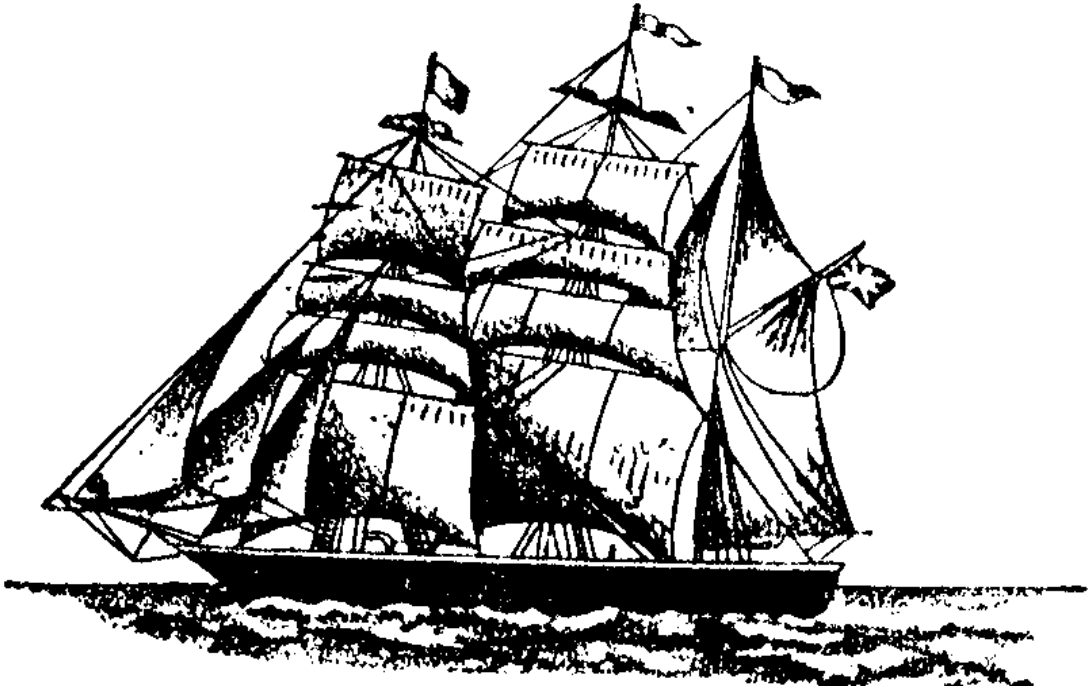


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NATURE.

“Throughout the world, what remains of the vast public spaces are now only the stuff of legends: Robin Hood’s forest, the Great Plains of the Amerindians, the steppes of the nomadic tribes, and so forth... Rousseau said that the first person who wanted a piece of nature as his or her own exclusive possession and transformed it into the transcendent form of private property was the one who invented evil. Good, on the contrary, is what is common.”

– Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*

STORY TIME.

Before our ancestors created a written language people communicated orally. Oral communities still exist. Stories which were told communicated information, culture, and concepts. Children heard lots of animal stories. Historical fiction supplements facts with an accessible story providing a background view that helps our understanding. The Nelson Institute Reviews No 18 and No 19 had content on Charles Dickens books including social commentary and politics.

Here is a story which helps understand how money functions in an economy. It is the play “The Admirable Crichton” written by J M Barrie (1902) with something added. The play is about Victorian social class relationships that are inverted with role reversals but then re-established.

Earl of Loam, his nephew Ernest Woolley, Loam’s three daughters Lady Mary, Agatha, and Catherine, plus only one ladies maid Tweeny (Eliza), a clergyman John Treherne, and the butler William Crichton are on a yachting cruise escaping a scandal. In a storm the engine fails and they take to lifeboats then coming ashore on an unpopulated South Sea Island while the crew were rescued in their lifeboat and return to England. These people of the upper class elite are hopeless when it comes to managing this situation. The wreck of their yacht floats to their island to become stuck on rocks. Crichton swims out to rescue practical items from the ship wreck instead of the luxuries the elite desire. Eventually the butler William Crichton is allowed to take charge to organise them so they can survive.

