AUSTRALIA'S PROGRESS
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

measuring the future we want

VicHealth

ACOLA
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED ACADEMIES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Australian National Development Index Limited (ANDI)

Australian Conservation Foundation

Australian Council of Social Service

Foundation for Young Australians

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What we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted. Choices between promoting GDP and protecting the environment may be false choices, once environmental degradation is appropriately included in our measurement of economic performance … The time is ripe for our measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being. And measures of well-being should be put in a context of sustainability.

Stiglitz, J., A. Sen and J-P. Fitoussi. 2009

… an African proverb says tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today. With key national indicator systems, nations everywhere now have a powerful tool to provide their people with a better future … (They) can help countries prioritise resource allocations,improve government performance, promote accountability and enhance citizens' engagement. In my view, it's an opportunity that no government can afford to miss …

Dave Walker, US Comptroller General, Government Accountability Office, 2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FIVE YEARS AGO THE OECD ISSUED A REPORT NOTING THE EMERGENCE OF A 'NEW GLOBAL MOVEMENT'. OVER THE PAST DECADE, IT SAID, THERE HAS BEEN 'AN EXPLOSION OF INTEREST' AROUND THE WORLD IN PRODUCING NEW MEASURES OF SOCIETAL PROGRESS THAT GO 'BEYOND GDP'. THESE INITIATIVES WERE BEING DEVELOPED IN RICH AND POOR COUNTRIES, FROM BRITAIN TO BHUTAN; AND BY GOVERNMENTS, CIVIL SOCIETY, ACADEMICS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THEY ALL SHARED ONE AIM: TO FIND A BETTER WAY TO MEASURE THE PROGRESS OF THEIR SOCIETIES AND THE WELLBEING OF THEIR CITIZENS, ONE WHICH TOOK MORE ACCOUNT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITIES, AND OF EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY – THE THINGS THAT MATTERED TO PEOPLE[1].

Today the issue of redefining progress beyond GDP and developing new progress measures with citizen engagement is an established global concern. It's an issue with which Australia has been closely engaged for nearly two decades, and in which we have shown some leadership; and it will have crucial implications for Australian society, democracy and public policy.

An important recent study by the Canadian government's Foresight Unit[2] attempted to map some of the impacts that will come as 'our measurement system (shifts) emphasis

We are facing both an opportunity and a duty to rethink what progress really means and to build stronger and more inclusive visions for the future of our societies. Citizens are looking for new ways to improve their lives. We need committed citizens, scientists and well-informed leaders ready to engage the whole of society in an assessment of the challenges ahead. Adequate measurements are essential in helping our societies to define their goals; ensure that we design the right policies to achieve them; and tell us whether those policies are working.

Angel Gurria, Secretary General, OECD 2009

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1 OECD, 2008, *Measuring the Progress of Society*. OECD, Statistics Directorate, Paris.
2 Policy Horizons Canada, 2011, *Redefining Progress: The Wellbeing Objective*, Ottawa.

from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being …. in a context of sustainability.' Certainly, it said, it will change the way we think about and measure the future progress of our nation and communities; but it will also influence the actual progress of nations and the outcomes and life chances for citizens. It will impact on government administration and the nature of public debate, and it may force some reappraisal of our aspirations; but in the process it will present distinct opportunities for better governance and policymaking and a stronger, more engaged democracy, through the shaping of a set of agreed and measurable national goals and strategies for a clearer and 'more inclusive vision for the future of our (societies)'.

Re-defining Australia's progress also offers an important opportunity – and a duty – for the academic and scientific community: to work with policymakers, stakeholders and the broader citizenry, to shape these strategies and shared visions. In fact, this opportunity is being embraced in many countries and projects throughout the world: the university and research sector has made a very significant contribution to the global progress measurement movement, as is described below.

The case for universities to be engaged in this issue rests on at least two foundations. It may be argued that universities as a sector should generally participate in debating and resolving critical questions about the nation's progress and future development. It is also the case that there are important interdisciplinary research issues – scientific, philosophical, statistical and technical – which must be fully explored to underpin the policy and democratic development of new national progress measures, and to answer large questions such as: What is societal progress? How should this be determined, and by whom? How should we best measure our progress?

Australia's Progress in the 21st Century (AP21C) is a project which attempts to address these research questions systematically and inclusively, and in the context of community engagement and policy. It reflects a sustained development process of more than two years.

ACOLA became directly interested in these issues in 2011. In that year, responding to a proposal from Professor Fiona Stanley, an ACOLA planning committee began to explore the possibility of a major 2-3 year national project, designed to address the research issues inherent in these questions. The project which emerged from this process, after extensive consultation across the four Academies, and with key stakeholder organisations already working in this field (the Australian Bureau of Statistics, VicHealth and the Australian National Development Index or ANDI) was AP21C.

AP21C has three main aims:

- to create a sound, cross-disciplinary scientific foundation for understanding, defining, promoting, planning and measuring societal progress in Australia in the 21st Century and the key issues, resources, barriers and aspirations likely to determine it;

- to develop basic tools and information that will support policy choices by Government and the community, including an index of national progress; to promote more informed, and engaged public policy debate; and to contribute to more equitable and sustainable wellbeing for Australians in the 21st century;

- to build a strong and effective national research network that enables Australia to participate in, and benefit from, the growing global and national research effort to redefine and remeasure societal progress.

The full AP21C project will be a key intersection of Australian research, public policy and democracy. It will be complex, evidence-based, interdisciplinary, community engaged and policy oriented. It will be integrated into international activities and optimise current international as well as Australian knowledge. It will help to build a

long-term national policy agenda as well as developing critical policy tools, particularly an index of national progress and well-being. It will promote widespread community engagement and improve public awareness and debate on vital national questions about the progress, wellbeing and future development of the Australian nation and of its people, society, economy, environment and governance. It is a project which will thoroughly challenge the capacity and resources of the Australian research and scientific community.

Such a project must necessarily range across many contemporary issues facing researchers and policy makers: climate change, energy, pollution, urbanization, public health, demographics, population, ageing, justice and social cohesion. This will require collaboration and expert input over a wide range of academic disciplines, involving all four Learned Academies and key researchers from many universities, as well as other community and government partners.

In April 2012, ACOLA Council agreed to support a comprehensive pilot study to scope out the major project and provided $50,000 for this purpose, with a further $50,000 provided by one of ACOLA's two key project partners, VicHealth. The other key partner is the Australian National Development Index (ANDI).

The pilot project's aims were to: examine the key evidence; identify national research strengths in this field; review international and Australian best practice; evaluate the critical policy and research issues (including key domains for progress, the operation of progress indexes and the opportunities and benefits for policy-making and planning); examine and recommend processes for national community and citizen engagement; identify possible partners and funding for the major project ; and generally report on the feasibility of the larger project.

The present report describes how this pilot project was developed, funded and carried out. It sets out the key findings from the project and a number of small studies which it commissioned. Finally, it provides details of how the full project might be planned and funded, and identifies a number of likely partners and supporters.

