

# Hawaii Scenarios Introduction



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On the following pages we present a smorgasbord of nine alternative possible scenarios for Hawaii's future. They are all products of a workshop process designed to facilitate groups of people in envisioning alternative futures. The first four were produced as part of a project within the State of Hawaii's Office of State Planning; the last five as part of a project sponsored by the Hawaii Community Services Council, a local non-profit organization. In order for the gentle readers to appreciate more fully the ideas these scenarios contain, the following paragraphs offer some historical context for their development and the issues used for their generation.

In the late summer of 1991, the Office of State Planning engaged the Hawaii's Research Center for Futures Studies to assist in developing a scenario-design component for OSP's ongoing Environmental Scanning Project. The two-year-old Environmental Scanning Project has been supported by volunteer scanners from the Department of Budget and Finance, the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, and the Department of Health, as well as from elsewhere in OSP. Scanning reports which seek to identify emerging issues and trends of interest to state government are generated by volunteers reading a wide array of "cutting edge" and "fringe" literature, and then submitted for discussion to OSP at monthly meetings. From these, OSP staff members produce a monthly report which is distributed to the Governor and Cabinet members. The OSP team also edits and produces a quarterly environmental scanning newsletter, *Future Wave* .

OSP asked HRCFS to organize a scenario building workshop which would integrate the emerging issues and trends identified during the scanning effort into coherent alternative images of Hawaii's future. Plans for the scenario-building workshop called for the participation of members of the Scanning Advisory Board, selected representatives from focus groups organized as part of an ongoing strategic planning process for the State of Hawaii, and the OSP Environmental Scanners -- a total of over thirty people. Prior to the workshop, HRCFS members identified a number of key "macro-trends" emerging from the two years of monthly scanning reports produced by the Environmental Scanning team. These macro-trends were divided into four sets of three each.

At the workshop, the thirty participants were divided into four groups; each group was assigned a set of three macro-trends to serve as the "change-drivers" applied to Hawaii's present situation to produce a scenario of a possible alternative future. The resulting scenarios are the first four which follow, entitled "Too Local to Be Global," "21st Century International Marketplace," "Islands in the Mind: Pick Your Own Reality," and "Uncommon Alliances in Sovereign Hawaii's." Each scenario begins with a paragraph listing the macro-trends on which it is based, as well as a note regarding the time horizon the facilitator assigned the group. [For those interested in further information about the workshop technique, as well as the comparative analysis of the four scenarios, contact the Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies for the "OSP Scenario Building Pilot Project: Final Report."]

The next five scenarios were produced under similar circumstances, but for a private, non-profit organization rather than a government agency. In the fall of 1993, the Hawaii Community Services Council requested that

the Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies train Council staff planners, as well as representatives of several of the community organizations the Council serves, in scenario building techniques. The HCSC had recently completed a locally-focused environmental scan entitled *Scanning Hawaii: Forces for Change in the 1990's*, which had been widely disseminated throughout the various non-profit, charitable, and community action organizations within the state.

In December, 1993, a training session was held during which participants "practiced" scenario-building while documenting and discussing the facilitator's role and tools; this session resulted in the construction of two scenarios. In early spring 1994, a more formal scenario building session was organized to produce three more scenarios, which were then used as part of a day-long workshop focused on environmental scanning and the use of scenarios in strategic planning, hosted by the Hawaii Community Services Council.

Both the training session and the formal scenario building session followed a pattern similar to that used with the Office of State Planning scenario building workshops: of the various emerging trends identified in HCSC's report, working groups used three as the change-drivers for each scenario. However, where the OSP trends were assigned to the working groups by the HRCFS staff -- with some malice aforethought -- in the case of the HCSC training session, participants voted on which three trends they wanted to use; in the formal building session, they drew three trends blindly from a deck. The resulting five scenarios are entitled, respectively, "Old is Gold," "Be Smart, Be Clean, Be Responsible," "Putting the 'Servant' back in 'Public Servant'," "Green Day," and "The Bankrupt State." Their "change drivers" are listed at the end of each scenario.

Again, these are *prospective* scenarios of *possible* futures for Hawaii: they are **NOT** forecasts, but thought exercises. What would your life/work/education/leisure be like in each of these scenarios? How would things change for you? Would those changes be all good? all bad? a little bit of each? How would you -- or your organization -- adapt? What trends might you want to work to encourage -- or prevent -- now, to help create or avoid these possible futures? Where do you think Hawaii is going, based on the trends of change you see around you?

But most importantly, where do you *want* Hawaii to go? Aloha.

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