

By Rob Upson

A Prediction from 1967

Late last year, while cleaning out a forgotten cupboard (in a house not my own), I came across a magazine published by Australian Consolidated Press Ltd. It was called *Australian Home Journal* and was dated September 1967 and priced at 25 cents. Not only was it quite interesting browsing through a publication from 33 years ago, but also one particular article caught my attention. It was titled **How We'll Live in the Year 2000** by a journalist named Diana Wynn.

Now that we have reached that year, just what were these predictions made all that time ago and how accurate were they? Well, the synopsis paragraph at the beginning of the article, perhaps gives us a clue. It reads

***We will have a world of almost no housework,
spotless cleanliness, more compact living
and limitless leisure.***

It then goes on to describe what our lifestyle would be like in the year 2000.

The world population will have reached 6,000 million, with 90% living in cities and more people living in high density housing near the centre of each city. (*This was a fairly accurate prediction.*) The conventional home as we know it, will be replaced by interlocking, prefabricated units, mass-produced and put together to suit one's own design and pocket. Housework will be virtually eliminated. (*Got that one wrong.*) Homes will be cleaned by electrostatic charges that will absorb every speck of dust. (*Enough to make your hair stand on end.*) All waste will be absorbed in a system like a sewerage outlet that will take it to a centre to be sorted and recycled. (*Partly right.*)

Food will be ready prepared and packed in edible wrapping. (*Again partly right, some pre-prepared food already tastes like cardboard.*) If you want to cook, use a microwave oven. (*See footnote.*) If you're too lazy, select a menu card, put it in a kitchen programmer and wait for the automatic chef to put the food on the table. (*Most of us have got one of these; it's called a Spouse or Mum.*)

Washing up will be a forgotten memory. (*Dream on.*) Plates will be disposable and come from a machine that moulds them out of plastic and then recycles them after use. Intelligent robots will do the household chores, including child minding, and be able to climb stairs, open doors and put themselves away in a cupboard when they have finished work.

With ever higher density housing in the cities, gardens will become a luxury and very small. (*If you live in a high-rise building you get no garden at all.*) Finally, public transport is predicted to take the form of underground rockets, trains riding on cushions of air, pneumatic tubes or monorails. (*At least high-speed monorails are a reality in some countries.*)

Well there you have it, yesterday's predictions of today. Not all that accurate but getting close to it. After all, George Orwell's prediction of *Big Brother* in his novel **1984** (which he wrote in 1949) was a few years premature. Today, *Big Brother* takes the form of huge computerised data banks, where your every move can be monitored through credit card and bank transactions as well as taxation records. Even perhaps your health records. The GST system and Business Numbers are going to make him even bigger!!! You can't escape.

Footnote : The microwave oven was originally patented by the American research scientist Dr. Percy Spencer in 1946. The first commercial, but primitive, microwave oven was used in a Boston restaurant in 1947. It stood nearly 2 metres high, weighed about 350 kg and the magnetron had to be water cooled, so plumbing was required. The first domestic tabletop oven was marketed in the USA in 1967. Who can remember when they appeared in Australia?