The AP21C Project Working Group believe that this twelve month pilot project has demonstrated a strong case for the importance and the feasibility of a larger 2-3 year project. It has engaged many different participants from a wide array of disciplines, highly competent researchers in their own right; carried out a thorough examination of the issues and the evidence; set out a clear pathway and a detailed design for the development and planning of a full-scale project, and identified a coordinating University for this task; and demonstrated that the project has good prospects of being funded from a range of different sources.

The PWG believes that the creation of a national progress index for Australia could become one of the most significant collaborative undertakings of Australia's science and research sector in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The OECD currently references more than seventy such projects underway around the world. Since the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission legitimized the concept of social progress within global economics, the Australian Treasury has increasingly expanded its own measures of success beyond GDP. The United Nations Development Program now uses six indicators of human development, of which only one is purely economic. In parallel, the recent work of the Australian Bureau of Statistics has focused on the identification of a number of parameters other than the purely economic. The unique strength of the Australian National Development Index project is that it is based on community participation. The result will be an index that is bottom-up, reflecting not just what technical characteristics might describe as a broad definition of 'progress' in Australia, but also how Australians themselves engage with and respond to that.

The Project Working Group recommends the adoption of this report by ACOLA Council and VicHealth.

Human advance is
conditioned by our
conception of progress... It is
time to end the mismeasure
of human progress by
economic growth alone.
The paradigm shift in favour
of sustainable human
development is still in the
making. But more and more
policy makers in many
countries are reaching the
unavoidable conclusion
that, to be valuable and
legitimate, development
progress – both nationally
and internationally –
must be people centred,
equitably distributed,
and environmentally and
socially sustainable.

UNDP, 1996, Human
Development Report

3

RE-DEFINING PROGRESS:
GLOBAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

AS WE MOVE FURTHER INTO THE 21ST CENTURY IN AN INCREASINGLY GLOBALISED WORLD, MANY ESTABLISHED ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SOCIAL PROGRESS ARE FRACTURING. AUSTRALIA FACES SOME MAJOR CHALLENGES AND MUST ASK ITSELF SOME FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS.

What kind of society is Australia likely to become in the 21st century? And what kind of society do we want it to be? What are the aspirations and values of Australia's citizens, and do we have a shared vision for our nation's future? Do we have the collective capacity – the knowledge and skills, and the will – to achieve that vision, or will our future be determined for us by external interests and pressures? What does the best research and science tell us about the possibilities and the options for us, the critical challenges and barriers, and the choices we must make, like it or not, for optimal societal progress in Australia in the 21st century? What goals should we set, and what policies and strategies are most likely to achieve them? How should we best measure our progress towards them? And how can we best engage 'committed citizens, scientists and well-informed leaders' to work together to address these challenges and do so in ways that might revitalise our democracy and reverse the trend of declining political trust and participation?

The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths to the future are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.

John Schaar, US Futurist, and Professor Emeritus of Political Philosophy

WHAT IS TRUE PROGRESS FOR SOCIETIES?

The question of what constitutes societal progress or 'the good society' has been a strongly contested topic of philosophical and religious debate in most societies since at least the time of Aristotle; but it is also an acutely practical question for policymakers, in both western and eastern societies. In the earliest formulations of both Aristotle and Buddha, and for many centuries after, true societal progress was seen as a kind of balance of various elements, more than mere material wellbeing, and necessarily including ethical and moral qualities, and ideas about the collective good and the health of societal institutions alongside more basic notions of individual and material progress such as health, wealth and power; but it was not seen as an inevitable destiny.

In more recent times, and despite the growth in universal political, social and economic rights, the dominant notion of progress has been one which reflects the idea that continuous increase in economic production is the key to social progress and the 'master goal' of public policy. This model of social progress is most notably embodied in the GDP, by far the most influential statistical measure of national progress globally in the past half-century, despite the fact that its architect, Simon Kuznets, argued at the time that it was not intended as a measure of social progress.

How we answer the question of whether or not life is getting better depends crucially on how we define and measure 'a better life'. Definitions and measurements of progress exercise immense influence on public policy, private practice and personal choice. Indicators of progress are the subject of growing international debate. At one level, the debate is about the adequacy of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the dominant measure of a nation's performance, relative to both past and other nations. However, the debate also reaches far beyond this question to challenge conventional thinking about progress and the relationships between economic growth, quality of life and ecological sustainability. This debate could alter radically our perceptions of progress, what it means, and how we measure it.

Eckersley 1998, 'Measuring Progress: Is life getting better?', p. vii

Measures are important. 'What we measure affects what we do'.[3] More than this, the measures we use also reflect our priorities and values, and influence how we understand and explain the world. The official measures of a society's progress, however defined and by whom, inevitably exert a major impact on the policies of the society and the well-being of its people. In complex modern societies, increasingly reliant on statistical measures, those statistics can be extraordinarily influential. They become 'the structural DNA codes of nations (which) reflect a society's values and goals and become the key drivers of economic and technological choices'.[4] For this reason alone, the selection of the definitions and statistical measures of a society's progress is also a critical democratic issue, not just a technical one, because it necessarily begs the questions 'Progress of what kind? And for whom? And in whose view?'.

Citizens rightly consider that the main purpose of political action is to improve present and future well-being. Increased production of goods and services, as measured by the GDP growth rate, is only an intermediate target. Economic growth may well be necessary, but it is not sufficient for society's progress.

European Statistical Commission, 2012, 'Final Report of Sponsorship Group on Measuring Progress, Wellbeing and Sustainable Development', p. 10

A GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO REDEFINE PROGRESS

In the past thirty years, a growing global movement has developed which is seriously questioning the dominance of GDP as the most influential global measure of national progress. More recently, it is beginning to challenge the model of progress which stands behind the GDP.

The critiques and drivers of this movement have gradually drawn together from many diverse sources including: the United Nations Development Programme and the

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3 Stiglitz, J., Sen., A. and Fitoussi, J-P. (2009). *Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, Final Report*, Paris.

