

# Brisbane Scenario Thinking Workshop 29 March, 2010 to 31 March, 2010

## Day One – 29 March 2010

Welcome to Country.

Introduction by Jan Archer, contextualising scenario thinking workshop with Executive Challenge Academy programme.

### ***Objective based introductions with expectations***

Asked to do four things, state name, role, expectations and talk to the object and why it represents your current reality of the system.

- Expectations are to try and see the potential for the whole journey to be the best she can be as a person. **Object is her watch because it is time.**
- Expectations to learn and be open to discover new things about people and solutions. **Object is the key, QLD does have a key to do things in a better way for the whole of Aust.**
- We will grow together and get new knowledge, power of the group and interface with the people. **Tiger, speed of change to get beyond the status quo.**
- Want to be a sponge and to learn as much as she can. **Didn't bring an object, would be a little toy with a lot of snow as feel have some many things in the air.**
- **Pack of cards can be in silos or all mixed up and interact with each other.** To meet people and have conversations.
- Get to know people and get a broader understanding of social policy. **Object is a house as it symbolises issue of population's growth and housing.**
- First session is about strategy and envisioning and interested in it, implement the operational stuff but wants to learn about the strategy. **Twenty-cent coin, challenged budget wise.**
- **A phone as it represents continuous change, rapid change.**
- Learn from others in the room. **Would be a bird's nest, represents a chaotic and disorganised change process.**
- Want to look at things from a different set of lens, old lens no longer sufficient. **Picture of a mosaic of a floor in cathedral in Dublin, represents the dimensions we all are trying to achieve no matter what the starting point.**
- **We can start to find common ground and build new relationships.** Always comes back to relationships.

- **Notebook computer, emails have become a major issue with people sending too much information.**
- **Be different, feel different. Box learn to access what is inside that box.**
- **To have some time to think through the challenges we are facing and to network with people to improve our lives. Greyhound as he is full of energy and runs around.**
- **Badge to Smash US Imperialism, how as Govt workers do we give frank and fearless advice now days.**
- **Be comfortable with chaos and change. Pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.**
- **Step back for a little while and see what is going on in QLD and the world. A light, it is a light at the end of the tunnel.**
- **Find some skills to have the power and ability necessary for a public servant. His ID card, we are all here to try and figure out our identity as a person.**
- **Development of relationships, how he can grow personally, has to be a different person if he is to make the right change, so his organisation can be responsive. Wallet, identity is in there, everything he is today is in his wallet. What is in the wallet needs to change.**
- **For renewal, how to re-frame how he and others view the path and engage in change. Pale blue green piece of cement, piece of the Berlin Wall which symbolises as it is was one of the major symbols of barriers, it wasn't those in power who pulled it down but it was the everyday person who brought the Berlin Wall down.**
- **Metronome because we go backwards and forwards, that is the way the system works.**
- **Hoping the next three days gives the latest and greatest in developing the next set of skills. Bookmark that represents how we have our identity whilst we drive to sustainability.**
- **Broaden skill set. Coral.**
- **Better understanding of scenario thinking. Condom as most young boys who carry these live in hope things will get better.**
- **Being with a group of people with talent and experience. Lip gloss that symbolises where we are at times that there is a glossy exterior but there are a lot of people doing it hard, including the frank and fearless advice makes it difficult.**
- **Stress bag, malleable, Qld can adapt.**
- **Interested in scenario thinking and planning. Wants to do it in the Dept of Communities. Bird wing butterfly because it is a thing of beauty and fragility, flies in all directions, also a symbol of hearing impairment.**
- **Relationships and teams and seeing things in different ways. Bottle of Coke, solid base but can fall over, can spray in different ways.**
- **Refresh and nourish myself as a leader and be a better leader. Rubik cube, different colours and patterns but there is a solution.**