For a new story we can say Crichton as having his money as banknotes which he retrieves from the shipwreck. He was paid in cash because he could not have a bank account like the upper classes. He has a surplus! He becomes the King. He gets called ‘The Guv’. He spends his money into the community to get an economy started. Then he has a deficit of the amount of money put into circulation. He pays the castaways to build a shelter for the men, a shelter for the women, and a suitable place for him. Then they have some equity in the money they received and that is equal to the deficit Crichton has been left with.

Lady Mary is sent to spear fish out in the lagoon while Agatha and Catherine have to collect breadfruit, coconuts, and bananas. The Earl of Loam has to collect firewood. Only Tweeny knows how to cook, so she has to be paid for the meals she provides. She buys the fish and other items and

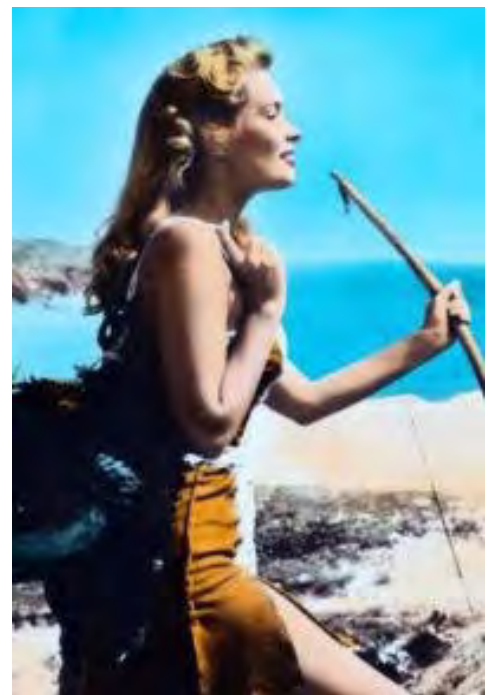


Figure 2 Films Lady Mary.

services needed to prepare the meals. Payment is made for meals and rent paid for accommodation. Income comes from the items and services they provide. Chrichton receives rent and pays for meals.

Thus a microcosm of economics can be established because Chrichton has spent money into the economy to get it to function. That money circulates. Things balance out with every body's expenses (meals and rent) paid from their income from their duties. The money circulates from person to person with income equalling expenditure for everyone. The turnover of money (GDP) is constant.

For a couple of years they establish a balanced stable economy using Chrichton's money to trade with. But there is gradually some inflation because the time each person needs to do their jobs increases as the nearest food and firewood etc gets used up and they have to go further afield.

Gradually the economy falters as they have difficulty paying their rent. The reason is that the clergyman on Sundays collects a small tithe from everybody and does not use that money for trading but accumulates it taking the money out of circulation. He has ambitions of building a small church with those savings. Chrichton has to spend more money into the economy increasing his deficit.

In the play they get rescued when Chrichton is about to marry Lady Mary (that must be why a clergyman was in the story). Rescued, the old class order was restored. Back in London Chrichton has to be quiet when Wooley writes a book about how he organised people to survive. The money spent into the economy is kept by the holders. Chrichton marries the ladies maid Tweeny not Mary.



The Admirable Chrichton was made into a film that can be found on YouTube with Kenneth More, Diane Cilento, and Cecil Parker.

DANICA MCKELLAR.

Danica was a child star of a popular TV series called 'The Wonder Years' playing the part of Winnie Cooper. It was all about the ups and downs of pre-teen years. She was much loved character as Winnie Cooper. There are rules about education for child actors. She learnt to focus; do school work, learn a script, do school work, perform, and do school

work. A change in maths teachers developed her maths abilities.

When the series finished she did not really know who she was like a lot of child stars. Judy Garland never escaped being Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz. She entered university at UCLA to major in media studies. She was always approached and asked was she Winnie Cooper. Called out “Hello Winnie, how is Kevin.” She naturally took up maths. After a test of multi-variables most of the class of 163 was in the low range of 2 to 9 with a mean about 6. There were two outliers at 15 but she was beyond that with 22.