4 Hazel Henderson, US economist and futurist.

Human Development Index; the Kingdom of Bhutan and its Gross National Happiness program; the environmental movement; the women's movement; the community planning movement; Canada's pioneering community-research project, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing; organisational management concepts such of the 'Triple Bottom and 'Corporate Social Responsibility'; happiness research in psychology; and quality of life studies.[5]

For many years these various projects worked apart, despite often having a shared concern about the inadequacies of GDP. However over the last decade, the most significant catalyst and unifying force for this global movement has been the OECD's Global Project '*Measuring the Progress of Societies*' (MPS), a project consciously designed to create a global platform to bring together these different strands to forge a new model for measuring societal progress that goes 'beyond GDP' and promotes a global debate about the meaning of progress, and not just its measurement. These goals are now reflected in the Istanbul Declaration, agreed at the OECD Global Forum in 2007.[6]

Since 2004, there has been considerable activity at the global level. The OECD has highlighted 'the growing gap that exists between the image conveyed by official macro-economic statistics such as GDP, and the perceptions of ordinary people about their own socioeconomic conditions'.[7] It has made major progress in addressing these perceived asymmetries, including at four OECD World Forums (in 2004, 2007, 2009 and 2012), the last, in Delhi, attracting 1200 participants. Further impetus to this process has come from the international Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (2009) (the 'Stiglitz Commission') and the Pittsburgh Summit of the G20 in 2009. The G20 Summit called for work on measurement methods that "better take into account the social and environmental dimensions of economic development".[8] In April 2012, the UN General Assembly held a special workshop to consider how to better incorporate happiness and wellbeing in development programs, and a possible new system of 'Sustainable Development Goals'. National initiatives to develop new social progress measures are now in place in countries that include Germany, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Slovenia, Spain, UK and USA, while community, local and regional initiatives now number in the thousands.[9]

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5 It is true, as the OECD (2008) states, that this movement has 'exploded' over the past decade or so; but it is possible to trace the steady and incremental growth of the movement for at least half a century, if we note the key drivers and milestones along the way: see Appendix B-1.

6 See Appendix B-2.

7 OECD, *Global Project Update 2011*, www.oecd.org

8 G20 Summit Communiqué, 2009.

9 Details of these projects can be found on the OECD website: www.wikiprogress.org or the ABS website: www.abs.gov.au (Measuring Progress), and see Appendix B-4 for a summary of main international projects.

KEY LESSONS OF THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT

In the development of this global movement, what began as a statistical problem has been gradually transformed into a set of more fundamental questions about the nature of progress in the 21st century; and in recent years, these questions have become more urgent as a result of world-wide problems such as climate change and the global financial crisis.

After nearly a decade of intensive activity on a global scale and at many different levels of community and society, it is now possible to identify some key lessons and agreements from this global movement (Box 1), spelt out in numerous reports, conference declarations and research papers.[10]

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRALIA

What we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted. Choices between promoting GDP and protecting the environment may be false choices, once environmental degradation is appropriately included in our measurement of economic performance.

Stiglitz, J et al. 2009. Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, Final Report, Paris

The availability of statistical indicators of economic, social and environmental outcomes and their dissemination to citizens can contribute to promoting good governance and the improvement of democratic processes. It can strengthen citizens' capacity to influence the goals of the societies they live in through debate and consensus building, and increase the accountability of public policies.

Istanbul Declaration, Measuring the Progress of Societies, World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, Istanbul, 30 June 2007

These wide-ranging developments in global policy and research are relevant for Australia in at least two ways. First, we now have in this country quite a long tradition, and a wide

BOX 1: SIX KEY LESSONS OF THE GLOBAL PROGRESS MOVEMENT

- The GDP may be a good measure of the nature and volume of a nation's economic production, but it is a poor measure of its overall progress and well-being.

- Societies need to develop better and more integrated (or 'holistic') measures of their progress which take account of four interdependent domains of broad societal progress: economy, society, environment and governance.

- Better measures of progress must also take into account qualitative and not just quantitative dimensions of progress, including subjective well-being, community belonging, relationships, life satisfaction and happiness.

- Essentially the problem we are facing may not primarily be that we use the *wrong measures* but that we have the *wrong model* of societal progress. 'Increasing equitable and sustainable well-being' may be a better definition of true progress than 'increasing economic production'.

- Developing a new model and new measures is as much a democratic as it is a technical or policy task; it requires the engagement of citizens, working with scientists and policy-makers.

- Societies need to give urgent consideration to the implications of these new progress measures and how they can be best put into practical application, use and understanding. This may involve some significant changes to current practices, but over time, it is likely to bring many benefits in government planning, policy making and transparency, and provide a better guide to long term development than current measures and decision-making cycles.

spread, of innovative work on measuring progress and well-being at different levels of government and society, and a strong academic and research base for such work. Secondly, we are confronted with many of the same kinds of problems and challenges in defining, measuring and planning our future societal progress as many other OECD countries, although in our case perhaps with slightly more opportunities.

Nearly 20 years ago, the Australian Senate instituted an inquiry into a new system of measuring national progress.[11] Four

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10 See for a review of these projects: Matthews 2006, Kroll 2011, Salvaris 2013.

11 Senate, Legal and Constitutional Committee, Inquiry into National Indicators of Citizenship and Wellbeing, 1993-1996.

years later, the first truly national and cross disciplinary conference on *Measuring Progress* was convened in Canberra. In 1999, and partly as a result of that conference, the ABS under newly-appointed Australian Statistician Dennis Trewin began to develop its pioneering *Measures of Australia's Progress* (MAP), becoming perhaps the first national statistical organisation in the world to develop a framework which acknowledged the limitations of GDP as a measure of societal progress, and combined economic, social, environmental and democratic dimensions of progress. MAP itself became one of the primary influences on the OECD's subsequent (2004) launch of its global project *Measuring the progress of societies*. Innovative state projects such as *Tasmania Together* (launched in 2000) combined integrated progress measures with community engagement. An internationally recognised statewide system of local community well-being measures has been developed in Victoria (*Community Indicators Victoria*), and a similar system is underway in Queensland (*Community Indicators Queensland*): both draw on many earlier initiatives in local community planning.

All of this work has been underpinned, and in some cases driven, by a strong research input. Australian scholars and researchers have played a significant part in the ABS work, the CIV and CIQ developments, and the OECD/UNDP work, including the initiation of the OECD Global Progress Research Network (GPRNet). An informal national research network, supported by VicHealth, was formed five years ago to drive a national progress measurement agenda and it was this group which submitted a proposal for a national development index to the Australia 2020 Summit in 2008. The proposal was supported by the summit as a national priority initiative, and later endorsed by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, which noted the need 'to go to the community in discussion about what is important to Australia's progress and development'. The summit proposal became the basis of the present ANDI project (see below).

Australia is also the only country in the world to have a development index for children: the Australian Early Development Index. First completed nationwide in 2009, the AEDI is a joint venture between federal and state governments and child research centres. Information was collected on 261,147 Australian children (97.5 per cent of the estimated five-year-old population) in their first year of full-time school. The Australian Government has committed to collect AEDI data every three years, and in 2012, AEDI was rolled out nationally for the second time. The results provide a national snapshot of how Australia's children are developing.[12] A related project is the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth's 'ARACY Report Card', which provides a summary of the wellbeing of Australia's young people including international comparisons and a baseline for future monitoring. ARACY is a national non-profit organisation of more than 2500 organisational and individual members, committed to better futures for Australia's children and young people; with other community partners, ARACY is currently engaged in a nation-wide consultation with children, young people and parents to develop a National Plan for Children and Young People ('The Nest').[13]

More recently, the ABS has begun developing a new version of its suite of national progress measures, known as MAP 2.0. The broad directions were set out in a 2010 publication ('Future Directions in Measuring Progress'[14]) and last year the ABS completed a national consultation to begin the process of identifying the key community aspirations for progress which will form the basis of its new progress measures.[15] The ABS has signalled that it wants to work more closely in the next phase of MAP's development with both the community and research sectors.