- Challenging himself and get a clearer vision from other people. **Biro, need to click it to work.**
- Mostly about herself to broaden her mind, and keep her work life out. Keen to build relationships. **Piece of jewellery which is a long piece of rope with beads all tied together by leather, they are all connected, functional and simple and QLD needs all of this and the utilitarian. Forget the simple connections in life.**
- About wanting to pursue ongoing journey around leadership and leadership as a practice and how we can make a difference. **Cuff link that he lost the stone out of, as it symbolises QLD as he has fantastic view of what it is but something is missing.**
- Time for reflection, great opportunity to discuss what is sustainable. **Shoe, tells you about the present state of Qld, lack of forward planning, thinking through on a number of levels.**
- Lot happening. **Bottle of water slightly more than half full. Previously in a drought, sustainability.**
- Brain food, had a lot of different roles recently, doesn't take time to brain food. **Toy racing car, lot of political intervention and one of the key questions was that what is the role of government which can generate income, still questions how and when we place investment.**
- Here to hopefully learn from those in the room. **Muesli bar because when you read the contents you think it is sold but it isn't. Like Qld situation at the moment also made in Asia which is indicative of the future of Australia being tied to the Asian region.**
- Hoping to reflect and think, listen and think and to actually shift from doing to sensing and reflective frame. Need to think to get some clarity. **Balloon which if fully inflated would be to the point of duress as Qld as a complex social system which is under duress that is at capacity. If we are system under duress it is pushed and pulled in many directions along with aspro and band-aids.**

### ***Overview of scenario methodology and workshop programme.***

Three results from scenario dialogues:

**Ideas** – understanding stories, insights

**Relationships** – connections, networks, alliances

**Intentions** – clarity, confidence, commitments

The three threads that will be brought together during the year.

Three dimensions of complexity – Dynamic, social, generative

### ***Elicit the strategic agenda – Clustering Process***

Do we know what progress is and the dimensions of progress?

Primary challenge of scenario work is how we can be relevant, connect to that we currently care about, and yet challenge.

### ***Listen to voices from the field after the Learning Journey***

Four questions:

1. What did you observe?
2. What are you feeling?
3. What surprised you?
4. What were you assuming that you are now questioning?

(Group discussion)

Questions about the emerging whole:

- What are you noticing?
- Is there a wholeness that we can start to discern through these observations of the parts?

(Group discussion)

### **learning Journey insights**

- The importance of vision, belief and leadership for success.
- Message around authenticity, words match the action and the power that comes from that.
- A lot of conversation around there are better ways to do things, it is not presently working and people are over it.
- When solving problems it is about the connectiveness of wisdom and ideas and look more broadly and engage in conversations.
- Need to look at when making decisions to run it through a filter as to how it will effect the whole.
- The message is that people who are effective leaders have found a place where they can be just who they are.
- Spoke to different people who had taken different paths to success but all showed passion and drive.
- At times of high change, chaos and uncertainty, then I look for the common themes and engagement.
- Being simple and up front, “this is how I do it”, refreshing.

Wrap-up for the day (AK). Spoke to the clusters and the cluster labels. What is it matters to the people in this room (read out the cluster labels). The seven titles are a synthesis of what were discussed this morning. Test of relevance to be used tomorrow. If this is what is focussed on what else is going on out there?

Reflections:

1. What stands out for you today, in both foreground and in the background?
2. What questions are you asking yourself?
3. What is the staff doing that is either helping or hindering the process?

Feeling about the day:

- Stimulating
- Motivating
- In the boat
- Anticipating
- Curious
- Learning
- Still keen
- Excited by the opportunities

End of Day One.

### **Day Two – 30 March 2010**

#### ***Contextualising the Scenario Thinking Workshop with the Leadership Journey (AK/JA)***

JA - Have explicit open process and now to have a moment or two to get a feel for how now we will start to be with each other.

AK – Two forms of feedback have received, formal and informal. Off to a rocky start. Where we are now and what is crucial as we pause as reflect on where are we now, are we getting to where we want. In practice all we can do is what are we going to do next. Must have capacity to reflect and re-adjust. Capacity to be aware of what am I feeling.

JA – Delighted that these senior leaders have come together and taken control of what is occurring.

Group feedback:

- What does it feel like to have gone through a journey? Most leadership courses for the individual this has built into it for the collective.
- I was impressed in talking about the future of Queensland. Need for an economy for that has not been considered. Missed that some of the

infrastructure agencies aren't here. All from the human services area, feel a bit blind sided without the other agencies aren't here.

