

Resonance Report 2025 Australia Edition



Contents.

03	<u>Welcome to the Coolnomics® Resonance Report 2025</u>
04	<u>Introducing The Coolnomics® School</u>
05	<u>Who is the Resonance Report Designed for?</u>
06 - 07	<u>Resonance Theme 2025 / How to Thrive in an Ap*calypse</u>
08	<u>Annual Pulse Predictions 2025</u>
09 - 17	<u>Pulse 1 / Changing Intelligence</u>
18 - 26	<u>Pulse 2 / Hedonic Wallet</u>
27 - 35	<u>Pulse 3 / Utility & Community</u>
36 - 44	<u>Pulse 4 / Absurdity & Endurance</u>
45	<u>Credits</u>
46	<u>Research Methodology</u>
47	<u>Coolnomics® Services</u>
48	<u>Contact</u>



*Culture is in everything
we do. From the words
we use, to the sport we
play, to the food we eat.*

Welcome to the first annual Coolnomics® Resonance Report 2025 Australia Edition.

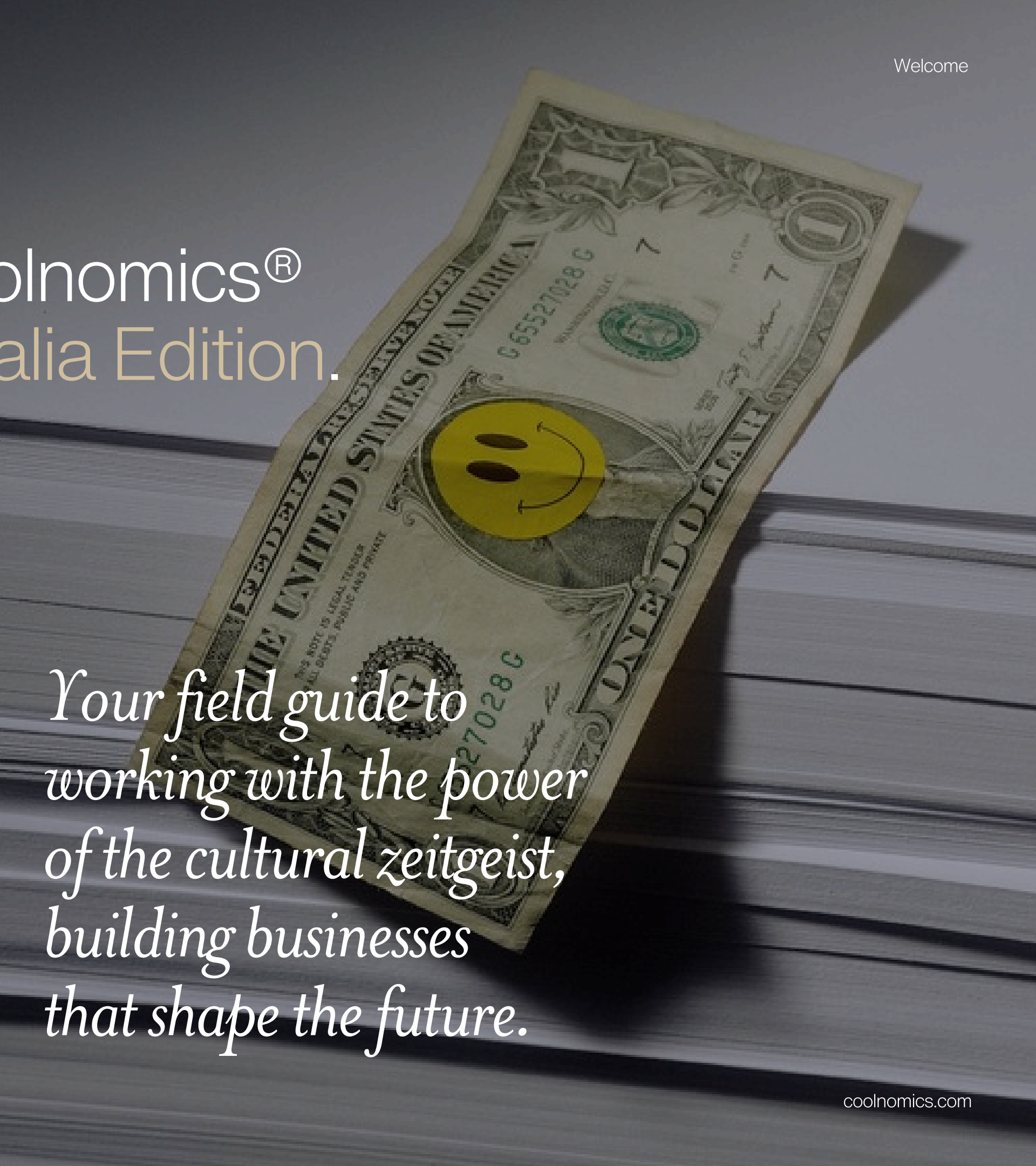
The economy isn't just shaped by data - it's shaped by people, culture, and ideas. What we value, how we spend, and the stories we tell all define where markets move, how industries evolve, and what policies take shape.

This first Australian edition of the Coolnomics® Resonance Report is an annual exploration of the major cultural and economic shifts defining our nation. It tracks the forces shaping how we live, create, and do business, helping leaders understand not just what's happening, but why it matters.

This report isn't about trends - it's about resonance.

Some ideas pass through the cultural zeitgeist quickly, while others stick, spread, and shape the future.

Our goal is to map these pulses of change - giving you insights, provocations, and opportunities to think ahead.



*Your field guide to
working with the power
of the cultural zeitgeist,
building businesses
that shape the future.*

