

Symbio- futures



Co-creating symbiotic futures with generative AI

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Thanks for joining our workshop!

Through their participation, attendees uplifted their optimism about the future by 36% and co-created 270 visionary concepts for a symbiotic, nature-positive tomorrow.



Our Approach

Our mission in this space is to support organisations in **reimagining what a better future could look like, while grounding that vision in tangible, actionable methods and approaches.**

We aim to spark **new ways of thinking and doing**, guiding teams to not only **envision ambitious futures** but also **develop practical tools and strategies** to make those visions achievable.

By blending **nature positive futures with real-world** applications, we **empower organisations to turn potential into impact and ideas into action.**

On the day

This was a live AI experiment combining careful design, exploration, ideation, scenario-building and prompt development - all brought together through a multidisciplinary approach of Symbiocene principles, futures thinking frameworks and generative AI tooling.

If you found this presentation valuable and would like to share it further, please reach out for permission - we're always open to new opportunities for collaboration.

Working with us

Interested in exploring how we can shape preferred futures for your organisation?
Reach out for a conversation.

Workshops & Sessions

- Explore what's possible for the future through Symbiocene-focussed workshops.
- Use generative AI to bring preferred futures to life in real time.

Visioning & Strategy

- Use the Symbiocene principles to unlock a sustainable, nature-positive vision for your organisation's future.
- Harness foresight and futures thinking to inspire change, using AI-powered, futures-focused models tailored to your organisation's needs.

Catalysing Change

- Unlock new ways of thinking & doing through AI and human collaboration approaches.
- Bridge nature and climate initiatives to break down silo's and promote unified goals.
- Bring together diverse teams to tackle complex, system-led challenges through interdisciplinary problem solving.

Design & Roadmapping

- Use life-centred design methodology to execute on your vision in a way that is actionable and impactful.
- Create roadmaps to turn future visions into reality.
- Design futuring sprints for rapid ideation around preferred futures, powered by AI.

Introducing the Symbiocene

WHAT IS THE SYMBIOCENE?

The Symbiocene is an organising theme based on the principle of symbiosis to enable people to have a mutually beneficial relationship with nature and the natural systems that support life.

- > The goal of the Symbiocene is to replace the Anthropocene with **a new era where life works with life to further life**, and all can thrive
- > Defined by Environmental Philosopher Glenn Albrecht, the Symbiocene is **rooted in scientific evidence** and is an **emerging force for change** around the world
- > The Symbiocene is both **a destination & a set of instructions** for how we might get there

What is the role of the Symbiocene?

A way to **think and act** in partnership with the natural world

An **umbrella** for strategies, ideas and innovations

Informing processes

- > Inspiration for ideas
- > Guidance for design
- > Criteria for creating
- > Directions for use and post use

A positive future vision with **practical ways** to help us get there

A powerful **action driven narrative** helping people create change

Symbiocene Principles

01 GENERATIVE

A partnership relationship where inputs use symbiosis & outputs support symbiosis & are reabsorbed into the systems of life.

02 RENEWABLE

Careful use of the resources of places & bioregions ensuring they are extraction free & renewed.

03 ENERGY EQUITY

Socially just forms of safe energy, with no intergenerational impacts.

04 WITHIN BOUNDARIES

Management of human systems to keep within boundaries at all scales – local to regional to planetary.

05 SYMBIOTECHNOLOGY

Technology enabling partnerships between people & nature, promoting not exploiting biodiversity.

06 HARMONIOUS

A dynamic balance working with change by adjusting conditions to maintain stability.

07 PROTECTIVE

Protecting symbiotic bonds between & within species.
Avoiding Symbiocide.

08 CREATIVE

The active creation of new symbiotic relationships between humans & non-humans. Replacing the Anthropocentric with the Symbiocentric.

09 SYMBONOMY

An economy run on the basis of living together, changing currencies & ideas of what is value.

10 SYMBIOSHIP

Beyond stewardship, an ethical responsibility to nurture, nourish & safeguard the symbiotic interconnections of all life.

Checklist for Symbio-future concepts

1

Does it take a relationship building partnership approach with nature to deliver co-benefits?

2

Is it inclusive and equitable, ensuring no negative impacts for future generations?

3

Is it designed for true circularity, where materials are reused or reintegrated back into nature?

4

Does it support biodiversity, using symbiosis to make ecosystems more resilient and productive?

Our symbio- future creations

A snapshot of a
Symbiocene future

Food Systems



A Symbiocene Food System includes...

A system that aligns food production & consumption with nature's capacity

Uses generative practices that improve soil, conserve water and support biodiversity

Centred around communities that rely on local, seasonal produce, free from harmful chemicals

Every step works in harmony with the planet to prioritise both human and environmental wellbeing

FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: SCENARIO

In Sydney, 2035, food is hyper-local, accessible, and deeply integrated with the city's community and natural systems. Community growing hubs flourish on every block, doubling as social gathering spots and supply hubs. Kitchens are self-sustaining, with indoor green walls and biogas generators processing food waste into energy. Food co-operatives and swap systems have replaced supermarkets, offering only pure, sustainably sourced ingredients. Each neighbourhood manages local food gardens and community kitchens, creating fresh, nutrient-rich meals and reducing waste. An app tracks biodiversity footprints rather than calories, and vending machines dispense locally harvested produce—no packaging required.

