

**Claire Marshall**

**Museum of Futures: Pandemic Pivots**

(250 words in total)

**Background**

*Museum of Futures: Pandemic Pivots* is a project that utilises the field of participatory foresight to enable community engagement with speculative futures through art. The field of speculative futures has traditionally been the domain of professional designers, who craft both the message and the medium. In the *Museum of Futures* project this process is interrupted. Instead, the ideas of community members are elevated by professional artists. There are two separate research questions for this project. For those involved – how might the Covid19 pandemic be seen as a pivot point for a different futures? For those visiting – how does it feel to see these imagined futures? This is the primary area of interest of Claire Marshall’s doctoral research.

**Contribution**

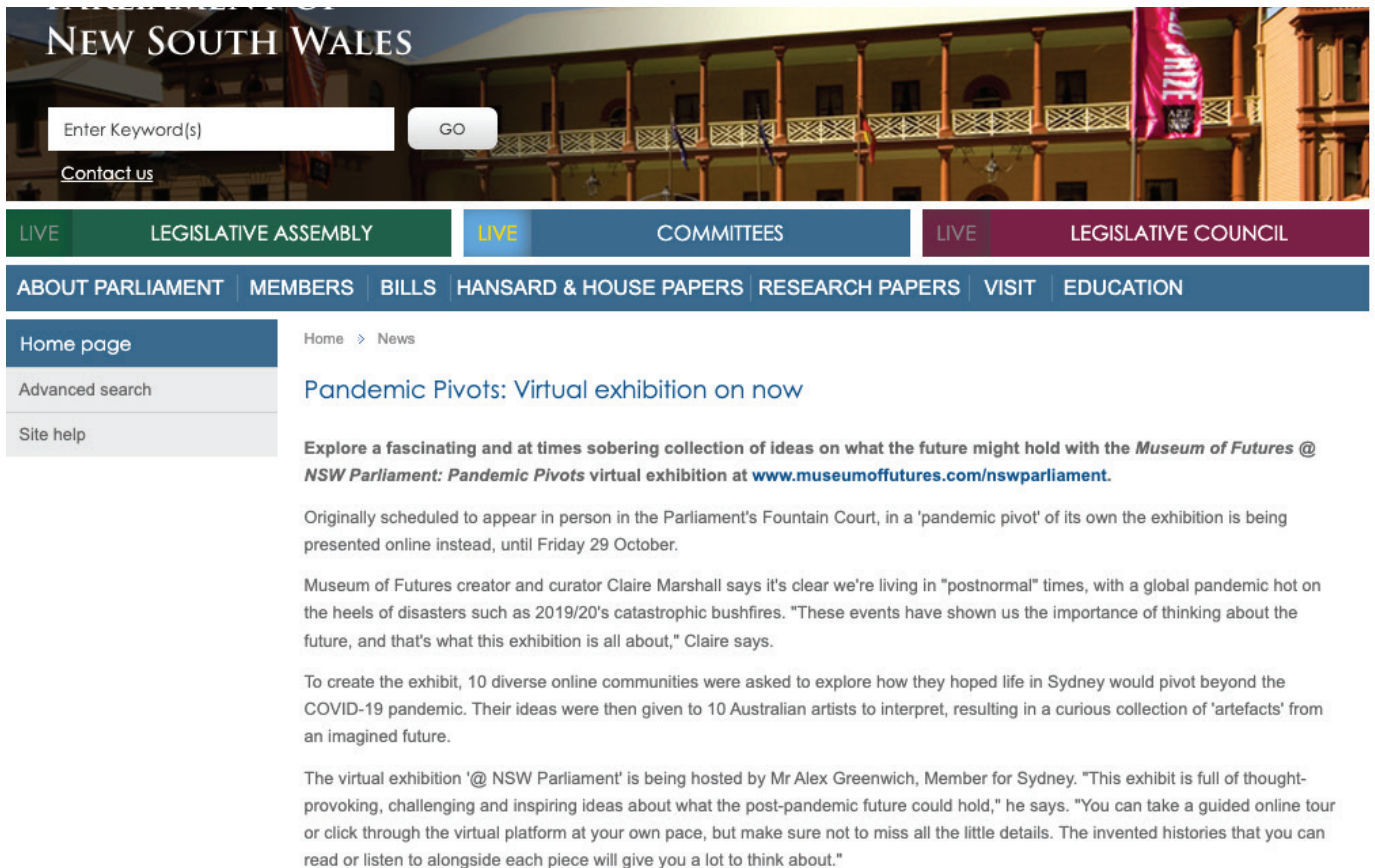
The *Museum of Futures* is not just a celebration of who we are as a diverse nation, it is a celebration of what we want to be. This project shows the power that speculative art to transform the ways we think about futures. The artists in the *Museum of Futures* worked with community members transformed complex, layered metaphors by manifesting these in tangible works of art. Feedback from visitors to the virtual gallery shows the impact of these speculative futures to re-frame thinking (a case study is forthcoming). The physical exhibition was delayed by Covid19 but rescheduled for 2023 and more evaluation data will be collected.