12 Details of the AEDI are available at: www.rch.org.au/aedi
13 www.thenestproject.org.au
14 This can be downloaded at: www.ausstats.abs.gov.au
15 ABS, 2012, 'Aspirations for Our Nation: A conversation about progress', Canberra.

In 2012 the ANDI project became incorporated as a not-for-profit company, with Directors including Prof Fiona Stanley, Rev Tim Costello and Prof Mike Salvaris. ANDI partners include around 50 national organisational partners with over two million Australians as members or clients; and the ABS is a key adviser. The structure and goals of the ANDI project broadly follow the design of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. The CIW started in 1999 and is widely regarded as a world-leading model for national progress measurement based on community-research collaboration. Both the CIW and the OECD are also ANDI partners or associates. Like the CIW, ANDI aims to encourage "an ongoing national conversation about what kind of society we want to be" and to "develop clear, ongoing measures of our progress towards that vision". ANDI is planning two major tasks over the next 2-3 years: a large scale national community engagement program asking at least 500,000 citizens 'What matters for Australia's progress?'; and the establishment of a national research collaboration to identify key priorities, goals and progress, and develop a national progress index that reflects community priorities and expert research, both for overall progress and in each of twelve progress 'domains'.[16]

Australia is also an influential international player in the progress measurement field through its membership of the G20 (which committed in 2009 to develop new progress measures), and of the OECD (through the MPS project), and its executive membership of the UN Statistical Commission.

In summary, therefore, Australia has a wealth of national and international experience, in both practice and research, in the development of new measures of progress,

The explicit goal of the CIW is to influence the debate on [progress in Canada by providing the public and the media with information and thus, at the end of the day, to make politicians more aware of indicators beyond GDP.

Kroll, 2011; p. 12

sustainability and well-being to guide us in the 21st century. We are well placed to harness the benefits of global developments in this field for Australia, and to anticipate some of the negative effects of what may be a major and at times traumatic shift in our goals and aspirations for societal progress.

CHALLENGES FOR AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Australia may have some natural advantages compared to other OECD countries, but it shares many of the same social problems and challenges: the uneven impacts of the global economy, high levels of environmental degradation, declining public trust in government, growing health problems due to stress and overconsumption rather than shortage (especially among young Australians), a rapidly ageing population, social and racial fractures caused by increased inequalities in wealth and opportunity, increasing challenges in ensuring a skilled and educated citizenry and the equitable optimization of our human capital.

Like other OECD countries, Australia also suffers from the kind of distortions in policy and public debate identified by the Stiglitz Commission, which occur in the absence of widely understood and trusted measures of national progress. This problem is compounded, here as in other OECD countries, by a declining trust in government and public institutions.

We therefore have as much need as these other countries to ask ourselves the same kinds of questions about where we are going as a society in the 21st century, even if in some ways we have greater opportunities, as a result of geography, natural resources and basically stable institutions.

16 *What kind of Australia Do We Want? Establishing an Australian National Development Index*, Melbourne: Allen Consulting Group (2011). See more generally on the ANDI project's partners, goals etc: www.andi.org.au

POLICY AND DEMOCRATIC BENEFITS FOR AUSTRALIA

Considered only from a policy perspective, the benefits of developing a national progress measurement framework are substantial, especially when measures are regularly updated with reports on the main dimensions of progress. These benefits include: clearer policy and planning guidelines, more effective evaluation tools and a more sharply defined vision for Australia's progress, which should itself improve the quality of governance and public debate.[17]

However, one clear lesson from the international projects, noted above, is that progress measures do not merely guide public policy and debate: they directly influence the distribution of opportunities and life chances in the society. This means that their development is not purely a policy or research issue. It is also a democratic and normative issue, and citizens should be involved in it.

Genuine community engagement in developing new national progress measures is complex, but can bring strong democratic and civic dividends, as the Istanbul Declaration suggests. For Australia and a number of other countries, these dividends would come at a time when, according to

Democracy and the measurement of society's progress are connected in many important ways. In a democracy, it should be the responsibility of citizens to define progress for their society. Citizens have a democratic right to be fully informed of the state and progress of their society. Democratic progress is part of the meaning of social progress and should itself be measured. Healthy democracy improves progress and wellbeing in other areas. Progress measures and indicators are a tool for better and more accountable governance. And finally, engaging citizens in progress measurement strengthens their democratic capacity.

Salvaris 2007

Measuring progress with reliable information is a key ingredient of the democratic process. On the one hand, it makes governments more accountable and trustworthy, and on the other, it encourages people to participate more actively.

Gurria 2007

Indicators are powerful. They frame debates, steer planning, affect budgets and motivate action. In an increasingly complex world, the search for indicators must be a continuous one. More and more, the process of choosing our measures of progress must be a collaborative process, drawing on the creativity of the whole community … By convening citizens to consider how to measure their overall well-being, the community as a whole is spurred to create new visions of the future, develop new working relationships across all boundaries, and define its assets, problems and opportunities in new ways.

Redefining Progress 1998

For several decades progressive politics have been seriously weakened by the loss of any concept of a better society. People have argued for piecemeal improvements in different areas of life … But nowhere is there a popular movement capable of inspiring people with a vision of how to make society a substantially better place to live for the vast majority. Without that vision, politics will rarely provoke more than a yawn.

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett K., The Spirit Level, 2009

many observers, we are experiencing a 'democratic deficit'. Our democratic processes are weakening and need renewal: they are losing public trust, lacking innovation, unable to tackle long term issues[18]. Exploring the nature and potential of these democratic benefits should also be seen as a legitimate part of the research task. As the eminent Canadian commentator John Ralston Saul put it:

> New measures of progress should be part of a larger process of civic renewal. As corporatism has grown, citizens have gradually metamorphosed into customers. Somewhere along this path, and despite the increase in our material well-being, modern civilization has lost its reflective capacity, the ability to ask the Socratic question "What is the way we ought to live?". It is by asking this question, and by making specific claims for the standards of a decent society against the dominant corporate goals, that we can re-assert the lost legitimacy of a democracy of citizens.

> *Saul 1997*

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17 Hall and Rickards 2013.

18 A recent poll is indicative: 'A significant number of Australians remain ambivalent about the value of democracy … more than a quarter express the view that 'in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable' (26%, compared with 23% in 2012) … more than one in eight (13%) say that 'for someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have' … the number of young Australians who say they prefer democracy over any other kind of government is still less than half (48%) of Australians aged 18–29. (Lowy Institute, 'Australia and the World: Public opinion and foreign policy', 2013, p. 21).

BROAD DESIGN REQUIREMENTS NEEDED FOR THE PROJECT

To optimise the benefits of AP21C, therefore, will require careful design which incorporates the lessons and best practice resulting from what is now twenty years of national and global experience in progress measurement.