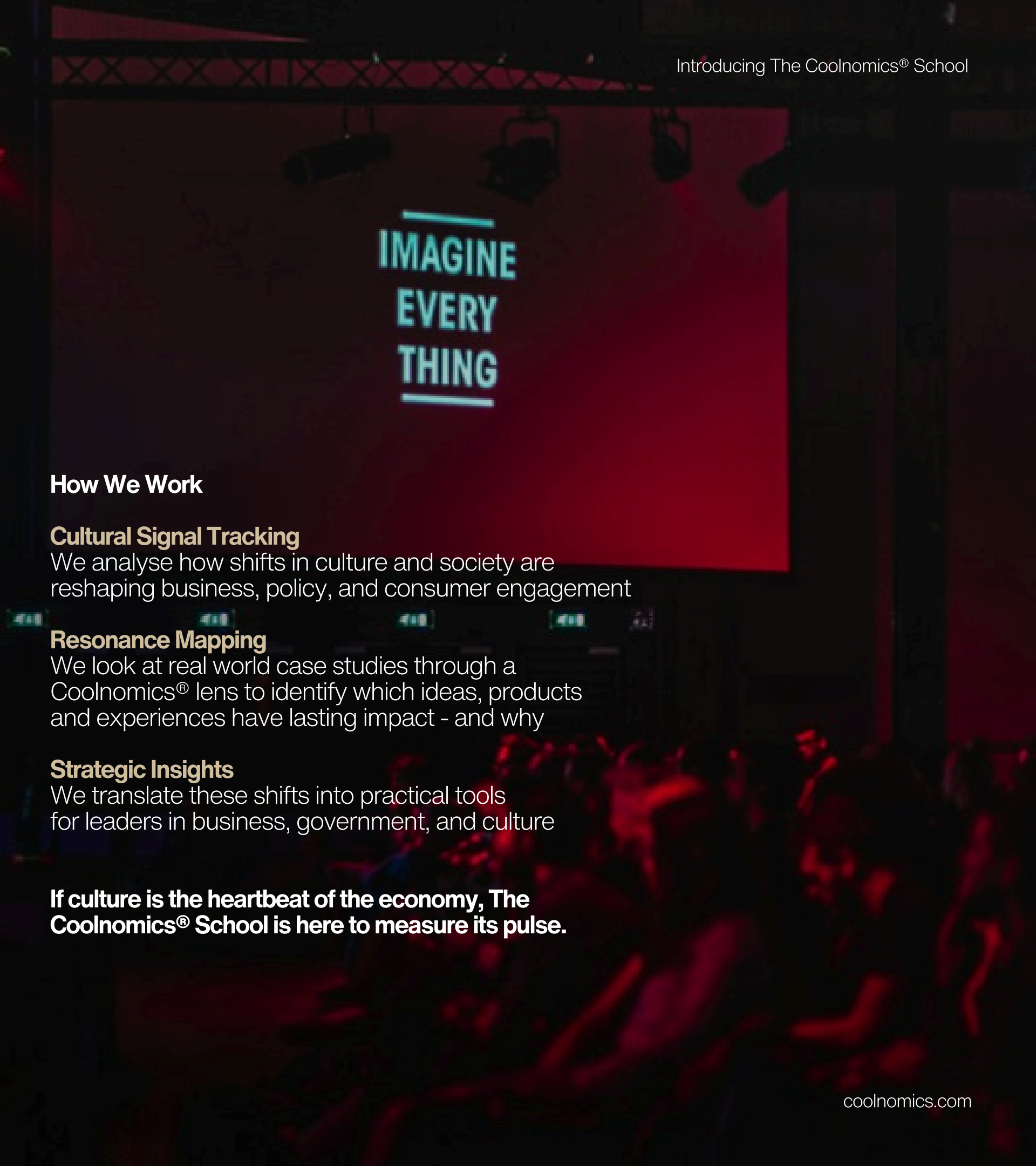
Introducing The Coolnomics® School

The Coolnomics® School is a research and education initiative founded by Australian creative director, commercial strategist and economic theorist, Robyn Wilson. The founding of the School was backed by investors and strategic partners through capital and intellectual support.

Coolnomics® is an economic theory that explores how culture shapes economies, worldwide. We track the shifts in values, intelligence and consumer behaviour that define markets and shape public policies.

We study what resonates. The ideas, movements, and signals that gain traction aren't random - they tell us where the world is headed.

*Mapping culture and
economics, in motion.*



How We Work

Cultural Signal Tracking

We analyse how shifts in culture and society are reshaping business, policy, and consumer engagement

Resonance Mapping

We look at real world case studies through a Coolnomics® lens to identify which ideas, products and experiences have lasting impact - and why

Strategic Insights

We translate these shifts into practical tools for leaders in business, government, and culture

If culture is the heartbeat of the economy, The Coolnomics® School is here to measure its pulse.

Who is the Resonance Report Designed for?



For Businesses

Cultural shifts drive markets.

What people care about today determines what they buy, how they spend, and what brands they trust tomorrow.

This report will help you:

- Align with emerging consumer behaviours and deeper spending patterns
- Design products, experiences, and brand stories that resonate with shifting values
- Stay ahead of economic and technological changes that are reshaping industries



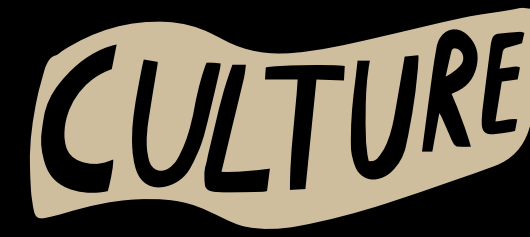
For Government

Culture shapes public engagement, policy adoption, and economic structures.

Understanding how intelligence, values, and participation are shifting helps create stronger, more future-focused governance.

This report will help you:

- Track how evolving social and economic behaviours impact policy and decision-making
- Build public initiatives and infrastructure that align with emerging cultural needs
- Strengthen civic trust by recognising *how* people want to work and participate in economic life



For Culture Leaders

The cultural economy is a driver of influence, industry, and innovation.

From media to the arts, understanding resonance is key to shaping movements that last.

This report will help you:

- Navigate the tension between fast-moving trends and long-term cultural impact
- Design immersive experiences and creative projects that connect deeply with audiences
- Understand the intersection of art, commerce, and public discourse in shaping the future

Resonance Theme 2025

How to Thrive in an Ap*calypse

Editor's note: We couldn't help but take a bit of a tongue-in-cheek approach to naming the Resonance Theme for 2025. Our Pulse 4 prediction, Absurdity & Endurance, told us to.

The Resonance of 2025.

If we're going to thrive in an ap*calypse, we're going to need a whole new level of **intelligence, resilience** and **humour** to help us endure.

The Annual Pulse Predictions offer deep insights and practical ideas for riding the waves of change in order to move business and society forward.

Australia in 2025 feels like a country in two speeds at once - both racing forward and pulling back, expanding and contracting.

There is an overwhelming desire for change, yet a simultaneous longing for stability, meaning, and grounding. **People are actively rethinking how they engage with work, money, culture, and community**, seeking out new ways to create value, purpose, and connection.

The economy is shifting, not just in numbers, but in **how Australians define success, intelligence, and quality of life**.

The cultural mood is one of searching and refining.

There is **an urgent need to adapt** to new technologies, new economic realities, and new ways of thinking, yet also a strong pull toward pleasure, emotional fulfilment, and deeper experiences.

Australians are spending and participating in culture differently - not necessarily more or less, but with more intention.

*What resonates now,
matters more than ever.*

At the same time, **the landscape is filled with tension and contrast** - between tradition and reinvention, between digital life and physical presence, between the fast and the enduring.

Australians are looking for products and experiences that feel **real, necessary, and lasting**.

Businesses, policymakers, and cultural leaders must navigate what is fleeting and what will last, what is functional and what is transformative, what is simply noise and what has meaning.

In 2025, resonance is the measure of success - what cuts through, what connects, and what creates lasting value.

Annual Pulse Predictions 2025

Here's some of what the world is thinking, feeling, doing and being this year. From culture to business, hypertrends to basic human needs, learn how to ride the wave.

PULSE 1

Thinking

Changing Intelligence

The evolution of hybrid, collective and economic intelligence.

FILE UNDER: EXPANSION

PULSE 2

Feeling

Hedonic Wallet

The redefinition of spending on meaning, not just material.

FILE UNDER: FUN

PULSE 3

Doing

Utility & Community

Functionality, shared spaces and grassroots initiatives reshape culture.

FILE UNDER: FUNCTIONAL

PULSE 4

Being

Absurdity & Endurance

Absurdity and humour help navigate chaos and uncertainty.

FILE UNDER: NOURISHMENT

Pulse 1 Changing Intelligence

In 2025, intelligence is no longer confined to individual cognition.

It is expanding into collective, artificial, and emotional realms - shaping public discourse, business strategies and cultural engagement.

The way we think, learn and make decisions is being redefined by technology, social structures, and economic realities.

This Pulse reflects three core shifts:

1. Artificial x Human Hybrid Intelligence

A shift from AI as a challenger, to AI as a co-creator

2. Collective Intelligence & Public Discourse

A recalibration of how people engage with complex issues

3. Economic Awareness & Participation

A shift toward financial literacy and collaborative economic models

Together, these forces are reshaping industries, influencing policy, and defining what it means to be *intelligent* in today's world.