**Significance**

This project creation was funded by the City of Sydney. The exhibition was funded by a grant from the Australia Council for the Arts.

# SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Exhibition Advertised on NSW Parliament Website. Virtual Exhibition held due to Covid19. Physical exhibition rescheduled to January 2023.



The screenshot shows the NSW Parliament website's navigation menu and a news article. The navigation menu includes 'LIVE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY', 'LIVE COMMITTEES', and 'LIVE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'. Below the menu, there are links for 'ABOUT PARLIAMENT', 'MEMBERS', 'BILLS', 'HANSARD & HOUSE PAPERS', 'RESEARCH PAPERS', 'VISIT', and 'EDUCATION'. The news article is titled 'Pandemic Pivots: Virtual exhibition on now' and includes the following text:

**Explore a fascinating and at times sobering collection of ideas on what the future might hold with the *Museum of Futures @ NSW Parliament: Pandemic Pivots* virtual exhibition at [www.museumoffutures.com/nswparliament](http://www.museumoffutures.com/nswparliament).**

Originally scheduled to appear in person in the Parliament's Fountain Court, in a 'pandemic pivot' of its own the exhibition is being presented online instead, until Friday 29 October.

Museum of Futures creator and curator Claire Marshall says it's clear we're living in "postnormal" times, with a global pandemic hot on the heels of disasters such as 2019/20's catastrophic bushfires. "These events have shown us the importance of thinking about the future, and that's what this exhibition is all about," Claire says.

To create the exhibit, 10 diverse online communities were asked to explore how they hoped life in Sydney would pivot beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Their ideas were then given to 10 Australian artists to interpret, resulting in a curious collection of 'artefacts' from an imagined future.

The virtual exhibition '@ NSW Parliament' is being hosted by Mr Alex Greenwich, Member for Sydney. "This exhibit is full of thought-provoking, challenging and inspiring ideas about what the post-pandemic future could hold," he says. "You can take a guided online tour or click through the virtual platform at your own pace, but make sure not to miss all the little details. The invented histories that you can read or listen to alongside each piece will give you a lot to think about."

## IMAGES OF EXHIBITION

Image of Virtual Gallery below. Virtual gallery can be visited at [www.museumoffutures.com](http://www.museumoffutures.com)





## IMAGES OF WORK

Details of each artwork.



### In your hands

Created by:

Nadya E. Anderson

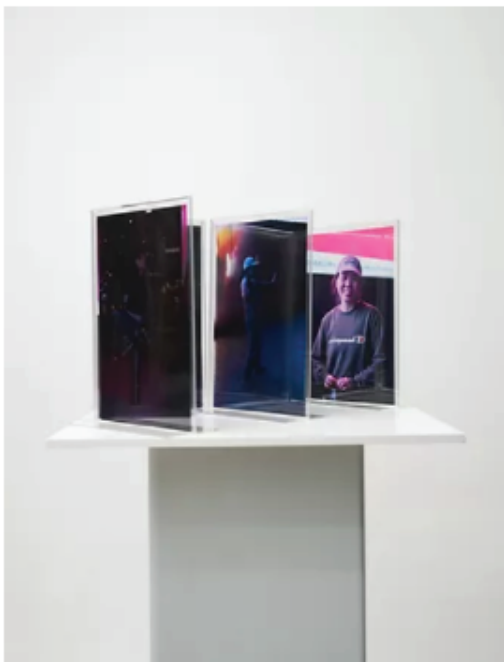
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Sydney Wildlife Rescue

