

## Newkind Writing Competition Entry by Claire Ogden

We will always find it hard to find happiness if we don't learn how recognise real value. This a great learning from Newkind that has helped me to see how rich I am and how much richness I can contribute to the community. Erin Young gave an excellent workshop at Newkind where she talked about the eight forms of capital. It is no wonder our society is languishing when we have focused on just two, financial and material capital, while leaving the other six to languish. How poor we have become in the modern world. The good news is that Newkind offered a healthy filling out of these other forms of capital.

1. **Social capital.** Of course, no money could buy the social inclusion and connectedness of the festival. The networks and solidarity that formed during the week and will continue to strengthen over time, are totally invaluable and are helping to heal our world.

2. **Cultural capital.** We all have the opportunity and the responsibility to change culture every single day. These are the lessons I took from Kate Nelson, who is leading the charge to break free from plastic; from Jason Rahilly, who is finding business opportunities and partnerships that make the world a better place; from Jenny Weber, who has dedicated years to environmental protection. Ruth Langford, Zac Romagnoli-Townsend, Delta Kay, Gerad Williams and Linton Burgess also graciously shared themselves and their insights. They all show us how Indigenous knowledge is sacred and their leadership is inspiring. All the Newkind leaders are part of an exciting cultural renaissance that can heal people and planet.

3. **Experiential capital.** Newkind presenters brought such depth and breadth of experience to the participants. Some stand-out examples for me were the inspiring journey of Tanith Roberts in her session 'Sobriety and Substance Free Living' and also the wealth of lived-experience shared by Dani Wolff-Chambers in her workshop 'Building Community'. The experience of being at Newkind enriched me beyond measure and I'll take that forward to my work in the world.

4. **Spiritual capital.** When all is said and done, what else is important? We have a short time on this big, blue planet and our spirit will live on when our favourite possessions are falling apart. I was heartened by the speakers who recognised that the real work starts with us. Aiden Rickets offered beautiful insight into the healing journey we all can take to become powerful leaders who love ourselves and work from that place of love.

5. **Natural capital.** I couldn't imagine a more perfect natural location for Newkind. Ruth Langford said in the Newkind opening ceremony, 'This country will love you right up' and it did. The environment is so much a part of us that we cannot exist without it. There is a lot of grief for what has been lost but all we need to do is give nature some space and it will recover. I felt inspired to be surrounded by many people at Newkind who feel this at a deep level and are working for the healing of the planet.

6. **Intellectual capital.** During the festival, I squeezed so much wisdom, creativity and ideas into my brain. Newkind opened my world view and equipped me with the power to get out there and change the world. As the expression goes, 'Knowledge is power'.

I will continue to go to marches, sign petitions and stand in solidarity with others for social justice and a healthy planet. But I also am excited to be part of the re-imagining. What fun to contribute to a truly creative, ecological, decentralised, distributed and democratic world. The future is not set. We all create it every day. There are new kinds of leaders who understand that the time for 'power with' is here while 'power over' is dying out.

There will be many experiments if we are brave enough to back ourselves and think outside the square. Some of these experiments will morph. Some will become stepping stones. There will be challenges and learning, of course. Yet, some of these experiments might just change the world for the better. This is one of the most empowering messages that I learned from Newkind.

My next creative experiment will be to build community. The only real secure investment is in community. With climate change looming large, we could try to cut ourselves off from the world, buy up farmland, build fences and point the guns outward. But I don't want to live in fear. It's an impoverished existence. My next steps will be to create a beautiful habitat for humans, animals and the environment through my work with Eco Villages Australia. I am currently learning a lot. Most importantly, I am learning that I don't need to have all the answers. That is the whole point of community. We all have wonderful skills, resources, energy and ideas to offer, and we can 'co-liberate' when we collaborate.

It is well understood that localism is key to thriving communities and Helena Norburg-Hodge articulated this so beautifully. We can keep the skills, resources and creativity circulating locally rather than being funnelled up to 'the one percent', which has been the reality of our extractivist, capitalist economy thus far.

When people are doing work that makes their heart sing, the world is richer for it. As a result of Newkind, I now feel more empowered and inspired to direct my energy to that singing, that shining, to expressing my unique gifts in the best way I know how. This is how I will increase the 'Gross Domestic Happiness' of my local community. We are all rich when we recognise the forms of value that every one of us can develop for a brighter future.