

Change Drivers

The 'Towards 2030' Steering Group in 2006, identified eight mega-drivers for changes likely to impact on our lives over the next quarter century. They are listed below.

New Knowledge

This has been selected as a major change driver, as often, when new knowledge combines with a perceived human want or need, new technologies emerge that change tremendously, the way we do things. Recent examples include digital technology fueling computers, the internet and cell phones; the jet engine fueling growth in international travel and tourism; artificial fibres for cheaper, more effective clothing; the list goes on. Our increasing new knowledge base will ensure our society will continue to change. New Zealand with a small population in an isolated part of the world will benefit from developing new knowledge and identifying early as many convergent opportunities as possible and thus new knowledge will be a major driver of change over the next quarter century. Water

This has been selected as a major change driver as water is essential for life and is capable in natural and man-made circumstances of destroying communities and economies. New Zealand as a primary producer and tourist destination will need to continue to ensure that there is an adequate supply of good quality fresh water. It is an increasingly contested resource, and is becoming a significant risk management issue for farmers, dwellers by coasts, on hillsides and on floodplains, local bodies, and transport system operators and insurers. Water quality in rivers, lakes and streams is a mounting and costly societal concern. Water management will be a major driver of change over the next quarter century. The global economy.

The global economic situation is constantly changing and local economies are becoming more and more interdependent. The global economy has since 1970 has been defined by over-productive capacity in the developed world and vast movements of capital, excess to local requirements, needing to find a home. Given this unbalanced economic situation and large international movements of capital, there is considerable uncertainty for the coming decades. The New Zealand economy is deep in debt, and as a nation that is very dependent on international trade, the shape of the global economy will be a major driver of change over the next quarter century.

Social inequalities

Large social inequalities in societies tend to be destabilising and can result in civil war and anarchy. Internationally, troublesome social inequalities are becoming more prevalent and the situation may worsen as communities struggle for natural resources that are now becoming scarce. Historically New Zealand had a brief period of several decades of relative social equality (circa 1945-84) but since then for various reasons a wider socio-economic spread has developed and more unacceptable social behaviour is being reported. Wider social inequalities will be a major driver of change over the next quarter century. Climate Change

The planet is experiencing a period of more rapid climate change than ever experienced before in modern human history. The changes appear to be mainly unfavourable for humans and many other life forms if they are unable to adapt their lifestyles rapidly enough to survive. Scientific evidence suggests that human activity is largely responsible for the increased rate of change. This is a global issue and the future of the planet is going to depend on how we as individuals accept and support solutions, resolve the tensions that will arise as the present population distribution and our personal lifestyles are altered drastically. New Zealand society and economic well-being is very dependent on stable weather patterns as agriculture is our main economic resource. Rapidly changing weather patterns will be a major driver of change over the next quarter century. Belief systems and multi-ethnicity

The world population density, ease of travel and for many the personal desire to migrate, mean that most communities are no longer isolated. All communities now contain a significant number of people with very different life-experiences, antecedents and belief systems. Change in community life is largely determined by the current belief system of the group. The growing multiplicity of belief systems within communities are creating tensions and debate, indicating the need for new social structures if communities are to survive and prosper. New Zealand is a country of migrants with about 20% of its resident population born outside of New Zealand. Our migration policy has led to a very diverse mix of cultures superimposed on the bi-cultural beginnings of the last 150 years of settlement. How we learn to live together as a multicultural society will be a major driver of change over the next quarter century.

Population Dynamics.

Increasing population densities, migrations and population aging are features affecting most countries in some way. They are likely to increase in magnitude over the next twenty years, resulting in major changes to population dynamics and their secondary affects, throughout the world. Many developing countries are already unable and/or unable to afford, to feed their populations. Many of these people are seeking better living conditions in other, more developed countries, usually against the wishes of the receiving countries. This condition is unlikely to decrease in the foreseeable future, and could well become more pronounced if/as inequalities continue to grow. Aging populations in the developed world will have major impacts on the cost of national budgets and change the mix of products and services expected by communities, for example in health and housing. Changing population dynamics will be a major driver of change over the

next quarter century. Energy

There is a strong probability that the international price of oil will increase to historically very high levels over the next decade or so and the supply of oil become increasingly unavailable for widespread use, especially for transport. The economies of the developed world, and much of the developing world, have been underpinned by cheap oil for nearly a century. The shift from cheap oil to more expensive, alternative energy sources is likely to have profound impacts on the way individuals live, how national and global economies operate, and the manner in which international affairs are conducted. Changing energy paradigms will be a major driver of change over the next quarter of a century.