Nature and technology coexist harmoniously, with high-rise greenhouses, solar-shaded community gardens, and even airborne vegetable gardens supported by waste-processing hubs below. Schools teach regenerative farming, while public spaces blend Indigenous and community knowledge, promoting food literacy and self-sufficiency.

FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: CONCEPT 1

Compost Brick Maker

A home device that converts food scraps into compact compost bricks, which can be used as fuel or fertiliser.



FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: CONCEPT 2

Personal Rainwater Harvesting System

Compact, modular rainwater
collection units attached to
apartment windows or
balconies, designed for
individual use.



FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: SYSTEM: CONCEPT 3

Live Impact Grocery Scanner

A grocery scanner app or device that provides environmental and social impact scores for each product scanned.



FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: CONCEPT 4

Green Wall Refrigerator

A vertical green wall in the kitchen that keeps greens and vegetables fresh without refrigeration.



FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: CONCEPT 5

In-Home Biogas Generator

A compact, efficient kitchen
appliance that converts food
waste into biogas for
household energy.



FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: IMPLICATIONS

FUTURE SKILLS & JOBS

- 1. Community Food Production Coordinator:** Oversees volunteers and neighbourhood gardens, ensuring balanced and sustainable yields
- 2. Biodiversity Footprint Analyst:** Tracks biodiversity impact of food consumption through apps and community metrics.
- 3. Waste-to-Energy Technician:** Manages household biogas units, ensuring optimal waste-to-energy conversion.
- 4. Regenerative Food Educator:** Teaches regenerative practices in schools, linking food systems with ecological stewardship.

RECOMMENDATION FOR GOVERNMENT

- 1. Subsidise Community Gardens and Food Co-ops:** Offer financial support for localised food production hubs to reduce reliance on supermarkets.
- 2. Mandate Circular Food Waste Systems in Buildings:** Implement legislation requiring biogas generators and compost units in new builds.
- 3. Incentivise Low-Impact Food Labelling:** Require transparency in biodiversity and carbon footprint for all food items.
- 4. Fund Food Literacy Programs:** Develop educational programs in schools to teach regenerative practices and food system knowledge.

NEW POLICY OR REGULATIONS

- 1. Ban on Non-Local Produce Imports:** Restrict long-distance food imports to encourage localised, seasonal food production.
- 2. Circular Packaging Requirements:** Mandate biodegradable, reusable, or compostable packaging across all food products.
- 3. True-Cost Pricing for High-Impact Foods:** Impose tariffs on foods with high food miles or plastic packaging.
- 4. Urban Agriculture Building Codes:** Require rooftop or vertical gardens in urban residential buildings.

FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM: IMPLICATIONS

NEW BUSINESSES, SERVICES, PRODUCTS, INDUSTRIES

- 1. Food Swap App:** Platform for local residents to trade homegrown produce within neighbourhoods.
- 2. Home Compost Energy Units:** Compact units that convert food waste to biogas for household energy use.
- 3. Totem Produce Markets:** Markets selling Indigenous and culturally specific plants and foods connected to local heritage.
- 4. Biodiversity Tracking App:** Tracks biodiversity impact of consumer diets, promoting symbiotic food choices.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- 1. Risk of Biodiversity Loss in Community Gardens:** Over-reliance on certain crops could lead to reduced plant diversity.
- 2. Potential Inequality in Access to Local Food:** Affluent areas may have better resources for community gardens, leading to food inequity.
- 3. Increased Dependence on Technology in Food Choices:** Biodiversity and carbon tracking apps may create detachment from direct experience with food systems.
- 4. Pressure on Urban Spaces for Green Conversion:** High demand for rooftop and vertical gardens may strain urban infrastructure adaptation.

CO-BENEFITS

- 1. Enhanced Community Cohesion:** Localised food systems foster collaboration and trust among residents.
- 2. Improved Public Health:** Access to fresh, organic produce in neighbourhoods reduces reliance on processed foods.
- 3. Climate Resilience:** Reduced food miles and emphasis on local production lessen emissions and bolster food security.
- 4. Economic Stability for Local Farmers:** True-cost pricing for imported food boosts demand for locally grown, sustainable produce.

Built Environment



A Symbiocene Built environment includes...

One that works in synergy with natural ecosystems, incorporating green spaces and biophilia into urban planning

Resilient buildings and infrastructure that produce their own energy, collect rainwater and support urban agriculture

Promotes sustainable mobility through walkable cities, shared electric transport, and cycling infrastructure

Utilises regenerative materials that can be returned to nature, designed to eliminate waste and carbon

FUTURE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: SCENARIO

In 2035 Sydney, daily life harmonises with the natural environment. Communities are vibrant, hyper-local, and resilient, with shared spaces like communal kitchens and gardens, co-living arrangements, and energy-efficient hubs. Streets are calm and pedestrian-friendly, designed for cycling and walking with porous, tree-lined pathways that encourage biodiversity and cooling. Housing structures blend with nature, using regenerative materials like mycelium and algae-based plastic and integrating rooftop gardens for food production and rainwater harvesting. Homes autonomously manage energy consumption through interconnected local solar and kinetic grids, with real-time energy and air quality tracking displayed indoors.

