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Preface

Welcome to the third edition of *Questioning the Future*. This edition makes minor changes from the second edition, mostly focused on a rethinking of the pillars of futures studies. The second edition included new chapters on the pillars of futures studies, teaching futures studies, new methods, and additional case studies. The case studies derive from nearly one hundred futures workshops run since the first edition came out; I would like to thank cities, businesses, associations, local, state and federal governments for initiating these projects. As well, the annotated bibliography has been updated.

While there are too many to thank each individually, I would like to single out: Jennifer Bartlett from Brisbane City Council; Jan Lee Martin from the Futures Foundation; Kelvin Spiller from the Endeavour Foundation; Steve Gould from Maroochy Shire Council; Phillip Daffara from Futuresense; Robert Burke from the Mt Eliza Centre for Executive Education; Jenny Brice formerly of Fuji Xerox Australia; Clement Chang, Kuo-hua Chen, Chien-Fu Chen and Iris Yang from Tamkang University; Gordon Prestoungrange from the IMCA, and Susan Leggett, who copy edited the entire manuscript and helped in many other ways. Finally, I would like to thank Ivana Milojevic; her support made this book possible.

This book initially grew from the graciousness of the International Management Centres Association awarding me the David Sutton Fellowship in Action Learning Questioning. Chapters on anticipatory action learning were specifically written while David Sutton Fellow.

Questioning the Future intends to bridge the divide between scholarly grand thinking on the future, particularly macrohistory and epistemology, and the details of managing the future. What links them is action learning futures, a method which iteratively questions the futures that we are given, thus creating the possibility of alternative and preferred futures. Hopefully, the methods and tools in this book will help us reject the often-used futures we are sold, and create the more authentic and innovative futures we seek for current and future generations.

Questioning the Future is divided into four parts. The first section explores futures studies—its epistemology, approaches, trends, as well as case studies from the field. The second section focuses on futures studies and action learning, developing a new approach that combines futures studies and action learning to create anticipatory action learning. The ways in which the future can be used to transform organizations are articulated in this section. It is written for the manager, and moves outside of traditional scholarly writing. Extensive case studies are presented, along with an annotated bibliography of significant works in futures studies. Section three is the appendix, which presents in bullet point the six pillars of futures studies. The book concludes with a comprehensive index.

Sohail Inayatullah, August, 2007