

IMAG40 PODCAST SERIES PILOT EPISODE – *IMAGINING MORE EFFECTIVE SYSTEM LEVEL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY.*

Some implications for future NFP sector advocacy to achieve better environmental protection – drawn from system change leverage points research.

Google Drive Link to Audio File of Episode:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tNo7ScJaCE_DOYSv9ESNd-zK6SdEVIlm/view?usp=sharing

The graphic features a dark blue header with the title 'IMAGINING 2040 – towards flourishing futures' in white. Below this, a teal section contains the episode title 'IMAGINING MORE EFFECTIVE SYSTEM LEVEL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY' in white. To the left of the text is a colorful illustration of a sustainable city with wind turbines, solar panels, and green spaces. To the right is a circular portrait of Dr. Andrew Joyce. Below the portrait, his name and title are listed. At the bottom, a yellow banner says 'Listen on:' followed by icons for various podcast platforms (iHeartRadio, Spotify, Amazon Music, etc.) and a logo for 'HOPE' (Householders' Options to Protect the Environment).

IMAGINING 2040 – towards flourishing futures

IMAGINING MORE EFFECTIVE SYSTEM LEVEL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY

Some implications for future NFP sector advocacy to achieve better environmental protections - drawn from system change leverage points research

Dr Andrew Joyce
Senior Research Fellow with the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University of Technology

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GUEST:

Dr Andrew Joyce Senior Research Fellow with the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University of Technology.

He has extensive experience in the management and delivery of evaluation projects for government and not for profit organisations in the social welfare and public health sector. His research interests include systems approaches in health promotion, disability and social policy, and the health and well-being impacts of social enterprises. Andrew's work history includes various university research and teaching positions as well as industry experience in schools, community health, and state and local government.

In this episode, Dr Joyce and I delve into how systems thinking, social movements, and policy innovation can come together to spark transformative change—locally, nationally, and globally. We touch upon the enduring legacy of the late Donella H. Meadows—an influential environmental scientist, educator, and systems thinker. Her 1999 work titled 'Leverage points—places to intervene in a system' —has become a foundational source and point of further evolution of system change thinking used by advocacy groups striving to shift deeply entrenched, often dead end approaches to achieving human progress.

More effective system change advocacy work could be key to bringing about timely better development pathways to flourishing futures which would be climate safer, properly nature protected, socially more inclusive and economically fairer in the share out of wealth and resources.

Dr Joyce and I commence our discussion on how strategic systems change advocacy, combined with political science thinking, could help us shape better social policy and socially fairer future development pathways out to 2040 and beyond. We then move on to consider implications of the findings from a 2023 research paper by Dr Joyce and his colleagues.

The 2023 research paper presented a blend of systems thinking with insights from political science to further adapt the concept of an *Intervention Level Framework* a strategic tool which can help identify the most effective points to intervene within a system. In turn, this framework concept was developed by Professor Finegood and colleagues based on Professor Meadow earlier work.

The core purpose of this research was based upon the premise that:

Not all policy demands and actions have the same potential to create the changes needed to mitigate climate change. So, it's important to understand to what extent different demands have the leverage to create change in the system. By unpacking the types of leverage points for change most commonly mentioned by climate advocacy groups in Australia we can identify which are missing and assist groups in choosing demands that might be more impactful in leveraging change.

More details of this research can be found through the Swinburne University, Centre for Social Impact research digest link given in the show notes.

The episode concludes with a final consideration of the strategic value of thinking about attempting system change in terms of specific leverage points and pyramid layers of potential system influence. We consider how greater adoption of such ideas could enhance the advocacy power of environmental protection, not-for-profit organisations, NGOs, and grassroots movements. That is, how it might enhance their power to better address the urgent political advocacy challenges of reducing climate disruption and biodiversity loss and the myriad of connected public health and human wellbeing issues - out to 2040 and beyond.

INTERVIEW TALKING POINT SEGMENTS FOR EACH GUEST – with approximate time elapsed in minutes. And see IMAG GUEST GUIDANCE NOTE 2: RECORD OUTLINE SEQUENCE.

- GENERIC INTRODUCTION – 0.00
- GUEST FORESHADOWING COMMENTS – 2.52
- EPISODE INTRODUCTION – 3.24
- GUEST SELF INTRODUCTION AND WORK IN 2025 – 4.52
- IMAGINATION EXERCISE 1 - TIME TRAVEL TO 2040 – 7.59
- IMAGINATION EXERCISE 2 - SIGNALS OF THE FUTURE IN 2025 – 14.18
- IMAGINATION EXERCISE 3 - THREE-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR 2025 – 17.31
- HOST TAKEAWAY INSIGHTS ON SYSTEM CHANGE APPROACHES – 30.23
- CLOSING COMMENTS AND AUDIENCE INVITATION – 33.46
- END OF EPISODE DISCUSSION – 36.55

SELECTED RESOURCES LINKED TO INTERVIEW COMMENTS

INITIATIVES AND ORGANISATIONS

Australia

Two examples of Australian NFP organisations that have explicit environmental advocacy objectives aimed at achieving higher levels of system change influence/intervention.

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA)

‘For over a decade, CAHA and its many alliance members have advocated for a national Australian strategy on climate health and wellbeing.’

The Wilderness Society

‘The Wilderness Society is pushing for governments and corporations across Australia to enshrine and activate community rights in environmental decision-making. If the public is empowered with laws, policies and regulations that recognise our right to a fair say in decision-making, we’ll ensure a better future for people and nature.’

International

The [Donella Meadows Project](#) The late Professor Meadows was an internationally renowned thinker and researcher on system change intervention going back many decades.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Research paper by Dr Joyce and colleagues *A systems science leverage point analysis of climate change advocacy* (December 2023)

Original paper with abstract online - [Health promotion International](#)
Free and accessible [extensive digest](#) of paper findings from Swinburne Centre for Social Impact.

Book by Geoff Mulgan: [Another World Is Possible: How to Reignite Social and Political Imagination](#) (2022)
Mulgan is one of the foremost thinkers on the value of increasing the exercise of public imagination.

CONCEPTS

[The Intervention Level Framework](#) as developed by Dr Finegood and colleagues. On this site there are some good graphics and links to other research on system change approaches – in this case relevant to public health. Part of the complex systems frameworks collection of Simon Fraser University, BC Canada.

GUEST AND CONTACT DETAILS:

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