- Previous experience with these type of workshops, hard, ugly but it was uplifting and would like the courage to do it again.
- Do some real time of stretching ourselves. Is it safe for us to stretch ourselves. Capture the gems of ideas. The recording is for use of this group and have a high quality product.
- We are re-learning, re-skilling and training and when doing that you have to go through a time of uncomfortableness and uncertainty.
- Widening of my understanding of whom I want to influence. Scenario process taught me to widen out my scope beyond the small minutiae. What you get is a heightened consciousness.

AK – What we are trying to do for these three days? Went through the U process, sense, presence, create. It is a theory about what it takes to innovate and create. What we talking about is doing this together, so it is co-sense, co-presence, co-create. Scenarios give understanding of the landscape and how it may unfold. We are dealing with the outside in dimension of leadership.

AK – Gives written feedback.

Conversation Group discussion then return for plenary. Any comments where we are after the discussion?

- Early on the process in some workshops to write on butchers paper, it is better to give time to reflect over what are the ten big things for a dept/organisation.
- This has been a valuable time just now, to hear others share their concerns where they are, more clarity and comfort.
- Not ready to go there with the whole group just yet.
- Concerned that half way through the programme will I lose interest, is it the journey I want to take.
- Big thing to sit with a high level of uncertainty, unusual for me, it is refreshing and good. Watch how things are being worked out has been a great learning.
- Cognitive dissonance is good.
- Common theme is that we live in a command and control environment how can we as leaders challenge that.

The nature of training. In the year as whole and in specific these three days the challenge is how do I deal with unpredictable and uncontrollable situation? Scenarios are about not knowing the future and unable to control the future. How do we step forward collectively? How do we move forward quickly and confidently. Not enough time to finish each step cleanly, there is a diverging and converging dynamic with a big phase in the middle that is in a mess.

Two methods to construct scenarios, to go step by step and choose the key uncertainties and then make a two by two matrix (**deductive**). **Inductive** method, where a range of scenarios which from those the most useful are chosen, this relies on this emergent method.

Trying to set up a training field for a particular way of working. How we can do emergent work with a diverse group in a limited time and space. Politeness and downloading are very similar. Debating is you say what you are thinking. Downloading and debating didn't create anything new. Dialoguing is a kind of talking when I not only tell you what I think but how I got here and why it matters to me and I am listening to you to understand why is it so important to you.

Going to use five steps:

### **1. Create snippets of scenario logic**

The idea here is to do this individually and then share it around the table. Two or three variables which you are asserting have a causal connection, variables that matter to this strategic agenda, eg, the economy (the level or extent of State government debt), liveability (level and extent of services provided across the board), put a plus if the variables move the same direction or minus if they don't); level or extent of the popular mistrust of government, level or extent of the reliability of politicians) – participants after the group session asked to understand there form of listening, down-loading, debating, dialoguing mode. Reflect on what were you doing for the last 45 minutes – as a group discussed there interaction – now at tables working with the flip chart stand create 3 or 4 scenarios, trying to get a range of stories, a scenario is achieve by combining a number of snippets – choose a direction for each of the snippets – create 3 to 4 scenarios on each flip chart page.

### **2. Generate candidate scenarios out of the snippets. Group discussion as to developing 3 to 4 scenarios.**

### **3. Cluster these candidates into families of scenarios -**

- 1 Decreasing economic stability people become fearful, try to own onto their own self interest
- 11 Decisions being made without content knowledge
- 12 Recognising the needs of the individual and meeting them
- 13 Decrease in trust leads to an increase in regulations and red tape
- 2 Increasing investment in regional resource industries
- 3 Increasing trend to individualism
- 14 Increasing aging population
- 4 Lack of evidence base to support policy positions

- 5 Increased community engagement
- 6 Increasing population growth in urban communities
- 7 Lack of transparency, short term, reactive, crisis/media driven policy and decision making
- 8 Open evidence based inclusive policy ???? and community driven
- 9 Changing population/demographics
- 10 What if we became a republic
- 15 The rise of economic rationalism
- 16 An increase in transparency in reform agenda – degree to which evidence based decisions
- 17 Govts command and control decreases
- 18 Increase in population
- 19 Less community fragmentation
- 20 Greater alignment and co-operation between layers of government, national, state and local.
- 21 Increase in the public participation in the setting of policy

Cluster themes:

Coming from different backgrounds etc they have all come back to 8 areas. These are very rough but there are at least 8 beginnings of scenario, has the group been challenged more, is the group diverse enough? They have mainly come from a human services background. Social enterprise space has not been mentioned. The shift in responsibility between Commonwealth and State. Too much of government mentioned and not acknowledging the community sector contribution. Very Queensland centric and not considering the global/big picture issues. It is a bit Ho Hum, same things have been heard for a while.