*In 2025, the very nature
of intelligence is changing.*

Pulse 1 Changing Intelligence / Signal Board

A collection of cultural, social and economic signals observed across news and social media, market behaviour and emerging digital discourse

CULTURAL
ARTIFICIAL X HUMAN
HYBRID-INTELLIGENCE

SOCIAL
COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE
& PUBLIC DISCOURSE

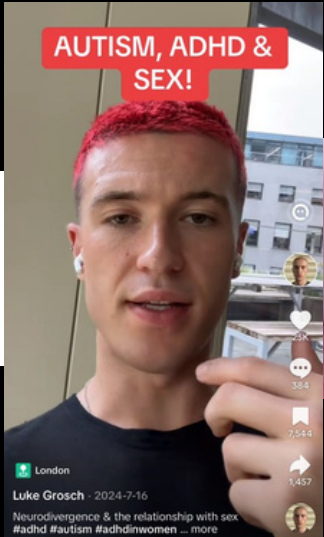
ECONOMIC
ECONOMIC AWARENESS
& PARTICIPATION



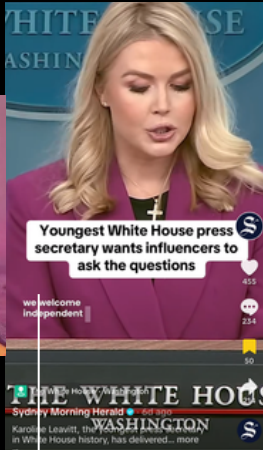
Rapid adoption of consumer AI and hybrid human x AI creative intelligence



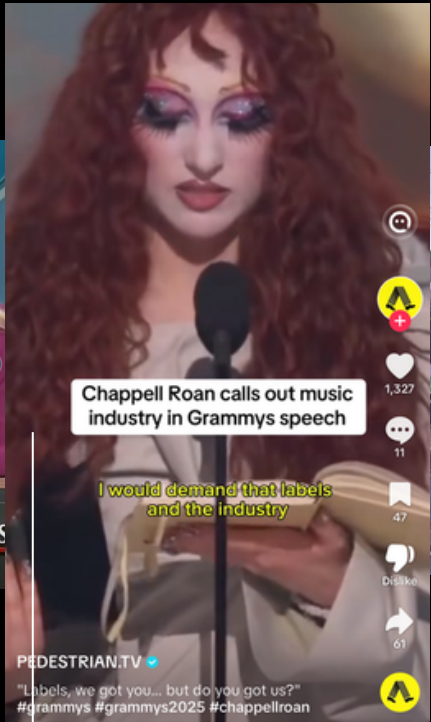
The avant garde of psychology lives on TikTok



The ways we discuss and disagree will evolve this year



Podcasters and new media invited into briefing room



Class consciousness and economic ethics are front of mind



Boycotting and collective action content



Savvy, young creators and writers contributing to collective awareness

Artificial x Human Hybrid-Intelligence

AI is no longer on the horizon - it's here, embedded in daily life, industries, and decision-making.

In 2025, the conversation has moved beyond whether AI will disrupt industries to how it can enhance human intelligence rather than replace it.

The shift is no longer about automation alone, but about collaboration - **where AI augments creativity, problem-solving and economic participation.**

Key Trends

- AI-powered tools are **transforming creativity**, with 82% of Australian workers already using AI to be more productive [1]
- Businesses are integrating AI into **personalised customer experiences**, with 68% of Australian companies using AI to optimise services across retail, finance, and healthcare [2]
- The workforce is evolving, with AI creating new **hybrid roles and employee capability** - by 2030, AI-driven productivity is expected to contribute A\$115 billion to the local economy [3]

Prediction

The future belongs to leaders who combine human intelligence with AI precision, turning hybrid collaboration into a competitive edge.

Leadership Mindset

AI is not a threat but a collaborator (though we need to be aware of its risks). Organisations that embrace AI to amplify human ingenuity - rather than replace it - will be the ones who lead.

Beyond fear: the new era of AI collaboration

Collective Intelligence & Public Discourse

Public discourse in Australia is at a turning point. Algorithm-driven content has intensified polarisation, making it harder to find common ground.

In 2025, there is **a growing demand for new ways to engage in complex conversations** - shifting from division toward collaboration. Citizens, businesses, and policymakers are recognising that collective intelligence is key to navigating national and global challenges.

Key Trends

- Digital platforms may evolve to prioritise **long-form, thoughtful discourse** over reaction-driven engagement, with an increasing number of Australians aware of the **impact of algorithmic echo chambers** on public debate [1]
- **Media literacy and training** is on the rise, with the Australian government investing A\$6 million to make digital literacy and misinformation training tools freely available to all schools [2]
- AI-driven moderation and fact-checking tools influencing **online discussions**, with research finding people are more likely to believe information that's been fact checked by AI [3]

Prediction

The next wave of social innovation will focus on tools that **enhance collaboration and discourse** rather than division and outrage.

Leadership Mindset

Leaders must champion **collaborative intelligence over division**, fostering nuanced, long-form discourse in an era of **algorithmic polarisation**.

Trust, public dialogue and social cohesion is changing.

Economic Awareness & Participation

People are engaging with the economy in new ways - not just as consumers, but as active participants shaping markets through spending, investment, and collective action.

In 2025, **Australians are using their financial decisions as a form of influence**, from boycotts to ethical investing that upholds sustainability and shared value. Businesses that ignore this shift risk losing trust, while those that embrace transparency and regenerative business models will lead the way.

Key Trends

- **Financial literacy is becoming mainstream**, with a 373% rise in financial content on UK TikTok between 2023/4. In 2024, 52% of UK adults reported they'd used saving tips from social media. [1]
- **Shoppers are willing to spend an average of 9.7% more** on sustainable produced or sourced goods - even in light of cost-of-living concerns. [2]
- **Interest in alternative economic models is growing** - the global circular economy is valued at US\$553 billion, with a predicted 13% annual growth rate over the next 5 years. [3]

Prediction

While cost-of-living pressures will continue to drive price-conscious decisions, **businesses that balance affordability with ethical and sustainable practices will earn deeper consumer trust** and long-term loyalty.

Leadership Mindset

The time for financial candour has passed - leadership that demonstrates economic transparency and sustainability will resonate with the market and the public.

A more conscious approach to finance and economic systems.

Pulse 1 Live Coolnomics® Case Studies

Live examples of Coolnomics® in-action across the Australian business, government and culture landscape.



Canva’s AI-Driven Creativity Hub

Business x Coolnomics®

Canva, the Australian graphic design unicorn, has fully embraced AI-human hybrid intelligence, launching an AI-powered creativity hub that enhances, rather than replaces, human design skills. By integrating ethical AI tools, Canva allows small businesses, educators, and non-designers to co-create compelling visuals without extensive training.

This move reflects the shift towards **collective intelligence and economic participation**, ensuring AI is a collaborator rather than a disruptor.



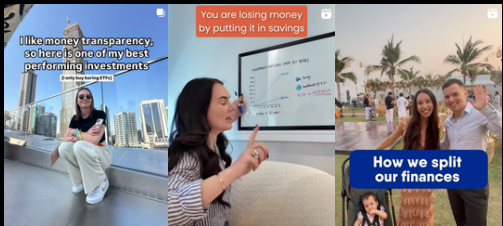
Australian Government
Department of Education

Australia’s AI Literacy Movement

Government x Coolnomics®

In 2023, the Australia Government’s Department of Education has introduced the **Australian Framework for Generative AI**. This Framework helps guide activity across academic integrity and assessment, AI in teaching and research, and engaging with students on AI. Further efforts to increase AI literacy, ethical standards and industry adoption are planned for the coming years.

By supporting the emergence of **hybrid and collective intelligence**, this move strengthens equal participation, creativity and social resilience.



MoneyTok’s Young Finance Creators

Culture x Coolnomics®

Young Australian creators are transforming economic discourse on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Influencers such as Tash Invests, Victoria Devine, and Queenie Tan are demystifying finance, breaking down investment strategies, and encouraging ethical consumerism through engaging, multichannel content.

Their work supports the rise of **economic awareness and participation**, making financial literacy both accessible and culturally relevant.

How to Work With This Pulse

From business leaders to policy makers, artists and creators, here’s how to work with this incoming pulse.



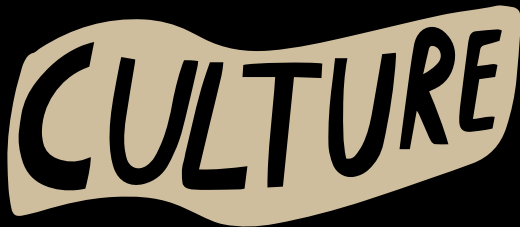
For Businesses

- Integrate **AI-human collaboration models** rather than automation-driven replacements
- Facilitate **real discourse spaces**, both online and offline, to engage audiences meaningfully
- Invest in **economic transparency** and consumer trust



For Governments & Policymakers

- Develop **AI and media literacy policies** to support ethical technology use
- Support **cultural discourse programs** that rebuild public trust
- Encourage **economic participation** through policy transparency and citizen engagement



For Creators & Culture Makers

- Use **hybrid intelligence** to push creative boundaries
- Foster spaces for **intelligent discourse** in arts, festivals, and public forums
- Leverage **cultural capital** to bridge economic and social divides

Wouldn't it be Cool if?