This experience confirms that while the quality and objectivity of research must be respected, the nature of such projects is inevitably a shared space. The design of the project will necessarily require a high degree of technical and research expertise, but must also be collaborative and citizen-engaged. It should aim to maximise the opportunities to strengthen democracy and the potential benefits for equitable and sustainable national development.

What is needed, therefore, is a major long term, applied, inter-disciplinary research project which will identify key problems and opportunities for Australian society in the 21st Century; support and promote a civic conversation around a new model or paradigm of progress; and help to define and develop measures and tools for this new model that reflect community and research inputs.

Understanding our nation's progress towards widely accepted goals is imperative in an age where most of us know far too little about the problems and opportunities we face. Supplying such information requires a trusted, non-partisan source, with scientifically credible and useful data.

Derek Bok, Professor Emeritus of Harvard University, 2007

WHY IS THIS A RESEARCH TASK?

The global movement to redefine progress has been driven by an extraordinary collaboration. Citizens, policymakers, academics and statisticians are working together globally and locally, championed by international organisations such as the OECD and the United Nations.

Innovative science and research, and the voice of the university community as a whole, have been central to the success of this collaborative movement. They have played a vital role in developing new measures of progress and new insights into progress and how citizens perceive and experience it; but they have also supported and promoted the wider debate about what progress is or should be in the 21st century world – a question which is quintessentially 'inter-disciplinary' and has been in the forefront of scientific, philosophical and democratic inquiry for over two millennia. Some key examples make this clear:

The members of the Commission represent a broad range of specialisations, from national accounting to the economics of climate change. The members have conducted research on social capital, happiness, and health and mental well-being. They share the belief that it is important to build bridges between different communities – between the producers and users of statistical information, whatever their discipline – that have become increasingly distant in recent years. Commission members see their expertise as a complement to reports on similar topics that were written from a different perspective, for instance by scientists on climate change or by psychologists on mental health.

Stiglitz Commission (CMEPSP) Report 2009

The institutional framework for sustainable development (should be strengthened) by means including … promot(ing) the science-policy interface through inclusive, evidence-based and transparent scientific assessments, as well as access to reliable, relevant and timely data in areas related to the three dimensions of sustainable development, building on existing mechanisms, as appropriate.

United Nations, 'The future we want', July 2012, A/66/L.56, p. 15

BOX 2: HOW ACADEMICS, CITIZENS AND POLICYMAKERS ARE WORKING TOGETHER GLOBALLY

- The leading international project, the OECD/UNDP's *Measuring the Progress of Societies* has been underpinned by an extensive international research collaboration, formalised in 2009 at the Istanbul Global Forum of over 1200 people, with the launch of the Global Progress Research Network.

- The leading national project, the *Canadian Index of Wellbeing*, was initiated from work in 1995-99 by the Canadian Policy Research Network and developed substantially by a team of researchers from eight universities working with Canadian citizens and policymakers.

- In the USA, recent (2010) legislation to establish a new system of *Key National Indicators* of progress and well-being in the US designates the National Academy of Sciences as the coordinator and principal guarantor of the new system.[19] The US Social Science Research Council sponsors the '*Measure of America*' project.[20]

- The most globally influential report in this field has been that of the international commission set up by President Sarkozy of France (the *Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi' Commission* of 2009-2010) into measures of economic performance and social well-being: a cross-disciplinary team of 25 scientists and researchers at the highest international level including six Nobel Prize winners.

- In Australia, the two leading national projects, the *ANDI* and the ABS's *MAP* projects, both owe their existence in part to the first major national cross-disciplinary conference on this theme (*Measuring progress: is life getting better*?) co-convened by universities, the CSIRO and the ABS in 1997 at the Australian Academy of Science centre in Canberra. The MAP project currently draws on several expert research advisory panels.

New paradigms and measures of progress will need strong scientific, community and policy foundations. The wide array of tasks involved in such a project makes this an ideal – indeed, a challenging and exciting – field for cross-disciplinary research. Different disciplines and research centres will be required to work together on a common problem of undeniable urgency and importance. Developing a new progress paradigm – a new way to think about, plan and measure national and global progress – is no less important or urgent a task for Australia than finding solutions to climate change and the global financial crisis, not least because the failure to develop such a paradigm has clear causal links to both these problems.[21]

From a research perspective, this enterprise necessarily involves most of the key disciplines in humanities, science and social science: from statistical and mathematical fields through to ethics, law, philosophy, health sciences, public policy, sociology, economics and environmental and earth sciences. It also offers exceptional opportunities for collaborative work between sectors of society (universities, community and policymakers) and between nations (and Australia has been a prominent contributor to the rich network of international research and development in this field). For all these reasons, this is a research project that is authentically strategic and 'nation-building'.

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19 Appendix B-3 sets out the introduction to the legislation establishing the KNI system.

20 'Measure of America provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding the distribution of well-being and opportunity in America and stimulating fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: health, education, and living standards. The hallmark of this work is the American Human Development Index, an alternative to GDP … (which) tells the story of how ordinary Americans are faring and empowers communities with a tool to track progress over time … (and) allows for well-being rankings of the 50 states' (see: www.measureofamerica.org)

21 According to Stiglitz et al, (2009) above.

WHAT ARE THE KEY RESEARCH TASKS?

In 2008, the OECD commissioned a discussion paper on the role of research in the future development of its global project, *Measuring the Progress of Societies*.[22] This paper identified the key tasks for a long-term research agenda and a global research network to support the OECD and the wider global project Box 3 below). These tasks are also relevant for Australia and form the basis for the research tasks proposed for AP21C, below.

BOX 3: KEY RESEARCH TASKS FOR THE GLOBAL PROGRESS AGENDA

- Understanding historic and inherited ideas about progress which have influenced our national development, how they are changing, whether they are still relevant, and what lessons they can teach us for the future;

- Conceptual development of new frameworks and definitions of progress;

- Technical development of new statistics, indicators and statistical indexes;

- Studying and understanding the social and global challenges which influence the nature and possibilities of progress;

- Understanding the community aspirations, attitudes and values that drive or affect our shared national 'vision' for Australia's progress and development;

- Researching best practice in all these areas across the world;

- Working with communities in applied research to develop new sets of measures and indicators etc;

- Helping to develop and understand new techniques for democratic engagement in communities, including social media and information technology;

- Preparing reports on current conditions across key domains of national progress and explaining trends and changes;

- Reporting on desirable innovations in the practical application and use of new progress measurement systems and tools, in policy-making, planning and public debate.

Australia's Progress in the 21st Century is envisioned as developing a sound academic foundation to support the achievement of the aspirations of Australians for the progress of their nation in the coming decades. The project will enable the development of ongoing policy recommendations founded on scientific evidence and informed by the extensive public consultation envisaged by ANDI, the ABS and other partners. These partnerships will enable ACOLA and VicHealth to help develop an Australian voice to add to the work being done in other social democracies, towards developing the public policy instruments that might underpin the achievement of societies committed to sustainability.

