

✓ WHAT IT IS

A visual image or metaphor of the desired future state that helps us mentally connect to it.

✓ WHEN TO USE IT

Use it to connect to strategy and the new story of collective change for the future.

✓ WHY USE IT

It provides a new narrative for, or vision of, the future. This is accompanied by a visual image that makes it easier for us to connect with the vision.



Use the metaphors as a starting point to create illustrations of the priorities for a strategy. Using visual images helps different stakeholders connect to your strategic plan.



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

The Pacific Community. 2022. A compendium of Pacific practice in strategic foresight, pages 20–27. Available at <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/b47zt>

HOW TO DO IT



Time
20 minutes



No. of participants
Not specified



Facilitation
One experienced lead facilitator

Material



A vision or description of the preferred future; imagination

Time & Activity	Step	Description
🕒 10 minutes	1	Identify your current metaphor for where you are now. You may take inspiration from fairy tales, nature, history, pop culture or other cultural references.
🕒 10 minutes	2	Once you have identified your vision (see visioning) identify a better metaphor (or visual image) that aligns with your vision. Share your metaphors.



CASE STUDY 11: METAPHORS FOR TRANSFORMED FUTURES

WHAT WE DID

As part of seven KFA workshops ([see Case study 15](#)) using causal layered analysis, participants brainstormed metaphors for the transformed future states for each KFA.

We worked with internal and external creatives to illustrate the metaphors for each KFA to represent the transformed state, to help readers visualise the changes we want to see through SPC's strategy.

Figure 9:

Illustrations of the transformed state (the vision) for key focus areas of Strategic Plan 2022–2031

KFA 1: Resilience and climate action | Metaphor: Harmonic generosity of wisdom



KFA 2: Natural resources and biodiversity | Metaphor: The Earth and I are one. The ocean is us



KFA 3: Food systems | Metaphor: Bountiful baskets and canoes



KFA 4: Equity, education and social development | Metaphor: Woven basket of well-being



KFA 5: Sustainable economies and livelihoods | Metaphor: The tree we plant today will bear fruit for tomorrow



KFA 6: Planetary health | Metaphor: Healthy mana



KFA 7: Transforming institutional effectiveness | Metaphor: Many weavers, one fine mat



Source: SPC

WHAT HAPPENED

The metaphors gave our strategic plan life. They helped connect our new story of the future to the strategic plan. The CRGA Subcommittee, Drafting Committee and SPC staff inspired the images we used in Strategic Plan 2022–2031. These images are based on the metaphors for the future state for each KFA ([see Figure 9](#)). We added some elements to the draft images (for example, people in all their diversity, different Pacific landscapes and elements that demonstrate the breadth of SPC's work.)

WHAT WE LEARNT

We found that Pacific people are particularly comfortable using narratives. They readily share their indigenous proverbs as metaphors to describe present and future states.



The used future is woven into the stories we tell about ourselves, the way we work, how we are structured, a perception that it was 'better in the good old days'. We pass these stories on to new generations of staff. We need to change the narrative, give up the used future and tell a new story.

- Emily Sharp, Director
Strategy, Performance and Learning, SPC