Provocations and conversation starters for business, culture and public sector leaders.

Public discourse was led by **intelligence** rather than **outrage**.

AI was used to **create** rather than **replace**.

Economic literacy was as common as **digital literacy**.



Continue the Conversation

Let's explore bringing this thinking into your business, policy team, or cultural venture - and expanding its full potential.

**Cultural Intelligence & Research / Business Education
Business Growth Strategies / Strategic Partnerships**

The Coolnomics® School builds and scales businesses at the intersection of culture, commerce and public interest.

Whether you're a culturally-led business needing commercial expertise or a commercially-led business looking to gain greater cultural traction, we can help you through our research, education, commercial strategies and partnerships.

Contact

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Connect



Pulse 2 Hedonic Wallet

In 2025, spending is no longer just about acquiring goods. It's about curating experiences that engage the senses, enhance wellbeing, and create lasting emotional impact.

Consumers are **prioritising how purchases make them feel**, whether that means investing in health rituals, immersive social experiences, or products that align with their values.

This Pulse reflects three key shifts:

1. Balancing Neurobiology

Spending on sensory wellness, communal rituals and emotional recalibration.

2. Transcendent Health

The pursuit of deep emotional and physical wellbeing, from wellness festivals to psychedelic therapies.

3. Healthy (& Sustainable) Is Hot

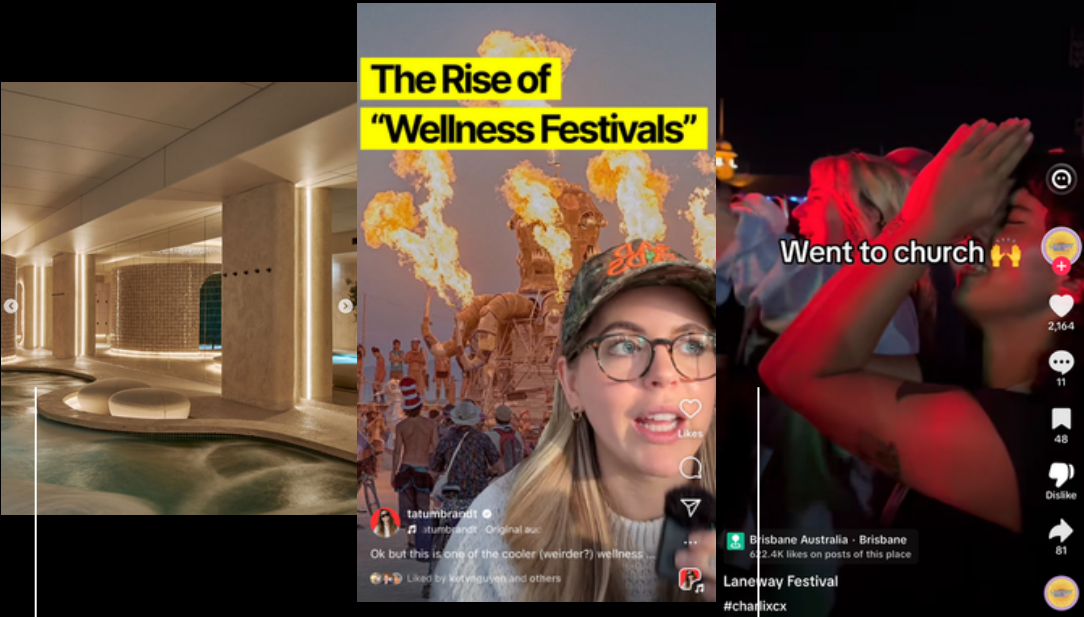
The rise of high-aesthetic, health-focused products that blur the line between luxury and necessity.

*Spending on meaning,
not just material.*

Pulse 2 Hedonic Wallet / Signal Board

A collection of cultural, social and economic signals observed across news and social media, market behaviour and emerging digital discourse

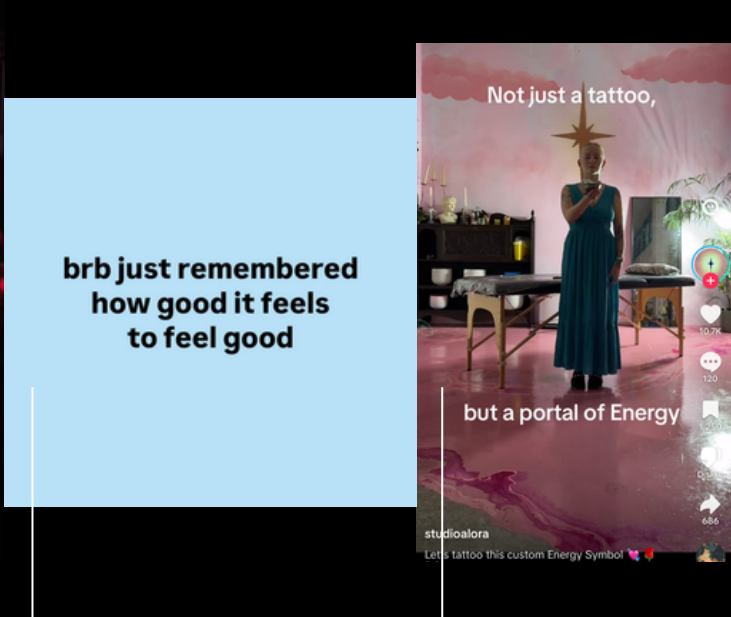
CULTURAL
BALANCING
NEUROBIOLOGY



Rise in bathhouses and wellness centres, in Sydney particularly

Rave culture as spiritual ritual

SOCIAL
TRANSCENDENT
HEALTH

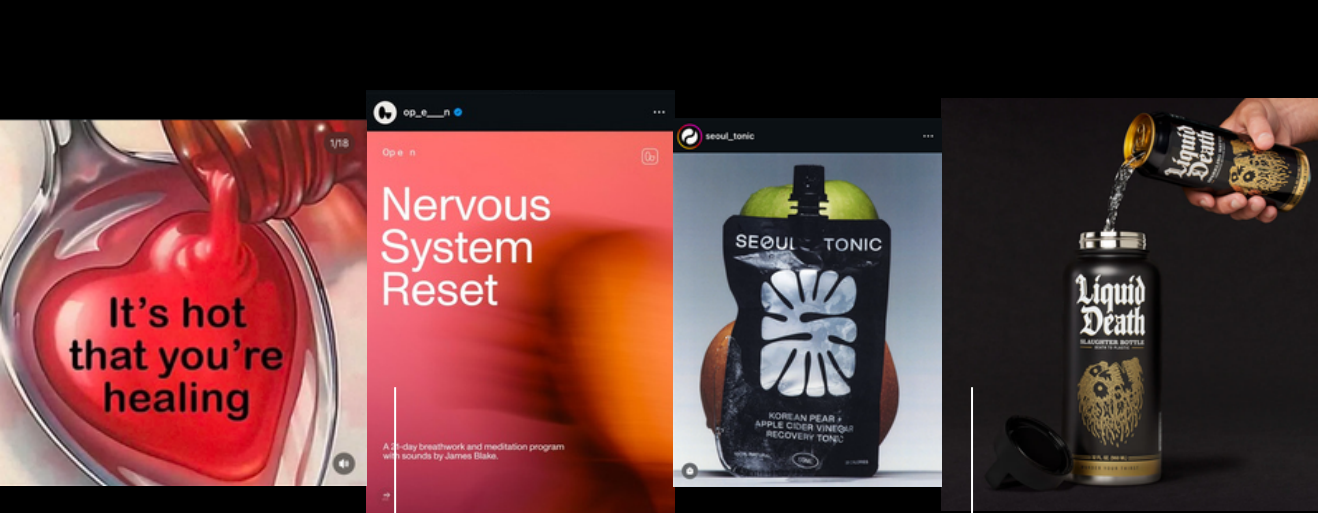


Feeling good amongst an apocalypse takes effort

Intentional, creative, wellbeing experiences will increase

Experimental wellbeing experiences will increase

ECONOMIC
HEALTHY (& SUSTAINABLE)
IS HOT



High-grade aesthetics x healthy, sustainable products - tech, beverages, food, beauty

*also see Absurdity (!)