One day a boy approached her and asked “was she the girl (not Winnie Cooper) that got the high marks. “Yes”! She could put Winnie Cooper behind and be herself. She was told that she had a gift for maths and she should pursue it which she did. She majored in maths. With another student, she worked on a problem and they came up with ‘Percolation and Gibbs States Multiplicity for Ferro-magnetic Askin-Teller Models on Z^2 ’ which now has her name on the theorem.

She still does acting but to encourage girls into maths she has written books for them : “*Maths Doesn’t Suck*”, “*Kiss my Math*”, “*Algebra Exposed*”, and “*Girls Get Curves: Geometry Takes Shape*”.



Figure 4 Danica in ‘Wonder Years’

STUDENT DEBT VS SCHOLARSHIPS.

Higher education seems to have become a business to earn money from students. The students who are not wealthy have to borrow money and have a debt burden hanging over them. There was a time when students who showed promise were able to get scholarships, now they may not get a chance.

Ernest Rutherford showed he had potential but without the scholarships he would have remained an agricultural worker. He got five scholarships as he progressed. Niels Bohr who chose to work with Rutherford also had a scholarship to enable their collaboration. Their work was behind a great leap forward in science. Without them progress would have been delayed significantly.

Rutherford was studying the bending of radioactive rays passing through thin gold foil.

He got a student to do an exercise to test if the rays bent through a very large angle as a training exercise. An assumption of a zero result is not science. So it still had to be verified as a null result. It was not. A few rays were sent back through large angles astounding Rutherford.

It took over a year for Rutherford to reason out an explanation. He was more than just an experientialist. Other scientists who read about the results could have repeated the experiment. Other scientists could have discovered the reason but did not. It took Rutherford's genius to work it out and show previous understanding of what an atom was like was wrong. Niels Bohr knew that there was still something to explain because Rutherford's idea of electrons spinning round the heavy and minute nucleus contradicted energy conservation. Bohr was able to use other new ideas from Max Planck which were also overthrowing previous ideas and solving a big discrepancy between knowledge and theory.

Now the new model became of a small nucleus surrounded by electrons existing in orbit shapes that could only move to other orbits in quanta of energy. This is now fundamental for understanding chemistry. This enabled a great leap forward in chemistry that would have been delayed if they had not revolutionised old concepts. If Rutherford did not get those scholarships progress would have been delayed and slow. He knew how important the scholarships were. As Lord Rutherford, President of the Royal Society when he heard of a plan to cut some scholarships, he became quite upset. He said "If it had not been for them, I shouldn't have been.". Maybe, but not as much as his great overall achievements.

THE GHOST OF ROGER KERR STALKS THE LAND.

Roger Kerr, once a Treasury economist and then Executive Director of the Business Round Table, gave a talk at Massey University in 1997 entitled "Seven Economic Deadly Sins of the Twentieth Century". His sins were:

1. Collectivism. (No getting together with others for a common interest)
2. Growth of the State. (The State must be bad because it taxes)
3. Protection. (No safety rules because they cost production)
4. Special interest Lobbying Groups. (Yet they still rule and produce laws)
5. Inflation. (Inescapable as the best and cheapest resources are used up first)
6. Unemployment. (Still with us. Cheaper labour depends on some unemployment)
7. The Welfare State. (Caring for others is bad?)



A commentator in the Dominion Newspaper came with his own sins in reply.

1. Greed (The mindless pursuit of money)
2. Privilege (Well paid elites)
3. Arrogance (Self righteous attitudes)
4. Indifference (Ignoring the plight of underprivileged)
5. Deception (Reneging on promises)
6. Illiteracy (Prostitution of language)

It was probably when Kerr was in Treasury that Treasury constantly warned of agency and departmental capture of bureaucratic, regulatory, and institutional processes. This projection disguises the way Treasury has itself been captured by its own preferred economic group. It will not be Marxist, Austrian, or Keynesian. It looks like some form of neo-classical or neo-liberal economic school.