22 Salvaris, M. (2009). 'A global research network on measuring progress (GPRNet concept Paper)'. www.wikiprogress.org; www.wikiprogress.org/index. php/GPRNet

RE-DEFINING PROGRESS: GLOBAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

4

THE PILOT PROJECT: AN OVERVIEW

HOW THE AP21C PROJECT DEVELOPED

In April 2012, ACOLA Council approved a pilot study for a full 2-3 year project entitled *Australia's progress in the 21st-century: imagining, defining, measuring* (later shortened to '*AP21C*'). ACOLA committed $50,000 to the project and secured a matching commitment of $50,000 from a key community partner, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

This decision followed a sustained process of over a year. In 2011, responding to a proposal by Prof Fiona Stanley (a leading academic participant in national and international work in this field and a Fellow of both ASSA and AAS), ACOLA decided to begin the development of a strategic research project which it provisionally called *Growing Australia: Economic Prosperity, Environmental Sustainability, Societal Wellbeing.* $50,000 was set aside for this purpose from the 2011/12 budget.

Over several months, a planning committee of the four Learned Academies and the ACOLA Secretariat explored existing research. They soon became aware of two particularly relevant

Better policies need to be based on sound evidence and a broad focus: not only on people's income and financial conditions, but also on their health, their competencies, on the quality of the environment, where they live and work, their overall life satisfaction. Not only on the total amount of goods and services, but also on equality and the conditions of those at the bottom of the ladder. Not only on the conditions "here and now" but also those in other parts of the worlds and those that are likely to prevail in the future. In summary, we need to focus on well-being and progress'.

OECD, 2011

projects: work underway at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (*Measures of Australia's Progress*, known as the MAP 2.0 project) and the developing project for an *Australian National Development Index* (ANDI).

The committee considered both these projects important Australian contributions to the larger global movement discussed earlier, and both the ABS and ANDI expressed enthusiasm for working collaboratively with ACOLA. The committee therefore decided that ACOLA's research proposal should become more focused on including this work and the lessons of the wider global movement.

In September 2011, ACOLA President Prof Robin Batterham wrote to ANDI Convenor Prof Mike Salvaris to express ACOLA's agreement with ANDI's development plan, and the importance of 'launching an Australian voice' into global thinking about future societies. ACOLA was committed, he said, to participating in the ongoing study of Australia's progress and sustainability in the years ahead and looked forward to opportunities to collaborate with ANDI. Prof Batterham also offered the suggestion that potential domains of progress to be measured should include research knowledge and innovation.[23] In October, ACOLA asked then President of AAH (Prof Joe Lo Bianco) and the General Manager, Secretariat to explore more targeted opportunities for collaboration with ANDI and the ABS and in January 2012, they attended an ANDI Research Strategy Workshop.

In February 2012, then Prime Minister Gillard made an announcement with important implications for ACOLA's developing project. Under new guidelines, the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) led by the Chief Scientist (Prof Ian Chubb) would be able to ask ACOLA to undertake in-depth, evidence-based and cross-disciplinary research '*to support policy development in areas of strategic importance*

to Australia's future.'[24] Funding of $10 million was provided for the purpose. The issues to be investigated under this this program (*Securing Australia's Future* or '*SAF*') would be those likely to have major impacts upon Australia's progress, wellbeing and sustainability in the 21st Century, including living standards, health, productivity and environment, and to contribute most to the government's goal of a '*richer, fairer, cleaner and safer Australia*'.

In March 2012, in responding to ACOLA's draft proposal 'Securing Australia's Future', Prof Chubb noted that he regarded as a high priority the research area proposed in ACOLA's document under the sub-title 'What sort of country are we working to develop?', which listed these questions:

- What are the dimensions and indicators of progress?
- How does scientific evidence underpin an index of progress?
- How do expert research and popular experience inform expectations?
- How do young Australians see the future?
- What influences public policy-making?

The final AP21C project proposal put to ACOLA Council[25] emerged from a detailed revision of the initial proposal and further discussions and inputs: from ANDI and the ABS and other community partners; from key Academy members and executives and the Chief Scientist; and in particular, from Mr Dennis Trewin (former head of ABS) and Emeritus Prof Anne Edwards (former Vice Chancellor of Flinders University), both current or former members of the Executive of ASSA and participants in the ANDI project. ACOLA Council approved the proposal on 13th April with seven community and research partners: Vic-Health; ANDI; The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF); the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS; the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA); the Young and Well

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23 Letter Prof Batterham to Prof Mike Salvaris, 8-9-2011.

24 Senator Chris Evans, press release 26-6-13, 'Research to help secure Australia's future'.

25 ACOLA 2013, 'Pilot Project – Australia's Progress in the 21st Century: Imagining, Defining, Measuring'.

Cooperative Research Centre (YAW CRC); and Uniting Justice (an arm of the Uniting Church in Australia).

ACOLA then established a Project Working Group (PWG) to oversight the project and a Project Reference Group (PRG) to act as an expert review panel. The PWG consisted of: Dr Jacques de Vos Malan (ACOLA); Prof Mike Salvaris (ANDI, Research Director); Prof Anne Edwards (ASSA), Prof Fiona Stanley (AAS), Prof Joe Lo Bianco (AAH); Prof Philip Davis (ATSE, who later resigned), Prof Tony McMichael (ATSE, replacing Prof Davis); Ms Kellie Horton (VicHealth); Ms Nikki Honey (VicHealth); Ms Regina Lane (Project Manager). The PRG was chaired by Adjunct Prof Dennis Trewin (ASSSA) and included Prof Robert Cummins (Deakin University); Ms Gemma van Halderen (First Assistant Statistician, ABS) and Assoc Prof Geoff Woolcock (Griffith University).

THE PURPOSE OF THE PILOT PROJECT

In reporting on the goals and results of the pilot project, it is necessary first to distinguish clearly between the goals of the 'full AP21C project' (shown in Box 4) and the more limited purpose of the Pilot Project, with which the present report deals.

The broad aim of the Pilot Project was to scope out the full AP21C Project including testing its feasibility and methodology, and building the institutional foundations and resources, and the planning, for a three-year research project. Within this broad aim, four tasks were seen as priorities:

- to investigate the value of a national progress index wider than GDP;

- to identify what has been done by others (in Australia and internationally) to date in this field and what is most useful from this;

- to maximise the benefits and learning from the commissioned research projects undertaken;

- to consider what the full AP21C project would involve and develop its next stage.

BOX 4: GOALS OF THE FULL AP21C PROJECT

What are the broad goals?

- **Create a sound, cross-disciplinary, scientific foundation** for understanding, defining, promoting, planning and measuring societal progress in Australia in the 21st Century and the key issues, resources, barriers, values and aspirations likely to determine it;

- **Develop basic tools and information that** will (1) support policy recommendations to Government, (2) promote more informed and engaged public policy debate and (3) contribute to more equitable and sustainable wellbeing for Australians in the 21st century;

- **Build a strong and effective national research network** to enable Australia to participate in, and benefit from, the growing global and national research effort to redefine and re-measure societal progress 'beyond GDP'.

