

## Introducing Futurescapes

### What is a Futurescape?

Futurescapes is a simulation that generates a continuum of visual depictions of possible futures based on the choices we make in our lifestyles. This representation of the future we have called the Futurescape.

Futurescapes enables students to help shape their own future. The action/pledge component of the website provides students with realistic actions they can take to make an impact on their future – and positive feedback to keep them engaged.

### Understanding Sustainability

How will our lifestyle choices of today affect the lifestyles of the future? Sustainability is about balancing environmental, social and economic needs of present and future generations. If we are to have a safe and comfortable life in the future we need to manage our environmental, social and economic resources carefully and thoughtfully.

Futurescapes provides an easy-to-understand demonstration of how our day-to-day actions determine the sustainability of our lifestyles and offers real solutions empowering students to make a positive difference.

### How Futurescapes works

This simulation is not a competition and there are no correct or incorrect answers – just different outcomes in the Futurescape.

Students answer a range of lifestyle questions. Each answer is rated from zero to five against a wide variety of environmental parameters. Each parameter affects a different pictorial element of the Futurescape.

Each pictorial element of the Futurescape comprises one of five illustrations – ranging from the friendliest future to the most catastrophic future. The simulation combines the many ratings

from the answers to the lifestyle questions and composes the Futurescape.



Of the five elements represented in Futurescapes:

- This first illustration represents the Earth being used in a sustainable way and past problems are being fixed.
- The second illustration represents use of the Earth's resources being close to being sustainable but there are still some minor problems.
- The third illustration represents a consumer society that is having a significant impact on the environment.
- The fourth illustration represents a society that has little control over its impact. Environmental and social degradation will at times have a major impact on people and their health.
- The fifth illustration shows the most extreme consequences of unsustainable activity.

## Futurescapes Actions

Futurescapes also provides information sheets providing further information about the six key areas of this Futurescape simulation - air, water, greenhouse, waste, biodiversity and land – and offers suggestions to improve the Futurescape for each area.

Each area provides students with realistic actions. Students can accept and complete any of these actions to help towards their future. Students are free to nominate those actions they wish to attempt. They are given a number of days to complete the action and to register its completion.

Students can keep coming back to choose more actions. Not all the questions asked have a direct link to the actions as students will not be buying cars, houses or booking holidays in the near future. However this simulation is also directed at helping students to think about the choices they may need to make in the future – and about helping adults, too, understand their impact on the Earth.

- Communicate with students via email and encourage them to complete their chosen environmental actions.
- Provide an engaging web environment for students to explore and experiment with the consequences of lifestyle choices.
- Create a simulation that enables students to make a small number of compromises and still obtain a quality lifestyle and sustainable future.
- Keep the questions and answers within the reading ability, interests and attention span of most students.
- Provide an excellent web environment for navigation.
- Ensure the Futurescape website can be efficiently downloaded on a school network.
- Keep the website self-contained so students won't find themselves lost on a different site.
- Ensure registration and email information is captured and stored securely.



## Make a Suggestion

Gould Group considers the actions as the key purpose of the Futurescape website. We have designed the site so that we can quickly add to the actions and modify them. Any suggestions teachers or students may have about the actions will be appreciated and you are invited to email them to [website@gould.org.au](mailto:website@gould.org.au)

## Designing Futurescapes

The key criteria used by the Gould Group when designing Futurescapes included:

- Focus on the interests of students.
- Provide a meaningful way for students to have a positive impact on their future.
- Keep their interest at a high level.

### Design Your Future with Futurescapes

This information sheet complements the Gould Group Futurescapes website at [www.futurescapes.com.au](http://www.futurescapes.com.au).

Find out more about Gould Group and our other interactive websites and sustainability and environmental education and training services at [www.gould.org.au](http://www.gould.org.au)

brought to you by Gould Group