The object before you is a sculpture made by Nadya E Anderson in 2030 to commemorate the introduction of The Native Species Title Act. This law gave animals rights to all native forests and bushlands across Australia, effectively preventing any demolition and development.

In 2019-2020 Australia experienced the worst bushfire in recorded history. More than 3 billion animals were killed or displaced. The Covid-19 pandemic provided a time for communities to set up crowdfunding campaigns that bought land and rewilded paddocks. Urban planners began to revise how they designed towns to incorporate nesting and feeding sites, allowing wildlife and humans to coexist. People started to flock to these towns with higher biodiversity, which were now the most economically viable communities due to their regeneration efforts after the fires.

Anderson's sculpture featured in the 2040 global Extinction exhibition as an example of what an empowered community can do. Estimates show this community work and legislation saved over 300 species from extinction.



### I dance. I live.

Created by:

Orion Mitchell

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Sydney Art Galleries and Artists

These images are of the Quantum Crew, a dance community from the 2030s taken by photographer Orion Mitchell. The Quantum Crew was an example of the unique style of relationships that developed when Universal Basic Income was introduced in 2022 after the Covid-19 pandemic. As Australia developed more sophisticated ethical artificial intelligence, the UBI amount gradually increased, and jobs in industries that could not be automated became highly paid. Care workers were the most valued, and universities started offering Care degrees that could be done alongside other majors such as creativity or ethics.

With more people aspiring to Care roles, it was discovered that self-expression through artistic mediums including dance provided empirical physical and mental health benefits. Communities like the Quantum Crew would get together to do nothing but dance, performing without rehearsal or structure, then disbanding at the end of a night. The City of Sydney started designing public spaces suitable for both production and performance, and this investment in the arts allowed many voices to be heard and was credited as a major reason why Australia, led by the City of Sydney, was able to handle the ethical challenges brought by quantum computing in 2027.



## Bear Mountain

Created by:

Guy Fredericks

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Studio A Artists

This object is a sculpture entitled "Bear Mountain" by Guy Fredericks, which became a permanent exhibit in the Art Gallery of NSW in 2026.

The artist explained that when he visited a bushfire-affected area, he saw luminescent pyrophytic grass that lies dormant in the soil. It only comes alive with the intense heat of a bushfire and provides cover for seeds that need more time to grow. He likened this to what happened after the Covid-19 pandemic, when people woke from their hibernation and provided protection for new leaders to emerge. And indeed they did.

By the end of the decade, Australia was the global leader in regenerative agriculture. The education system was reinvigorated by teachers who championed diversity of abilities. There were even some big technological leaps, with Australia being the first country to sustainably produce a solar-powered flying car.

In 2046, when reflecting on this work, Fredericks said: "the bear is my favourite animal, and when creating this work, I felt it holding the weight of the world on its shoulders. I am so glad that the small changes we implemented grew bigger over the years and the Earth now has a chance to regrow and regenerate."



## What do people do all day?

Created by:

Rocco Fazzari

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New Economy Network Australia

The object before you is a children's book from 2040 titled *What do people do all day?*, written by Nena Fazzari. The book was loosely based on an 80-year-old classic of the same name by prolific 1960s author Richard Scarry. The modern version includes a vignette titled "Everyone is a helper", while the 1960 version is "Everyone is a worker". This is a clear example of how a citizen's contribution to society was reframed in the early 2020s. Another vignette was "Building a road" in 1960 and "Removing a road" in 2040. This clearly shows how society's infrastructure needs changed due to transport technology, including the introduction of Communal Autonomous Vehicles. The last vignette on display details how a town's renewable energy system worked, contrasting with the 1960 explanation of how coal powered the town. By 2030 coal was outlawed in Australia, thanks to actions organised in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Both editions of *What do people do all day?* have travelled extensively in museum exhibitions, as they are seen to be a perfect example of how societal worldviews can change.