How will they be achieved?

- Through (1) the **development of key domains of progress**, and agreement on the most important themes within each domain, (2) the **establishment of appropriate progress indicators and indices** by a process combining community and expert input, (3) the **initiation of a university progress research network** (including links with key international research and policy organisations in this field) and a *national progress research agenda*: and the ongoing (4) **formulation of research analysis**, to be submitted to Government with the intention of influencing the public policy debate.

- The full AP21C Project will be designed as (1) **a major national project** to be carried out over a minimum of three years with an initial scoping and pilot phase of 12 months (the Pilot Project); (2) It will necessarily **consider a wide range of issues**, and will require **collaboration and expert input** across most academic disciplines; (3) A central feature for achieving these goals will be the **convening of expert cross-disciplinary research teams** working with policymakers and the community in each of the key domains of progress.

In a broad and inter-disciplinary project such as this, many interesting research questions could be pursued. However, given that the primary purpose of the pilot was to examine the feasibility of the larger project, the PWG decided to focus essentially on seven fairly specific and practical questions, summarised in Box 5 below (and see Appendix B-12 for a more detailed elaboration of these issues).

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

When it first met to develop a work programme, the Project Working Group was faced with a potentially large set of tasks and a fairly modest budget. It decided initially to commission a small number of funded studies and to undertake other tasks on a voluntary basis, using the resources of partners and the expertise of PWG members. Overall the PWG believes that with a combination of commissioned and funded projects and considerable voluntary input, quite a lot has been accomplished. The main tasks achieved fall into four broad categories, below.

1. Review tasks and pilot projects

The PWG commissioned five separate studies, each dealing with a significant component of its research brief:

- A detailed **listing of wellbeing measurement models** (Cummins and Choong, Deakin University)

- A **critical review of domains and index methodologies, indexes and international best practice** (Saunders and Wong, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW)

- A report and focus groups exploring **qualitative community attitudes to progress and progress domains** (Kellard and Pennay, Social Research Centre, Melbourne)

- An national online survey to provide **quantitative data on community attitudes and priorities on progress** (Pennay and Wild, Social Research Centre, Melbourne)

- Preparation of a '**language guide'** for community consultation on Australia's progress (Coppel, The Big Picture Strategic Services)

These studies are reported in the next chapter. All commissioned reports will be published on the ACOLA website www.acola.org.au.

2. Development of potential partner and adviser arrangements for AP21C

During the 12 months of the project, the PWG collectively or through individual members explored a range of potential institutional relationships that might support AP21C and ANDI. They included the following:

- agreement with Deakin University as research coordinator (for ANDI and AP21C)

- negotiating a Memorandum of understanding with the ABS (on research and data for MAP2, ANDI and AP21C)

- international partnership with the OECD

- proposal to ASSA to co-host national expert workshop

- collaborative partnership with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, Waterloo University and the Council of Canadian Academies

- partnership or collaboration with three important and comparable European projects (e-Frame, BES, Brainpool).

These are reported in section 6 below.

3. Review of funding and support opportunities

Part of the PWG's brief was to examine the funding and resourcing of AP21C and where possible, to use ACOLA's $50,000 grant to leverage additional project funding (an additional $50,000 was provided by VicHealth on this basis). Discussions were held with a number of organisations willing to provide resources or direct funding to the major project. Some of these discussions were between ANDI and other organisations, but also included the possibility of funding for the AP21C project. These are also reported in chapter 6.

4. Preparing a detailed report and development plan for the full 3-year AP21C project

- This is the present report.

5

RESEARCH FINDINGS: LESSONS FOR AP21C

THE RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN FOR THE PILOT PROJECT PRODUCED SOME INTERESTING AND INNOVATIVE RESULTS WHICH WILL PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR THE FULL AP21C PROJECT, FOR EXAMPLE:

- The Social Research Centre's focus groups pointed to a number of problems relating to community engagement and dialogue around the theme of progress and progress domains. It is clear that these are not subjects that "ordinary Australians" feel comfortable in discussing; but on the other hand, it seems also the case that with the appropriate language, preparation and community engagement techniques, people can participate in a valuable way.

- The SRC's online survey suggested that the notion of "equitable and sustainable well-being" is a reasonable proxy for how ordinary Australian citizens might define progress. It also showed that a slight majority of respondents believe that Australia is not making progress ("heading in the right direction") as they see it.

- The Social Policy Research Centre's exploration of best practice models suggests that the draft ANDI progress domains are generally consistent with a number of leading models in other countries and with the OECD.

- The SPRC study also examined the nature and operation of composite indexes for measuring progress. It reported that, while indexes are not uncontroversial, their use is growing and,

especially in Canada, where the idea of a composite national progress index has been most developed, such indexes can have a powerful influence in both public policy and media debate.

In the section which follows, each of the research projects commissioned for the pilot project is discussed, its key findings noted, and the lessons and implications for the full AP21C project highlighted.

A. QUALITATIVE REPORT ON COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON PROGRESS (SRC)

The Melbourne-based Social Research Centre (SRC) was commissioned to carry out a series of focus groups and an online survey.

Aims: The qualitative study was "(the) first stage of the AP21C pilot (and) was designed to explore – in a focus group setting – the language, values, goals and priorities expressed by focus group participants when they talk (and discuss with each other) about national progress".

It also aimed to identify "some provisional recommendations for domains to be included international develop an index on what these domains include an mean to the community" (Kellard and Pennay 2013, p. i). Seven focus groups were held, four in Melbourne, two in Sydney and one in a regional Victoria town. Each group was composed of a distinctive demographic.

Key findings: The major finding from the focus groups was the identification of a series of key 'themes' and 'issues' that respondents believed important for the progress of Australian society. A detailed list of these 'emergent themes' and issues for measuring Australia's progress is set out in Appendix B-5. The key themes which emerged from the focus groups are as follows:

- *Society* – cultural diversity, immigration, social relationships and support networks, housing, social welfare and social security, transport, leisure and recreation, work-life balance, neighbourhood and community safety, national security, health, education and technology, and information

- *Economy* – employment, trade and industry, wealth and materialism, banking and finance

- *Environment* – protecting national resources

- *Governance* – governance and the political system, standards in public life, policing and the justice system.

Comments on methodology: The SRC team emphasised that the themes and issues which they have identified came more or less unprompted out of the discussions, rather than as responses to a set of listed or predetermined categories of progress issues or domains. At this preliminary stage of the AP21C project, the key research aim was to identify in a very broad way what things were important to people for Australia's progress and to do so initially in a spontaneous and "top of the head" manner. A related aim was to examine *how* people talk about progress: that is, to identify the basic concepts, assumptions, language and values which emerge when people talk about Australia's progress and what is important for it, and also how comfortable they are to talk about such issues, and how well informed.