Balancing Neurobiology

The modern world is overwhelming - so consumers are seeking spaces and rituals that help regulate their nervous systems.

Bathhouses, raves and communal wellbeing spaces are emerging as refuges from digital noise and environmental extremes, highlighting **the role of sound and space to counter-balance the intensity of modern life.**

Key Trends

- The **resurgence of rave culture** and the demand for immersive, music-driven sensory experiences sees the global electronic music market projected to hit US\$24.5B by 2032. [1]
- Audiences are seeking-out **nature-based experiences**, with 75% of 21- to 35-year-olds enjoying events that allow them to experience natural settings. [2]
- The market for **adaptive spatial design** - like biophilic presence in workplaces and stress-reducing environments - is set to grow to US\$575.9B by 2027. [3] “Biophilic” was the #1 trending interior design term in 2024. [4]

Prediction

Sensory-driven wellness will shift from a niche offering to a mainstream expectation, influencing everything from urban planning and retail design to entertainment and hospitality.

Leadership Mindset

Integrate sensory intelligence into design, policy, and culture making - design experiences, spaces and products that regulate stress, enhance well-being and deliver emotional resonance in an uncertain world.

*From wellness to
sensory recalibration.*

Transcendent Health

Health is no longer just about fitness or diet - it's about transcendence, altered states, and peak experiences.

The intersection of neuroscience, environment, and wellbeing is **redefining how individuals expand their potential in an unstable world**, with psychedelic therapies playing a growing role in unlocking deeper emotional processing and mental resilience.

Key Trends

- A 5-year Yale University study published in 2022 found that 63% of festival goers in the US and UK reported they **found festivals to be a transformative experience**. [1]
- There have been **more than 300 clinical trials** on psychedelic-assisted therapy over the past decade. [2]
- A 2018 study found that wellbeing increased by 21% from just **20 minutes of watching live music**, compared to 10% for yoga and 7% for dog-walking. [3]

Prediction

Transcendent, social wellness (from group sound baths to alternative health retreats) will become a dominant sector in the experience economy.

Leadership Mindset

Redefine wellness as a communal and transformative experience by integrating world-building and spiritual nourishment into products, services, and cultural spaces.

Health as a transcendent, expansive experience.

[1] *Nature Communications*, 2022
[2] *Mind Medicine Australia*, accessed 25 Feb 2025
[3] *O2*, 2018

Healthy (& Sustainable) is Hot

In 2025, health-conscious consumption isn't just about wellness - it's about status, aesthetics, and sustainability.

Products that **seamlessly merge design, function, and ethics** are thriving, as consumers seek brands that make them look good, feel good, and align with their values.

Key Trends

- Edgy, high-design health brands are **making wellness feel cool rather than clinical**. US canned water brand Liquid Death, has grown to US\$263M in revenue in just under four years. [1]
- Sustainability is now a luxury marker. In Europe, over 51% of luxury shoppers are **willing to pay a premium for items that are sustainably made** or shipped. [2]
- Younger generations are unwilling to compromise on wellbeing despite the cost-of-living crunch. In Australia, **Gen Z spends more on their health than any other generation** surveyed – averaging roughly A\$117 a month. [3]

Prediction

Health and wellness products will become judged as much on **aesthetics and brand storytelling**, as on their **functional benefits**.

Leadership Mindset

Position health and sustainability as covetable by blending high-design aesthetics, cultural relevance, and ethical transparency to create products and experiences that people want to be seen with.

Health, with an edge.

Pulse 2 Live Coolnomics® Case Studies

Live examples of Coolnomics® in action across the Australian business, government and culture landscape.



Sydney’s Bathhouse Renaissance

Business x Coolnomics®

Inspired by traditional onsens and hammams, Sydney has seen a revival of modern communal bathhouses, including new and expanded venues like Capybara, Slow House, Nature’s Energy and Sense of Self (originating in Melbourne).

These spaces offer a mix of **social connection**, **sensory relaxation**, and **aesthetic minimalism**, embodying the intersection of luxury, sustainability, and well-being - where “**healthy & sustainable is hot.**”



Melbourne’s Psychedelic Therapy Investment

Government x Coolnomics®

The Victorian government has become a global leader in **psychedelic-assisted therapy**, investing in clinical trials for psilocybin-based mental health treatments. This comes in response to growing evidence that substances such as psilocybin, MDMA, dimethyltryptamine (DMT), and cannabidiol (CBD) may **help treat mental illness that has not responded to other treatments.**

As the regulatory landscape shifts, Melbourne is positioning itself as a hub for **transcendent health**, blending **medical innovation** with **cultural acceptance** of **alternative therapies.**

Beyond The Valley LOST PARADISE Pitch™

Dance Music Festivals as Hedonic Sanctuaries

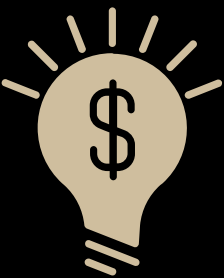
Culture x Coolnomics®

Australia’s dance music festivals are thriving, evolving into **hedonic sanctuaries that fuse music, well-being, and communal escapism.** Events like Beyond the Valley, Pitch Music & Arts, and Lost Paradise offer world-class DJ experiences alongside breathwork sessions, art therapies, and sound baths

This reflects a shift toward **transcendence** and **ritualistic release**, where festival-goers seek **sensory recalibration, not just entertainment.** These festivals are becoming economic and cultural powerhouses, helping **hedonism** to balance **resilience**, in an ever-changing world.

How to Work With This Pulse

From business leaders to policy makers, artists and creators, here’s how to work with this incoming pulse.



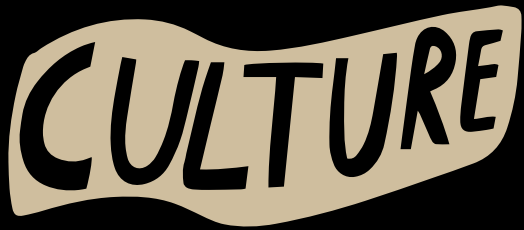
For Businesses

- Design **multi-sensory brand experiences** that go beyond product function
- Integrate **wellbeing and escapism** into hospitality, retail, and service industries
- Create culturally resonant, **high-aesthetic health products** that merge **sustainability with status**



For Governments & Policymakers

- Invest in **urban wellness infrastructure**, such as communal bathhouses, sensory parks, and health-focused public spaces
- Support **psychedelic and alternative therapies** as part of public health strategies
- Encourage policies that **normalise and regulate wellness-focused experiences**



For Creators & Culture Makers

- Develop wellness-infused events, festivals, and experiences that **merge music, movement, and mental health**
- Explore sensory design in art, architecture, and cultural spaces to **create immersive emotional experiences**
- Use creativity and brand strategy to reshape wellness culture, making it **aspirational and inclusive**

Wouldn't it be Cool if?

Provocations and conversation starters for business, culture and public sector leaders.

Health was a **cultural experience**, not just a **personal responsibility**.

Public spaces were designed for **sensory wellbeing**.

Sustainability was marketed as **aspirational**, not just **ethical**.



Continue the Conversation

Let's explore bringing this thinking into your business, policy team, or cultural venture - and expanding its full potential.

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Pulse 3 Utility & Community

In 2025, utilitarian and community themes are present in culture, commerce, and public life.

As people **move away from overconsumption**, they are embracing functional design, shared spaces, and grassroots-driven initiatives that foster **connection and resilience**. The focus is no longer on acquiring more but on using what exists in smarter, more meaningful ways. For leaders, **this isn't about scarcity - it's about resourcefulness**.