Important observation is that they are particularly framed in lack.

15 minutes to think up missing stories.

Regathered to hear the new stories/scenarios

J Global dependencies – effected by the conditions of other countries

N We adopt a new decision making framework which is human rights base implemented through a Bill of Rights – economic and social decisions made on the human rights agenda.

O Exposed to unpredictable environmental event and the consequential dysfunction.

L Commonwealth takes over the allocation of all resources and split it up on an allocation system

I Move to a different system of funding outputs and outcomes.

A Increasing the growth and recognition of social enterprise in partnership with for profits and not for profits.

K Centralised taxations system



M In 10 years – no market for coal or gas.

Now have 10 stories and it is time to now make a judgement, which ones do we want to develop. Get into groups of 3 with people haven't worked with before and sit with them in order to see the 10 sets of scenarios.

The question is for each trio to consider is, “....what are the three most useful seeds?” and they have to be:

- Relevant
- Challenging
- Plausible/substantial
- Clear/distinct

Put red dots on the scenarios that are the most useful seeds.

Finished up with 3 scenarios

#### **4. Chose two to four most useful scenarios.**

Developed in group work where they considered “headlines” for 2011-2016, 2017-2020 and 2021 – 2030. Reworked and focussed these further.

#### ***Check Out***

- Tired
- Positive
- Not quite there
- Fluffy
- Been a good day
- Connected

End of Day Two.

### **Day Three – 31 March 2010**

#### **5. Develop the chosen scenarios into narratives.**

Clustering of the adaptive and activist results from the initial scenario development phase. Narration of why the clustering occurred as it did.

Commences with **Crisis Realisation** then to **Political and Self-interest** and how any change may affect them. **Individual Voices** are not heard which leads to **Vulnerable**

**becoming more Vulnerable** which involves many similar words such as loss, social disadvantage. Then move to **Social Isolation** which moves to **Civil Breakdown** with a tipping point with the **Chaos after Tipping Point**, whole cluster of words, not the right workforce to meet where we re going, diminished capacity, economic viability. **Green Shoots** are then commenced to be seen such as innovation, partnerships, and collaboration. **Local and Small**. The **Enlightenment** commences with **Education Reform** with new models, thinking across generations, with spiritual rights, able to make a choice. **Community Reform** continues the **Enlightenment** with services being delivered closer to the individual, commitment to change, vibrant communities, sustainability threads is obvious including regional sustainability. **Service Reform** to focus on new ways to deliver services, new reform, inclusion, close to the economic growth. Then **New World Order**, comments about the new world, environmentally aware, meeting need, co-operative government, acceptance, higher value of recognition.

Discussion with partner as to what this means to them.

Then whole of group discussion for the questions:

- What does it mean for this journey?
- What does it mean for our organisations?
- What does it mean for us as a journey team?
- What does it mean for me personally?

Discussion on the clustering of the hexagons:

- All the scenarios talk about a crisis situation or utopia, not talking about keeping what is good.
- Thought it was a wonderful journey but where are we in this journey. Are we in this chaos and how can we move to that utopia.
- Our activist role seems to be clustered, no sense we can be activist in the crisis it is either being an activist in the beginning or at the end.
- Where are we on this journey at the moment? Re we closer to the tipping point.
- How much were being adaptive or activist in the New World.
- Similarity to past civilisations. A recurring theme as with past civilisations. There is a similarity in the journey. Why do we have to wait to get to **Green Shoots** shouldn't we being doing something else.
- Much of this is not dissimilar to conversations I was having at University. These conversations have been had for quite a long time.
- This journey is not linear. Much more multi-dimensional.
- I am not sure it is my reality.
- This paints a picture of holding onto the past, death and denial. Scenario planning will get you past the issue of death and denial.