Economists love growth even though material growth on a finite planet is impossible. . Politicians talk about better measures to GDP but never produce and use an alternative measure of human benefit. There is a constant mantra of 'grow the pie'. Some will magically trickle down to the people at the bottom of the material order. The 'rising tide will lift all boats' (assuming every one has a boat otherwise they will drown). When an economic downturn happens, the rich have the capacity to adapt easily while the bottom decile become destitute. In depressed times the trickle down cannot exist. This can be considered proof that our economic system is clearly a failure to care for all humans by the evidence clearly before us.

HOW MUCH TO CHANGE?

Change is a requirement for a better system even when we tend to resist change. It must be well known that doing the same thing over and over again and expecting something better or different is a sign of madness. There are many features of our current system with potential for change. Which ones to overturn and reverse?

A: The current demand to minimise the activities of the Government results in a culture of austerity. The contrary change would be for the Government to take on the funding of support for the care of people in all their variety. There are many institutions that voluntarily take up care in social activities that Government could fund.

B: Deregulation pressure of lobbies on the Government results in a de-emphasis of safety rules. Quality standards get made voluntary which allows short cuts which reduce standards. Government maintenance of practical regulations and safety standards are needed.

C: The pressure for privatisation depends on a notion that a private provision is better done by private profit taking business. Neither privatisation nor nationalisation can make such a claim. Private provision of **essential** products and services allows restricted supply and high profits. Government could take over control and management of all essential products and services so all people can get essentials without costing higher profits. A home is a human necessity along with air, water, and food yet homes are used by the

wealthy to improve their finances. Homes should be for Government to create, supply, and manage the supply so all people can have a home.

D: The Government is subject to constant pressure for tax reduction particularly from institutions that have ability to pay. It is a common error to think that taxes pay for Government activities. That is a fallacy; a false equivalence fallacy. The Reserve Bank creates the funds legalised in a budget for the Government to spend. There is no need for the Government to borrow money. Taxation and Government fees take money out of circulation avoiding inflation. It also ensures that it is the Government money that is used. Taxation should be seen as a price to pay for a caring and civilised society.

E: The role of organised labour has been reduced so their interests get ignored or over-ridden. Lobbies are well funded and have the ear of Government Ministers yet the backing of lobbies are not revealed. They may be completely backed by foreign Governments and secretive commercial activities. A change where the funding and makeup of lobbies is revealed could balance the representation. A change possible would be for a registered lobby system would put the process online using the internet whereby misinformation, omitted information, and false information would be revealed.

F: Is capitalism as a economic system a major fault in our economic failures? In a business enterprise suppliers, customers and labour do not have any say in matters within the enterprise but only owners do. Is more democracy required in business? A change would be to have co-operative systems of commerce.

G: The Government actively encourages the sale of NZ land to non citizens. The loss of land to foreigners is a way of losing effect control of NZ management of land. A change would be to eliminate all foreign ownership and control of NZ land.

H: Competition is presented as the way to achieve. The way it gets applied also produces losers and sometimes wasted resources. The opposite would be to develop a co-operation, caring and sharing as a way of producing enough human needs for everybody.

I: Banks have the licence from the government to create money when it lends. The bank cancels that money of existence when loans are repaid. This fluctuation of the money supply in the economy is therefore not under control of the Government which has to be the actual guarantor of the fiat money. Some of this loan money is speculative and causes instability in the economy. A sensible change would be for the Government to control the amount of money in circulation so that stability can be maintained. This would require the Reserve Bank to manage this and lend money at a lower basic interest rate to the trading banks for non speculative lending. Thus money circulation would be managed and not subject to wild swings.

This must enough items for Nelson Institute members to consider and philosophise about. Just remember economics is not a science but an assumption based construct. Which brand of economics should we apply?