## Our Time

Created by:

Annie McKinnon

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DirtGirl World community

The playful and kinetic 'Our time' sculpture was created by artist Annie McKinnon and local school children in the Sydney area during an artist-led workshop in 2021. After the Covid-19 pandemic, McKinnon was inspired to take local school children on excursions to local fossil sites to explore the concept of time. Annie asked the school children what would our ancestors tell us?

15-year-old Melissa Foster was so inspired by this that she led her school's campaign for a better waste system, garden and solar panels. Inspired by indigenous knowledge, the class of 2024 wrote the "Future Generations First" manifesto, which laid out how decisions should be made by evaluating the effects they would have on future generations. The idea spread amongst schools and then business, and by 2030 the government was forced to introduce the manifesto's guidelines into law. In 2040, Melissa Forster was elected prime minister of Australia and declared September 20 "Children's Day", a day when leaders around Australia were urged to listen seriously to the concerns of children.



## Haptic Hubs

Created by:

Jasmine Craciun

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Sydney Wildlife Rescue

This object is from 2025 and is a model created by designer Jasmine Craciun to depict haptic communication technology, which is soon to be introduced to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. During the Covid-19 pandemic, travel restrictions caused intense feelings of displacement and disconnection from mob and country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The National Centre for Indigenous Excellence published a landmark report in 2023 bringing this issue to national attention.

In a surprise move, three of Australia's biggest technology companies took on the challenge and worked with NCIE, leading indigenous technologists and local communities to develop Haptic Hubs. These hubs were placed in urban and remote locations and contained technology that could digitally replicate touch, scent and sound to achieve realistic experiences of places and of people. By 2030, Haptic Hubs began making their way into schools, workplaces and parliament, creating a new globalised world that involved less unsustainable travel and more multiculturalism in every space we live, work and visit.



## Toy

Created by:

Jeff McCann

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Rainbow Families Community

The object before you is a toy made in 2035 by a local artisan maker in the Sydney region. It is a bespoke creation made from cardboard exemplifying the techniques for toy production used at this time.

Between 2020 and 2025 the Covid-19 pandemic remained an issue in Australian society. A focus was placed on local communities and mechanisms that could make them self-sufficient, such as the encouragement of artisanal products made in the community. At the same time, mental health and the benefits of cohesive communities became national issues, and between 2023 and 2025 many town centres were redeveloped, allowing for more outdoor public spaces for workshops and markets that enabled artisans to sell their products.

This toy was a product of a market and was made for a young boy named Jeff (as evidenced by the name on the foot). This toy was designed for Jeff and designed to be recoloured, repurposed and eventually recycled. This item is of particular value as the owner is none other than Jeff Hope, the internationally renowned Sydney-based designer, whose pioneering approach to cardboard wearables revolutionised the fashion world.



## The Ghost of Coal Past

Created by:

Louis Pratt

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Green Ups Community

This statue is a bust model of the character "Ghosts of Coal Past" created by artist Louis Pratt in 2022 and used in the first augmented reality feature-length experience of "A Climate Carol" released in 2024. It was a smash hit with the public and is now listed as one of the most iconic AR experiences of the past century. It contained incredibly realistic augmented reality scenes where viewers were able to map the augmented reality scenes onto their own environmental surroundings. While climate modelling data had been available for years, this was the first time entertainment had allowed people to visualise the climate risks to their area through the vehicle of entertainment. The feature experience, "The Last Ghost, the Ghost of Futures Yet To Come", was also credited in providing viewers with ideas for positive action, as it showcased ideas on reforming democratic processes and recasting business as a saviour of the environment through the use of not just circular but regenerative production processes.

Pratt and the team behind the film went on to create a series of augmented reality experiences and their work was recognised with an Academy Award in 2045.