- The forward thinking stuff seems to be an aspiration to go to back to the way things were.
- In my leadership role, if we are aware of some indicators it puts us into a place where we have to attend to the indicators rather than ignore them. If we can look at this as indicators it will assist us to eliminate what is not required so we don't have to react.

AK – we have done some maps of the territory. If this is even a half way picture of the territory what does it mean to you as a leader. What are you seeing about the challenges to your leadership?

- Need to step outside of the old ways of doing things and try to create a new way of leading that acknowledges what is going on and deliberately sets out to be different. It would be different in that acknowledging this stuff we can say there is breakdown happening what can we do to address it and think about it. Not a block of wood but a piece of clay that we could mould.
- To what extent do you accept this is the natural decay of the system and let it go or how much do you try to salvage. Do you say this is self evident, this is not going to take us forward, can we all agree to let it go.
- How critically mindful we must be of our relationships. There is a lot of damage we can do to each other unless how mindful I need to be as to my role to ensure others are with me.
- Different people are at different stages in different organisations and different programs. People drive agendas which aren't their own, eg because people have been told to do the certain agenda. Decisions aren't made on long-term interest but are dollar driven. Frustration, annoyance, anger that people aren't making quality decisions.
- I see hope because all of us in this room can take a glimpse of the future. I can focus more on the future and start to prepare for the "what if". Hopeful.
- We can pull back to what we know as safe. "Growing stronger" has come out of a crisis driven response but has fallen back to what has been done historically. It is being done to, not done with. "Growing stronger" is an example of a lack of leadership. I feel betrayed by that process and in that it makes it very hard to have honest and trustful relationships in an ongoing change process.
- Feel in similar space working with ATSI issues, needing to put into service reform. All the space for the thought and planning is not there; it has to be achieved in the next twelve months. Feel frustrated but also why I am working where I am working.
- My observation of the wall it is a great cluster of the observations we have made over the last three days. It makes sense. We can shift around the order of what we have here, there is opportunities in my relationships, friendships, influencing roles. Challenging, I am challenged by it, interested.

- I don't know enough to be effective as a leader to deal effectively with this, I can't possibly know enough ever to make a difference. Both exciting and scary.
- There are so many facets to it, have to involve a lot of people. There is a New World Order and we are helpless at that point. We really have to keep looking at the big picture and always get a fresh pair of eyes. Open mindedness, empowered, encouraged.
- This process has taken to me back to Monday morning. Public servants carry the power in the hands and often drop it on the toes of other people. Can I pick this up and move forward, if not me or us, who, if not now, when?
- We have incredible amount of power, we shouldn't wait for a tipping point. Excitement and trepidation.
- Concern about the fragility of all of this, fragility of where we are, making a change, some of the solutions. My leadership role is to be thoughtful and taking time out to understand how this plays out. Thoughtfulness.
- I feel breathless. Started the week with very smart people but they feel they have no power. It takes this time to for people to realise they do have some power. Trepidation excitement.
- I have a job and a responsibility where I can influence. Step outside of the formal structure of process and make a change. Strong.

Then asked three questions:

1. What stands out in the foreground and background for the last three days?
2. What must this group keep in mind when it moves forward on this journey?
3. What has the staffed done that has helped or hindered the process?

### ***What Next (Jan Archer)***

Where are we now and what is next? Now asking you to come back to the whole journey. Who am I when I am being asked in this immense journey? What are the thoughts about putting the scenarios into our journey? What are we thinking about, what are the assumptions we have about leadership? This is our space we are creating.

What importance does the conversational process hold? How does the conversational process work?

- What is the interest to do further work with the scenarios?
- Lead a workshop around doing scenario thinking?
- Touching base in about two and a half weeks what we are doing?
- Good resources for scenario planning generally and this process in particular.
- The scenarios as they are have served their purpose for us.

- Good corporate governance in the reform agenda.
- Opportunity for a shared structure for decision-making.
- Discussion of public policy in the political environment.
- Notion of governance across organisational structures.
- Governance as an enabler rather than a constraint.