

The Fascination of Our Futures

Jennifer Coote, Hutt Valley Branch, works with Yvonne Curtis, a Wellington member, to produce *Future Times*, the quarterly journal of The New Zealand Futures Trust. The NZFT, now using the brand name *Futures Thinking Aotearoa*, is an independent, non-profit non-government, membership-based organization, which for twenty five years has sought to encourage New Zealanders in futures thinking.

Futurewatching, Jennifer's work, is a scanning process, a skill developed over many years of sensitised looking at, reading, listening to and gathering a wide variety of materials from sources including newspapers, specialist journals in libraries, and online sources. The materials from this continuous process are collated, read, and selectively written up every quarter, to fit into the required space for the journal.

The job is endlessly fascinating, providing snippets of insight into many different issues. These glimpses of understanding come together from such a diversity of sources, many of which seem otherwise to have little connection. But, the truth is that seeing these connections is an essential part of future watching.

Yvonne meanwhile is requesting, selecting and editing material, as well as writing some items herself, for the remainder of the next quarterly issue. She sees the journal through the proof-reading, printing and distribution stages.

Both Jennifer and Yvonne have been members of *Futures Thinking Aotearoa* for over twenty years and have supported its aims as professional volunteers in several roles, including as Board members, members of the executive, researchers, and facilitators and speakers at workshops and forums.

At present, Yvonne, as well as editing the journal, is also effectively the chief executive officer for *Futures Thinking Aotearoa*, which is a fascinating and rewarding task. It involves working with many stimulating people, covering a very wide range of topics, all with the common aim of supporting futures thinking. As well as *Future Times*, FTA maintains a website and, for a small fee, holds forums and workshops open to members and the public.

Although the main focus of *Futures Thinking Aotearoa's* work is on New Zealand's future, which has many unique features because of its geographical isolation, any futures thinking must have a global framework. With the new information technology, Yvonne and Jennifer are able to have frequent real-time interactions with other futurists and futures thinking materials from around the world, without leaving Wellington.