This Pulse reflects three key shifts:

1. Utilitarian Sensibilities

The rise of practical aesthetics, stripped-down design and essentials-driven consumption

2. Connection & Comfort in Community

A cultural return to grassroots organising, local initiatives and collective identity

3. Using the Spaces & Places We Have

Transforming existing urban spaces into cultural, social and economic hubs

*The shift from excess
to purposeful.*

Pulse 3 Utility & Community / Signal Board

A collection of cultural, social and economic signals observed across news and social media, market behaviour and emerging digital discourse

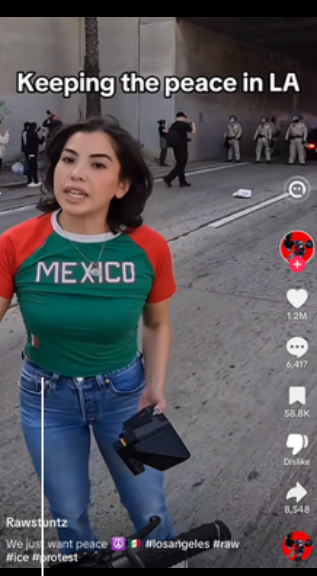
CULTURAL
UTILITARIAN
SENSIBILTIES

SOCIAL
CONNECTION & COMFORT
IN COMMUNITY

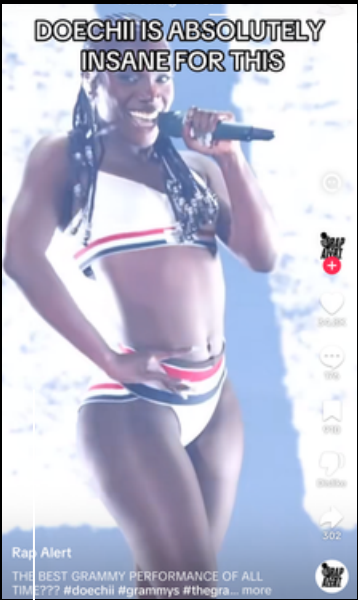
ECONOMIC
USING THE SPACES &
PLACES WE HAVE



Fashion, music and design reflects a more conscious era



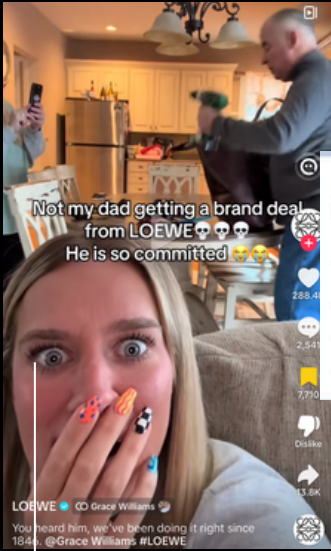
Peer-to-peer protest and conflict management



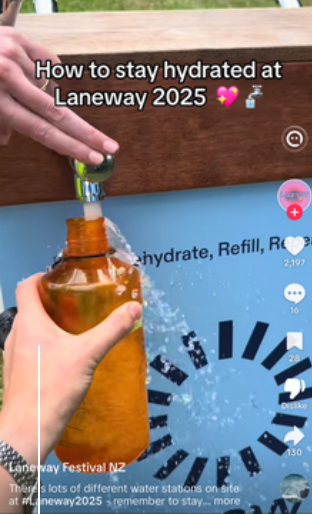
Fashion, music and design reflects utilitarians times



Cool aesthetics in the community space - elevates and amplifies the message



Cost of living pressures makes living with and having fun with family a norm



Reuse as a social norm



Using public gardens, buildings and spaces to present compelling cultural experiences



Davide Giovanni's NON contemporary dance performance in a Sydney carpark

Utilitarian Sensibilities

Consumers are shifting from excess to intentional, function-first choices.

Whether in fashion, music, or design, **utility is now the ultimate statement**, with stripped-down, essentialist aesthetics becoming a cultural norm.

Key Trends

- Workwear-inspired street style and practical home goods are thriving, **reflecting a shift toward durability and practicality**. The functional fashion market is predicted to almost double to US\$725.28B in 2032. [1]
- **Austerity as an aesthetic**. Minimalist branding and stripped-down marketing are replacing excess. 87% of Australian consumers now believe quality is more important than price, reflecting a shift towards “less but better”. [2]
- **Simplicity, authenticity, and cultural resonance are driving consumer trust**. Research shows that using low-cost guerilla marketing campaigns increases brand awareness more effectively than traditional campaigns. [3]

Prediction

Utility-driven design will become commonplace, where function-first thinking is not just efficient but a measure of innovation, adaptability, and cultural relevance.

Leadership Mindset

For businesses and creators, the challenge is clear: strip things to their essence - **functional, practical and culturally relevant** without excess or overproduction.

*Aesthetics for getting
the job done.*

[1] SkyQuest, 2024
[2] CHOICE, 2024
[3] Ratih Azar, 2022

Connection & Comfort in Community

In 2025, community is less about geography and more about shared identity - whether online, through aesthetics, or in everyday rituals.

As we shift from mass broadcasting to interest-based micro-communities, **people are finding connection in niche subcultures, digital town squares, and local collectives**. Normcore aesthetics and culture reflect a deeper longing for simplicity and sincerity.

Key Trends

- Platforms like TikTok and Discord are driving **the growth of tight-knit, interest-based communities**. 77% of people engaged in online communities say the most important group they are part of now operates online. [1]
- The rise of “soft culture” and Normcore wholesomeness. **Dressing simple, acting kind, and embracing a slower, more intentional life** is increasingly celebrated. Google searches for “slow living” and “quiet luxury” have risen across the board. [2]
- The question of **who we are collectively is more fragmented than ever**. 70% of Australians believe they are a ‘work in progress’ when it comes to truthful self-expression. [3]

Prediction

Community will become less about institutions and more about **decentralised, self-organised networks** - both online and offline.

Leadership Mindset

This is an era of resonance *and* reach - where cultural influence is built through meaningful, small-scale connections, on scalable platforms.

*Wholesome *and* hot.*

Using the Spaces & Places We Have

Cultural and economic shifts are forcing a re-evaluation of how we use public and private spaces.

Rather than building more, there is a shift to consider **reclaiming, repurposing, and reactivating what already exists** - turning underused urban areas into cultural hubs, co-living spaces, and creative playgrounds. The shift isn't just about necessity - it's about making cities work harder for the people who live in them.

Key Trends

- **Gardens, libraries, and disused retail spaces are being transformed** into hubs for community and creativity. In the US, the adaptive reuse projects in the pipeline grew from 122,000 to 153,000 in 2023. [1]
- Economic pressures and changing values are making shared living more viable and desirable. **Multi-generational households have increased** in Australia by 22%. [2]
- Cities are embracing green infrastructure, the NSW government injecting A\$1.37M into increasing urban tree canopy cover for Greater Sydney to 40% by 2036. [3]

Prediction

The future of cultural spaces won't just be built from scratch - they'll be reclaimed, adapted, and redefined to meet new social and creative needs.

Leadership Mindset

The opportunity lies in rethinking the built environment - not as fixed real estate, but as **flexible, evolving spaces that adapt to new social and economic needs**.

Taking what we have and reimagining it for the now.

Pulse 3 Live Coolnomics® Case Studies

Live examples of Coolnomics® in action across the Australian business, government and culture landscape.



Baba's Place and Corner 75

Business x Coolnomics®

The team behind Baba's Place and Corner 75 (in collaboration with Sixpenny) is celebrating **hospitality as a form of community-making**, transforming spaces into cultural and social hubs. More than just dining venues, these spots celebrate **diasporic identity, intergenerational storytelling**, and **shared culinary experiences**.

Their approach reflects a shift toward **using the spaces and places we have**, proving that restaurants can function as **living cultural archives, creative incubators**, and **community anchors** - not just places to eat.



