

Australia 2050: Conversations about our future

Workshop Agenda Template

Duration - 2 hours

Purpose: To provide a toolkit for running an Australia 2050 within two hours

Background:

The Australian Academy of Science's ambitious Australia 2050 project is intended to help Australia chart its path in uncertain but shared futures by engaging scientists, business people, policy makers and members of the public in structured conversations about the challenges we face, and the kind of Australia we want. Australia 2050 was initiated by the Australian Academy of Science with funding from the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Australia 2050 sought to describe Living Scenarios that could be adapted and built on to provide deep provocations for futures thinking. The Living Scenarios are based on archetype scenarios of growth, restraint, catastrophe and transformation.

Running your own community or workplace workshop will deepen understanding about Australia's future and contribute to national conversations on how we can take action to enable an economically prosperous, environmentally stable and socially equitable future.

For more background on the Australia 2050 project, associated events and scenario descriptions, explore <https://futureconversations.net.au/>

Format:

Previous experience tells us that having productive conversations can be difficult, especially when the participants have diverse and even incompatible outlooks. To address this, the workshop is based on structured conversations and adopts the world café' style to keep discussion dynamic and fresh. This workshop includes an optional rapid prototyping step to articulate preferred futures.

Structured conversations

Participants should be encouraged to be as open and creative in their thinking around the archetypes, whilst keeping the living scenarios concepts of 'plausible', 'acceptable' and 'workable' in mind. Instead of viewing their own or others' perceptions as 'right' or 'wrong', or trying to solve problems, they should let ideas bubble to the surface independently of moral judgment. Participants should be encouraged to participate and to listen, making the process of the conversation the outcome.

World Café Format

The World Café format requires rotating conversations, in this case 5 mins for each round. Participants can either be seated in groups of 3-4 people cabaret style, or for this length workshop standing in small groups works well too.

For each scenario, participants are given a brief introduction to the scenario, and then three rounds of conversations to discuss that scenario. These questions are useful to ask:

- At Round 1: What does Australia look like in 2050 under this scenario?
- At Round 3: How do you think we might get there?

Rapid Prototyping Preferred Futures

To explore preferred future directions, this workshop uses rapid prototyping techniques. Participants are given access to craft materials (plasticine, pipe cleaners, paper) and asked to produce an object from the future that doesn't yet exist.

Links:

- Brochure: [Australia 2050 brochure](#)
- Living Scenarios descriptions: [Australia 2050: Future Conversations](#)
- Structured conversations (how to): [Australia 2050: Structuring conversations about our future](#)
- 2013 & 2016 Workshop report: [Australia 2050 Workshop Report 2013 & 2016](#)

Suggested Agenda:

Notes times are indicative only. The workshop can be run as part of a longer day, or as a stand-alone. Over drinks (6-8pm) at a networking event is also recommended.

Time	Topic
9:00am	Welcome and acknowledgement of country Introduction to futures thinking, structured conversations & world café process
9:10am	Introduction to the Growth Archetype
9:15am	First iteration
9:20am	Second iteration
9:25am	Third iteration
9:30am	Introduction to the Restraint Archetype
9:35am	First iteration
9:40am	Second iteration
9:45am	Third iteration
9:50am	Introduction to Catastrophe Archetype
9:55am	First iteration
10:00am	Second iteration
10:05am	Third iteration
10:10am	Introduction to Transformation Archetype
10:15am	First iteration
10:20am	Second iteration
10:25am	Third iteration
10:30am	Rapid prototyping to produce an object from the future that doesn't yet exist
10:45am	Report back
11:00am	Close