VOICES OF THE FUTURE

This article is by Will Stovall who gave a talk to the Nelson Institute on 5 July 2026 entitled: *“Educating for a Brighter Future.”*

I have spent the past two years facilitating a **Climate Change Learning Programme** for Year 7 and 8 students (ages 11-13) across Nelson and Tasman. Developed by environmental educator Sian Carvell and first delivered in Christchurch in 2018, the programme expanded into our region in 2024, when I was fortunate to join as a facilitator. Throughout my life, I’ve cared deeply about the relationship between people and the natural world, and this drove my decision to move to New Zealand from the United States thirteen years ago. What drew me to this *particular* job, though, was the programme’s emphasis on empowerment. It asked *the right questions* – how can we adapt to our changing environment, mitigate our species’ contributions to the problem, critically distinguish facts from misinformation, and – perhaps most importantly – use our voices to take peaceful and productive action?



Still, when I accepted the role, I worried about discussing such a daunting and existential topic with young people, potentially compounding the widely reported anxiety they already experience. However, despite the many challenges and influences they are navigating, I found a generation eager to learn, seeking genuine connection, and refreshingly unhindered by cynical notions of impossibility.

Within a year, thanks in large part to the efforts of supportive teachers and principals, the programme was able to spread from three country schools to eleven across Nelson and Tasman. The classroom sessions were a blast, but many young people wanted opportunities to act beyond school. In partnership with colleagues at the Nelson and Tasman Councils, I began helping young people engage directly with local government, building on similar work pioneered in Christchurch.

As these connections grew, students from different schools formed relationships through council events and expressed a desire to create an organisation of their own. They were eager to develop a distinct identity – continuing to engage with councils but also to reach out into the community, and to immerse themselves within the beautiful environments they strongly desired to protect.

The product of these conversations became Lighthouse Aotearoa – a non-profit organisation dedicated to amplifying rather than diminishing the voices and dreams of environmentally conscious youth. The lighthouse was chosen as a symbol of hope and truth, guiding individual ships lost at sea to safe harbour in what can often feel like a dark and stormy night. It is also fitting that the Top of the South is home to several iconic literal lighthouses, including those at the Nelson Boulder Bank, Farewell Spit, Kahurangi

Point, and Takapourewa Stephens Island.

Since its establishment in May 2025, Lighthouse members have organised an intergenerational Conversations Event hosted at Cawthron Institute, a film screening and youth-led panel during last year's Climate Action Festival, and launched what we hope will become an annual community barbecue at the Boulder Bank Lighthouse.

Our largest initiative so far has been the Climate Futures Summit, where Lighthouse Aotearoa members joined peers from Christchurch's Next Generation Conversation (a similar youth voice organisation) for workshops, outdoor activities, and discussions about the future they want to help create. Together, they produced an [Open Letter](#) that now informs engagement with three councils and six Members of Parliament across four political parties.

As Lighthouse Aotearoa has grown, so too has the work required to sustain it. While this reflects the clear demand for young people's environmental leadership, it is no longer sustainable for one person to manage. We are now seeking grants, crowdfunding, and project funding to build the capacity needed for Lighthouse Aotearoa to continue growing and empowering young people well into the future.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read about us. If you would like to support our second upcoming camp scheduled for April 2027, please visit our fundraising page for the event at the link below, and please also feel free to contact will@lighthouseaotearoa.org.nz with any questions or feedback.

[tps://events.humanitix.com/support-our-youth-environmental-voice-summit](https://events.humanitix.com/support-our-youth-environmental-voice-summit)

And so at long last, after me waffling at length about the young people's voices, here are some from the horse's mouth:

"As a young person, the issue of climate change is especially important. The decisions you make now will affect us the most, and it is only right that we get to be a part of those decisions." – Amy (14), addressing Nelson City Council

Climate change is a worldwide problem that affects each and every one of us. Our voices are important too, and I hope we can continue to contribute in the future. – Nate (14)

"If the adults do listen to us, they could actually change, instead of waiting for us to make a change." – Chanulya (14)

"Climate change is a global battle faced by many cities and countries around the world. However, Nelson and Tasman have an opportunity to lead in this space, and we are grateful to be a part of that process." – Cadence (15)

"We don't have as much power as adults do, but we can still be heard; we have the right to speak." – Eila (13)

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