and coordination of grassroots efforts, and a means of co-creating a hopeful vision to work towards.

Dynamic State has three key goals, informed by the Dynamic State Summit:

1. Harness and elevate South Australian people power through coordination and collaboration of aligned groups and organisations with a diverse representation of voices.

2. Provide guidance and influence policy and decision-making by bringing together diverse, multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary expertise to coordinate open-access research and recommendations to decision makers.

3. Inspire the South Australian community to actively transform our state and connect deeply with people and place.

NEXT STEPS

In the aftermath of the Summit, Dynamic State is coming alive, breathing life in to the innumerable opportunities existing invigorate South Australia to a sustainable future.

This includes:

- Facilitating workshops with diverse experts focused on key challenges, to produce informed, pragmatic, and open-access recommendations for policy and decision-making. Please contact us to participate.

- Developing an 'ecosystem' map of groups and organisations already working towards a sustainable SA to strengthen collaboration and coordinate a unanimous community voice.

Dynamic State exists to elevate and collaborate with existing solutions within the community and to facilitate the birth of new ideas. We are non-competitive and non-aligned.

At this stage in our journey, we are actively partnering with Regenerating Australia, World Wildlife Fund and the Jane Goodall Institute Australia. See also our Summit partners below.

We are actively seeking to expand our Dynamic State community. If you are interested in what we do, are considering collaboration or want to be part of the movement to change, please visit https://dynamicstate.com.au



GLOSSARY

Dynamic state: A group of South Australians that, joined together, have the power to enact meaningful change for a better future.

Dynamic statement: The 'Dynamic Statement' is a synthesis of all that transpired at the Summit. It contains a sober assessment of our current predicament, and excitingly, a stock take of local solutions and opportunities for change.

Megatrend: A major trend emerging in the macroenvironment and having impact on a global and local scale.

Driver (megatrend): A megatrend that is having an effect on social and environmental systems, either positively or negatively.

Symptom (megatrend): A megatrend that represents an impact to social and environmental systems, either positively or negatively.

Mega challenge: The related problem or barrier to a megatrend.

Mega solution: A conceptualised direction that can move us from negative to positive drivers and symptoms.

Future leaders: A volunteer group made up of students, early career scientists, and passionate leaders that were tasked with capturing the conversations at the summit with pen, paper, keyboards, or microphones.

The summit: Attended by 130 bright minds, the inaugural summit of 2022 challenged South Australians to think about 12 megatrends. Specifically they were asked to define the trend at a global and local scale, consider the impact to South Australia, and conceptualise local solutions.

Root cause: A common theme that emerged at (almost) every megatrend discussion when addressing the cause of their megatrend.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The summit was made possible with help from some of South Australia's finest organisations and volunteers. We sincerely thank them their time and contributions.

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Ecocreative
Ukaria
Ngeringa

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Hahndorf Academy
Ngeringa
Ukaria
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Jane Goodall
John O'Brien
Shannon Flemming
Damon Gameau

2022 Future Leaders
Eilish Thomas
Megan Jenssen
Elisabeth Williamson
Shannon Evenden
Chris Keneally
Emilia Newlands
Lucinda Duxbury
Scarlett Graf
Charlotte Lassaline
Ekkachai Oonnankat
Madeline McShane
Andrea Stiglingh
Tahlia Taylor
Lisa Wood
Kiri Marker

2022 Dynamic State Faculty
Andy Lowe
Chris West
Janet Klein
Natasha Davis
Susannah Eliott
Jan Ferguson OAM
Tim Jarvis AO
Alan Noble
Tobias Turner
Meera Verma

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