Space & Innovation, Adelaide

Government x Coolnomics®

One of Australia's most ambitious adaptive reuse projects, Lot Fourteen, is a **cutting-edge innovation precinct built on the site of the former Royal Adelaide Hospital**.

The SA Government has invested A\$756 million transforming the historic hospital buildings into a technology and defense **innovation hub**, housing organisations like the **Australian Space Agency**.

Approximately 70% of the district will be returned to publicly accessible space and will host art and events. This project illustrates how **former institutional spaces can become future-focused economic drivers**.



“Non” Dance in Unexpected Spaces

Culture x Coolnomics®

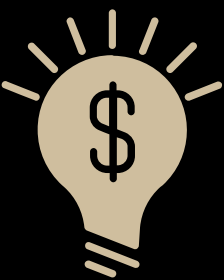
Choreographer Davide Giovanni is invigorating Sydney's dance scene with “Non”, **a contemporary performance project staged in unexpected urban spaces** - from parking lots and train stations to abandoned warehouses.

Rejecting traditional theatre settings, “Non” **transforms everyday environments into immersive cultural experiences**, blurring the lines between public space, performance, and social interaction.

This aligns with the shift toward **utilitarian aesthetics** and **adaptive reuse**, proving that **art can thrive outside of institutional venues**.

How to Work With This Pulse

From business leaders to policy makers, artists and creators, here’s how to work with this incoming pulse.



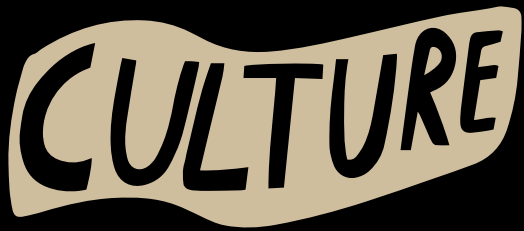
For Businesses

- Invest in utilitarian product design that prioritises **functionality and longevity**
- Embrace raw, stripped-down branding that **speaks directly to cultural authenticity**
- Build business models that support **community participation and shared value**



For Governments & Policymakers

- **Transform under-utilised public spaces** into cultural and social hubs
- **Support community-led initiatives** through funding and policy backing
- Enable **cooperative housing** and shared **urban infrastructure**



For Creators & Culture Makers

- **Leverage adaptive spaces** for performances, exhibitions, and cultural activations
- Champion **grassroots movements** and **hyper-local creative scenes**
- Design cultural experiences that **blend utility with storytelling and shared identity**

Wouldn't it be Cool if?

Provocations and conversation starters for business, culture and public sector leaders.

Cities were redesigned for **shared use** rather than **private ownership**.

Brands prioritised **usefulness** over **hype**.

The best cultural spaces weren't built - but **discovered, adapted and transformed**.



Continue the Conversation

Let's explore bringing this thinking into your business, policy team, or cultural venture - and expanding its full potential.

**Cultural Intelligence & Research / Business Education
Business Growth Strategies / Strategic Partnerships**

The Coolnomics® School builds and scales businesses at the intersection of culture, commerce and public interest.

Whether you're a culturally-led business needing commercial expertise or a commercially-led business looking to gain greater cultural traction, we can help you through our research, education, commercial strategies and partnerships.

Contact

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Pulse 4 Absurdity & Endurance

In 2025, culture is oscillating between fleeting absurdity and long-term endurance.

On one side, hyper-trends thrive in surreal, fast-moving digital spaces, where **irony, randomness, and unconventional formats** drive engagement. On the other, **art, humour and storytelling are evolving into survival tools**, helping people find stability and meaning in an overwhelming world.

This Pulse reflects three key shifts:

1. Ideas with Edge

A rise in experimental formats, unconventional mediums and digital absurdity shaping modern aesthetics

2. Humour for Endurance

The use of humour, irony, and self-deprecation as a coping mechanism and cultural anchor

3. Balancing Reality & Digital Escape

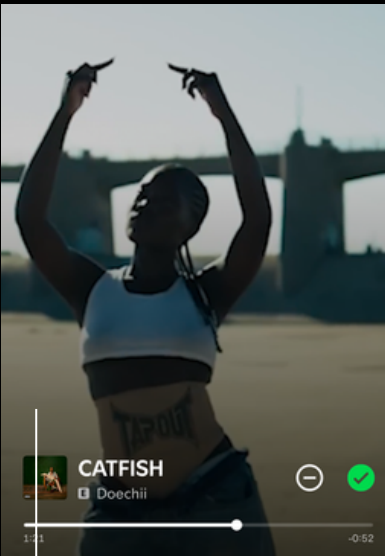
The tension between digital escapism and the weight of being informed

*Creativity in
the age of chaos.*

Pulse 4 Absurdity & Endurance / Signal Board

A collection of cultural, social and economic signals observed across news and social media, market behaviour and emerging digital discourse

CULTURAL IDEAS WITH AN EDGE



Irrelevant attitudes and intentional aesthetics



Thousands of people falling in love with a rare flower



It's the weather but make it cool



Sydney Water takes on Drake

SOCIAL HUMOUR FOR ENDURANCE



Heavy topics unpacked in a fast format



Performative nihilism and meme culture

I'm just trying to have a nice time despite knowing facts and information

Living the dichotomy between reality and ideals

Ideas with Edge

In 2025, the question of “who is an artist?” is no longer defined by medium, training, or status - it’s about ideas that cut through.

The most powerful creators aren’t just painters, filmmakers, or musicians - it’s also **the ones who resonate the deepest and move the fastest** in culture. Absurdity, irony and knowingness define this shift. People crave ideas with edge - bold, self-aware, and subversive enough to disrupt, yet meaningful enough to endure.

Key Trends

- **The collapse of artistic hierarchy.** The lines between professional artists and digital creators are blurring, with 41% of Gen Zs believing social media influencers create new trends and shape culture. [1]
- **Audiences value ideas over execution,** fuelling the rise of lo-fi, high-impact storytelling. Visually unpolished videos receive 40% more views and 30% more engagement than hi-fi videos. [2]
- Brain-rot aesthetics and surreal storytelling. Irony, randomness, and **deeply self-aware humour dominates digital creativity.** Searches for "absurdist humour" spiked in 2025. [3]

Prediction

The most influential cultural figures will not be defined by their discipline but by **the strength and spread of their ideas.**

Leadership Mindset

Recognise that **cultural power now belongs to those who create ideas that travel, provoke, and endure** - regardless of status, format, or medium.

*Art is no longer about medium
– it’s about resonance.*

Humour for Endurance

In uncertain times, humour isn't just entertainment - it's a social and cultural imperative.

From ironic self-deprecation to deep satire, **humour has long played a role in counteracting cultural chaos**. Jokes aren't just jokes; they're vehicles for social critique, emotional release, and collective resilience. From absurdist memes to comedy as activism, laughter is an essential tool for making sense of the world in 2025.

Key Trends

- **Self-deprecation as social currency.** Vulnerability and self-mockery are now signs of authenticity. Gen Z report using self-deprecating memes to normalise their struggles. [1]
- **Satire and humour can serve as entry points for complex conversations.** 84% of TikTok users in 2024 discovered news about current events via entertaining or funny posts. [2]
- Audiences now crave **humour that mixes irony with genuine emotion**. "Humour has universal appeal... this affords [it] a social function with the power to transgress social boundaries and engage mass audiences." – Dr Benjamin Nickl. [3]

Prediction

Humour will become an essential tool for endurance, helping people navigate uncertainty while shaping everything from politics to brand communications.

Leadership Mindset

Use humor as an entry point for deeper conversations, transforming satire and irony into cultural touchpoints that resonate.

Humour as a cultural survival tool.

Balancing Reality & Digital Escape

People are stuck between wanting to stay informed and needing to disconnect, in order to stay mentally balanced and durable.

Digital exhaustion is real, yet so is the urge to stay plugged into the chaos. Instead of full digital detoxes, people are **curating their own on-and-off cycles, choosing when to engage deeply and when to escape into absurdist entertainment**. Culture in 2025 is about balancing reality overload with intentional detachment.