A sense of shared responsibility permeates these communities, where people borrow tools from neighbourhood hubs, exchange skills, and tend to micro-forests. Nature strips teem with native plants, and innovative transport options—from kinetic footpaths to electric bikes—help power the shared energy grid.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT: CONCEPT 1

Symbiotic Building Materials

Homes constructed from regenerative mycelium-based materials.



BUILT ENVIRONMENT: CONCEPT 2

Energy-Producing Footpaths

Kinetic footpaths capturing
energy as people walk



BUILT ENVIRONMENT: CONCEPT 3

Community Resource Hub

Neighbourhood hubs with shared tools and resources



BUILT ENVIRONMENT: CONCEPT 4

Zero Waste Community Hubs

Self-sustaining neighbourhood hubs where waste is repurposed, creating a circular resource system.



BUILT ENVIRONMENT: CONCEPT 5

Kinetic Energy Tracking App for Gyms

A futuristic app that tracks and visualises kinetic energy generated by gym-goers, encouraging community engagement and personal energy goals.



FUTURE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: IMPLICATIONS

FUTURE SKILLS & JOBS

- 1. Symbiotic Architect:** Designs regenerative, nature-integrated buildings using sustainable materials and biocircular principles.
- 2. Kinetic Energy Technician:** Specialises in harnessing energy from movement in footpaths and public spaces.
- 3. Community Resource Curator:** Manages localised sharing hubs, coordinating tools, skills, and resources among residents.
- 4. Eco-material Scientist:** Develops new building materials from biodegradable or recycled substances, like mycelium and algae-based plastics.

RECOMMENDATION FOR GOVERNMENT

- 1. Incentivise Biocircular Innovation:** Provide grants or tax breaks for developing biodegradable and regenerative construction materials.
- 2. Support Local Energy Grids:** Promote local energy production with subsidies for community-owned renewable sources and smart-grid connections.
- 3. Expand Public Green Spaces:** Enact policies that increase access to biodiversity-focused areas, including micro-forests and nature corridors.
- 4. Encourage Communal Infrastructure:** Fund neighbourhood hubs for resource-sharing, repair, and skills exchange to foster community resilience.

NEW POLICY OR REGULATIONS

- 1. Building Material Standards:** Require that all new constructions use biodegradable or regenerative materials, reducing waste and reliance on non-renewables.
- 2. Localised Energy Autonomy Mandate:** Enable neighbourhoods to generate, store, and manage their own renewable energy, fostering energy independence.
- 3. Public Transport Zoning for 15-Minute Cities:** Develop zoning laws that support 15-minute cities, reducing dependency on private vehicles.
- 4. Biodiversity Buffer Requirements:** Mandate green buffers like nature strips or rooftop gardens in urban development for ecosystem support.

FUTURE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: IMPLICATIONS

NEW BUSINESSES, SERVICES, PRODUCTS, INDUSTRIES

- 1. Urban Micro-Forestry Services:** Establishes micro-forests and biodiversity pockets within urban areas.
- 2. Symbiotic Building Supplies:** Provides sustainable construction materials, like algae-based plastics and mycelium bricks.
- 3. Community Energy Tech:** Offers local energy systems, integrating solar, wind, and kinetic energy for urban hubs.
- 4. Repair and Resource-Sharing Platforms:** Digital platforms connecting residents to shared resources, repair services, and upcycled products.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- 1. Community Resource Overload:** Demand for shared hubs could strain resources or lead to under-supplied facilities.
- 2. Energy Inequality:** Energy curfews or grid dependency might create disparities in energy access during peak times.
- 3. Loss of Privacy:** In tightly-knit, hyper-local communities, the balance between connectivity and personal privacy may be hard to maintain.
- 4. Increased Regulation Costs:** Mandates for biodegradable materials or 15-minute cities might drive up initial costs for housing and development.

CO-BENEFITS

- 1. Enhanced Community Cohesion:** Shared spaces and resources foster closer social bonds and collective responsibility.
- 2. Improved Public Health:** Green corridors, walkable cities, and nature-focused designs reduce pollution and encourage active lifestyles.
- 3. Local Economic Growth:** Neighbourhood-based energy and resource sharing drive local job creation and economic resilience.
- 4. Ecosystem Restoration:** Biodiverse urban planning helps restore habitats and promotes species diversity within cities.

3 thoughts to leave you with...

1

Be empowered to disrupt
the crisis of imagination
and the status quo

2

Have a conversation around
a preferred symbiotic
future, a future you actually
want

3

Follow the Symbiocene
Institute and join our
community of
changemakers

Thank you!

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