

# Australian Future Directions Forum

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## Prime Minister to be Patron of future leaders' forum

The Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard, MP has become Patron of the Australian Future Directions Forum – a not-for-profit organisation established to facilitate constructive discussion about our future challenges and build relationships between the next generation of Australian leaders.

The Chairman of the Australian Future Directions Forum, Mr Graham Kraehe AO, welcomed the decision of the Prime Minister to be Patron given his pivotal role in promoting Australian leadership at home and overseas.

“The Prime Minister’s support demonstrates the commitment of the Federal Government to promoting constructive dialogue about the future challenges facing the nation,” Mr Kraehe said.

The National Australia Bank, BHP Billiton, Telstra, Qantas and Australia Post are the principal sponsors of the Forum, providing critical support for the first Forum meeting of Australia’s next generation of leaders at the Sebel Heritage in the Yarra Valley in February 2006.

The senior sponsor representatives that have committed their personal support to the Forum are the Chairman of BHP Billiton, Mr Don Argus AO, the Chairman of Telstra, Mr Donald McGauchie AO, the Chairman of Qantas, Ms Margaret Jackson AC, the Managing Director of National Australia Bank, Mr John Stewart and the Managing Director of Australia Post, Mr Graeme John.

The key objectives of the Forum are to:

- enable emerging leaders and decision makers to consider longer-term issues outside the concerns, interests and constraints of their current contexts and constituencies
- deepen relationships, share values and enhance mutual understanding of potential leaders across socio-economic, cultural, ideological and occupational boundaries, and in so doing enhance future dialogue and decision making; and
- generate ideas and activities for concrete actions that lead towards desired futures.

Eighty to 100 participants will be selected after a comprehensive search and nomination process to form the highest potential influence group after taking into account an appropriate, reasonable balance and weighting of sector, gender, geographical spread and philosophical disposition.

Participants will include representatives of business, government and non-government organisations. However, participants will be invited as individuals and not as representatives of their sectors/organisations.

Participants will be nominated from various sectors including:

- Academia and think tanks
- Education
- Politics (on a bi-partisan basis)
- Professions
- Public Service (from the three levels)
- Welfare/youth/overseas aid
- Arts/culture/sport/leisure
- Environment
- Communications, media, publishing and journalism
- Consumers
- Indigenous
- Multicultural
- Religion (all faiths)
- Science/Medicine/Health
- Corporate
- Unions
- Small business
- Rural/agricultural

Final participant recommendations will be made by a group comprising the Forum management committee and independent community representatives including: Mr Tim Costello, Chief Executive Officer of World Vision Australia, Mr Don Henry, Executive Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Ms Wendy McCarthy AO, the Chancellor of the University of Canberra, Ms Katie Lahey, Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia and Ms Barbara Livesey, Chief Operating Officer of Reconciliation Australia.

On acceptance of an invitation to participate, invitees will be asked to prepare a 500 word statement outlining their aspirations for the future of Australia and challenges they feel need to be met in getting there. This will provide an important take-off point for discussion at the Forum.

The Forum will be run on a search conference format which maximises direct input and control of the process by participants as the dynamics of the event evolve. This is a sophisticated process which requires experienced professional leadership from expert facilitators.

The Future Directions Forum is based on a conference of future Australian leaders run by Australian Frontier Inc at Latrobe University in August 1980. Many of Australia's political and community leaders over the last 20 years participated in that conference.

Several participants in the 1980 conference are part of the management and selection committees for the Australian Future Directions Forum including Mr Geoff Allen, Director and Founder of the Allen Consulting Group, Mr Michael Henry, Managing Director of the Strategy Shop and Ms Wendy McCarthy AO, the Chancellor of the University of Canberra.

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