Key Trends:

- **People joke about disconnecting while still consuming endlessly.** 36% of teenagers in the US say they spend too much time online, but 64% say it would be “hard” to give up. [1]
- Entertainment as knowledge delivery. Neuroscientists have found that **news clips involving humour activate more brain regions** than non-humorous clips. [2]
- AI-driven nostalgia, retro interfaces, and "liminal spaces" offer **comfort amid chaos**. Searches for “AI nostalgia” are up 231% over the past 12 months. [3]

Prediction

Content that merges education with intelligent humour and play will be the most effective tool for engaging the public in social and political issues.

Leadership Mindset

Find ways to deliver information in engaging, emotionally aware formats, making knowledge accessible without overwhelming audiences.

*Tuning in, tuning out
– and knowing when to switch.*

Pulse 4 Live Coolnomics® Case Studies

Live examples of Coolnomics® in action across the Australian business, government and culture landscape.



Slather Sunscreen’s Absurdist World-Building

Business x Coolnomics®

Slather Sunscreen encapsulates both **ideas with edge** and humour for endurance. The Australian SPF’s branding centres around **bold absurdity, blending chaotic, nostalgia, and irreverent humour.**

With campaigns featuring people’s skin being lasered off by a cartoon-ish Sun, humorous reviews, and taglines like “the Sun is not your friend”, the product turns a staple product like sunscreen into something **edgy and irreverant.**

The early success and virality of the brand shows that with **intentional, attitude-heavy design** and plenty of cultural in-jokes, brands can make even the most practical products feel **rebellious rather than routine.**



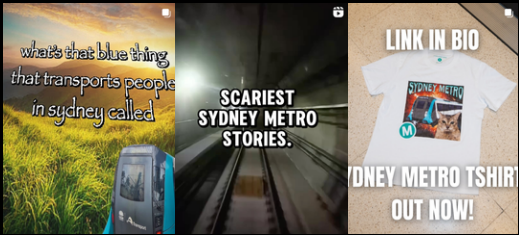
Putricia the Corpse Flower: A Viral Sensory Spectacle

Government x Coolnomics®

The Botanic Gardens of Sydney turned the rare **blooming of ‘Putricia’ the corpse flower into a viral cultural moment**, using humour, live-streaming, and social media buzz to engage the public.

Known for its overpowering stench and short-lived bloom, Putricia became an unlikely internet star, drawing thousands of visitors to the Botanic Gardens and igniting **conversations about biodiversity, conservation, and the absurd beauty of nature.**

This reflects **the power of memetic storytelling** in public engagement, proving that humour, spectacle, and digital media can **transform scientific phenomena into cultural events.**



@ilovesydneymetro An Ironic Civic Fandom

Culture x Coolnomics®

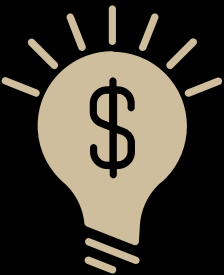
Unofficial Instagram account @ilovesydneymetro has turned Sydney’s driverless train system into an absurdist cultural obsession, with more than 50,000 followers. The account uses **memes, surreal humour, and ironic civic pride to build an unexpected fan movement** – and has even launched a sold-out merch line.

Through dramatic tributes to platform screen doors and love for pristine station floors, the account **transforms mundane commutes into moments of joy, resilience,** and meme-worthy devotion.

This reflects the power of humour in public engagement, proving that even infrastructure can inspire fandom.

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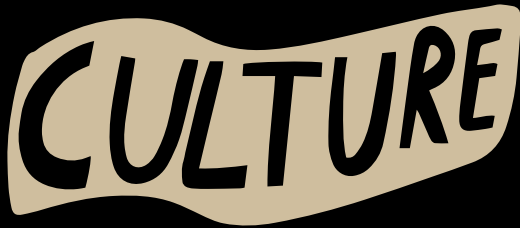
For Businesses

- Create interactive, playful brand experiences that **embrace humour, irony, and digital absurdity**
- Develop experimental content formats, **blending entertainment, education, and self-awareness**
- **Balance short-term virality with long-term cultural depth** to build lasting brand relevance



For Governments & Policymakers

- **Use humour and storytelling to engage the public** in policy conversations
- Recognise the role of digital absurdity in **political and cultural discourse**
- Invest in cultural infrastructure that supports **experimental and emerging art forms**



For Creators & Culture Makers

- **Explore new creative formats** that break traditional storytelling structures
- **Use ironic sincerity as a bridge** between humour and meaningful narratives
- **Capture the cultural paradox** of information overload and escapism in artistic expression

Wouldn't it be Cool if?

Provocations and conversation starters for business, culture and public sector leaders.

Information was as engaging as **entertainment**.

Art could exist beyond definition - **fluid, interactive, and weirdly compelling**.

The absurd wasn't just a distraction, but **a tool for making sense of the world**.



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Credits



Robyn Wilson
Founding Researcher & Author

Founder of Coolnomics® and the lead researcher behind the Coolnomics® Resonance Report 2025, decoding how culture drives economies.

Following 20 years in the field working across culture, business and the public sector, this framework maps shifts in intelligence, values, and consumer behaviour, shaping strategy and supporting growth.

As CEO of Superora® Strategy Studio, Robyn turned cultural insight into commercial impact. With an MBA and a background spanning tech, tourism, and the arts, she has advised SXSW Sydney and worked with Google, Disney, Ministry of Sound, NSW Government and Optus.



Fiona MacDonald
Editorial & Research Advisor

An award-winning journalist and co-founder of popular science news site ScienceAlert. Fiona has spent her career writing about science, wellness, and culture for some of the world's leading publications, including: Vogue Australia, Harper's Bazaar, Marie Claire, Popular Science, GQ, and the Sydney Morning Herald.

She spent 7 years as the CEO of ScienceAlert, growing its global audience to 30 million readers monthly, and now serves on its board of directors.

Fiona graduated with a Bachelor of Science with first-class honors from the University of Melbourne and holds a Graduate Diploma of Journalism at Deakin University.

Acknowledgements Researchers, Reviewers & Supporters

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Research Methodology

The Coolnomics® Resonance Report 2025 maps the cultural and economic shifts shaping Australia by analysing what resonates - some of the ideas, values, and behaviours that endure and transform industries, policies, and society.

Our research methodology is built on three key pillars:

Cultural Signal Tracking

- We track shifts in cultural and social values that influence business, policy, and consumer behaviour
- This involves analysing emerging movements, public sentiment, and how cultural narratives evolve

Resonance Mapping

- Not all trends shape the future - some fade while others redefine industries
- We look at real world case studies through a Coolnomics® lens to identify which ideas, products and experiences have lasting impact - and why

Strategic Insights & Application

- Our research translates cultural shifts into actionable insights for leaders in business, government, and the cultural sector
- We provide tools and strategy to help leaders navigate economic and social change

Coolnomics® Services

Strategic intelligence for business, government & culture.

Reports & Intelligence

Our research dives deep into the forces shaping economic and cultural trends.

Through data-driven resonance mapping, we identify the ideas, movements, and behaviours that are shaping markets, industries, and policies.

Get in-depth insights on:

- Consumer behaviour & cultural economics
- Market shifts driven by values & identity
- Emerging opportunities across business, government, and creative industries

Research Projects

We conduct bespoke research for organisations looking to understand how culture shapes their industry.

Whether you're a brand, policymaker, or creative leader, we translate complex cultural signals into actionable intelligence.

Our research helps you:

- Identify and track emerging cultural forces
- Align business strategy with cultural resonance
- Navigate economic transformation with confidence

Workshops & Strategy

We turn insights into action. Our workshops and strategy sessions equip teams with the tools to apply Coolnomics® principles in real time.

These sessions are designed to spark innovation, align teams with cultural momentum, and future-proof decision-making.

We work with you to:

- Develop strategies that tap into cultural and economic shifts
- Design brands, products, and policies that resonate
- Build business and government models that thrive in a changing world

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