Table B-5 also compares key themes or domains adopted or proposed by: the Australian National Development Index (ANDI), the Canadian Index of Well-being, the OECD Better Life Index and the present consultation.

Lessons for AP21C

(1) In the broadest terms, the study confirms that the key categories and priorities of progress identified in many international studies and by the ABS are a solid starting point for an Australian progress index and measurement framework.

(2) The study raises some critical questions about the most effective ways to promote community debate and secure clear and useful input which will directly inform such progress measures.

(3) While a broad-scale community engagement process will necessarily involve a wide range of different engagement and research techniques, the researchers conclude that there is an important place for a focus group approach. Focus groups are especially useful for promoting discussions and debates about progress but also enable a wide range of views to be raised and consensus reached and these ideas can then trigger new points of view.

(4) However, focus groups to discuss Australia's progress and its measurement need to be effectively designed and managed, because otherwise the topic is far too broad for meaningful discussions and conclusions, especially for a single focus group over 1 -2 hours; and such focus groups will be more effective if participants are encouraged to think about the issues before coming to the groups and given some basic information or 'homework'.

(5) Ordinary citizens find it difficult conceptually to think about and discuss such broad concepts as societal progress and its measurement; and they are unfamiliar with technical terms like indexes, indicators and domains. On the other hand, they find it easy to talk about what they perceive to be the good and bad things about Australia and how the latter could be improved. This suggests that the foundations for such discussions need to be carefully laid and introduced at a familiar level.

(6) The project showed that in group situations, participants often feel awkward about discussing aspects of progress that are perceived to be controversial or inappropriate, such as ethnicity, migration, welfare dependency and the well-being of indigenous people.

(7) The SRC recommends an improved focus group program for the full AP21C project which would be more focused, structured and iterative. Focus groups would be convened around main theme areas and each would meet perhaps three times, to enable a progression in the discussion. Some focus groups should be female only. The SRC recommended focus groups of around two hours and a structured (and more 'deliberative') process which would involve more advance contact; better briefing notes and a more extended introduction to the topic; and then more structured debate; with finally, a process to reach consensus and determine priorities and weightings (see Appendix B-11).

B. LANGUAGE GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS ON PROGRESS (COPPEL)

Aims: Strategic communications consultant Louisa Coppell worked with the focus group program, and prepared a short report on strategic communication issues in discussing national progress and its measurement. Her report identified the language, key assumptions and values that appeared to drive people's attitudes and beliefs about progress for Australia and suggested how to communicate with the Australian public on these issues in a manner that was direct, apolitical and without spin, and as far as possible, 'in their own language'. This report was intended to provide guidance for a large scale community consultation and engagement program as part of a future AP21C and ANDI project, including advice on how such discussions might be carried out in the media.

Findings: A commitment to 'engage all Australians in a national debate about our shared vision for Australia' (a key goal of the ANDI project) clearly demands to be taken 'beyond the usual cohort of experts policymakers and legislators', says Coppel. Yet this is a subject on which 'the research shows that Australians are

not typically having conversations ….
that they feel distant from language like
"index", "measurement" and "indicators" or
"domains" of progress' (Coppel 2013, 1).

Coppell concludes that 'we need to find a
new way of framing the conversation for
(these) concepts to resonate widely' and for
the development of a national progress index
that is widely understood and respected . For
this, she says, two principles are particularly
important: avoiding "spin" and steering clear
of implied political positions and orthodoxies.

Lessons for AP21C

Coppel has identified ten "Principles of good
communication" in discussions about national
progress measurement and some of the 'key
messages' that will help make an unfamiliar
topic more easily understood: for example

- What is national progress?

- What are progress 'domains'
  and what do they mean?

- What is an 'index' of national progress
  and what are its benefits?

Finally, Coppel has prepared a useful table
in which the key domains and themes of
progress identified in the focus groups (and
usually framed in 'policy' language) are then
aligned with language and concepts in
everyday use in Australia.

C. ONLINE SURVEY ON COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR PROGRESS (SRC)

Aims: Building on the 'national priorities'
identified in the focus groups, the Social
Research Centre (Pennay and Wild 2013)
developed an online survey aimed to provide
some quantitative data that would help:

- measure the relative importance of
  these national priorities for progress;

- measure our perceived national
  performance in each of these priority areas;

- provide insights into some of the
  factors which underpin community
  perceptions as to whether or not
  Australia is generally progressing
  ('heading in the right direction'); and

- better understand the complex and
  multi-dimensional nature of community
  priorities for Australia's future.

Research method: The questionnaire for
the online survey was based on the findings
from the focus groups and questions used
in similar surveys[26] and it was developed in
close consultation with ACOLA's PWG. A total
of 7,400 invitations were sent out to panel
members to generate the 1,012 completed
surveys, which were administered from 19 to
23 March, 2013.

Survey findings: The top three national
priority areas for Australia's progress which
emerged from the survey were: 'preventing
war from occurring on Australian soil' (mean
score 9.2), 'everyone having access to a high
quality health system' (9.1) and 'ensuring that
our children grow up healthy, happy and well-
educated and can reach their full potential'
(also 9.1).

The bottom ranked areas were: 'making sure
as a country we provide our fair share of
foreign aid to people around the world in
need of help' (6.6), 'ensuring the wellbeing
of Australia's Indigenous people', (7.6) and
'having diverse ownership and control of the
media' (7.7). 'Increasing economic growth and
national wealth' ranked 16th on this list of 22.

The most commonly chosen (single word)
qualities considered important 'if Australia
is to be the sort of country you want it to
be' were: 'secure' (38%), 'peaceful' (36%) and
'productive' (33%), while the words 'open' (7%),
'creative' (6%) and 'giving' (5%) were least likely
to be selected.

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26   Most notably, a 2011 online survey by the Centre for
     Policy Development (CPD) prepared with assistance
     from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The PWG is
     grateful to the author of this survey, PhD scholar Tani
     Shaw from the University of Technology Sydney: Shaw,
     T. 2012 (*unpublished*) 'National Survey on Australian
     Values and Views on Progress', Centre for Policy
     Development, Sydney.

Respondents viewed economic growth and the preservation of the natural environment as almost equally important: and further exploration showed that 37% believe the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some job losses, while 41% believe that economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffered to some extent.

When asked what they believe are the areas of progress in which Australia currently performs best and worst, respondents believed that we performed best in:

1. 'Preventing war from occurring on Australian soil' (mean score 7.1 out of 10)

2. 'Ensuring we have a safe banking and financial system' (7.0)

3. 'Providing access to a range of arts, sport, leisure and recreational activities that all people have the opportunity to get involved in' (6.7)

4. 'Making sure as a country that we provide our fair share of foreign aid' (6.7), and

5. 'Protecting the freedom of speech of all people, even those with whom I may not agree' (6.2).

Australia was believed to perform worst in these important progress areas:

1. 'High standards of honesty in politics and public life' (mean score 3.7 out of 10)

2. 'Providing enough job opportunities so that everyone who is capable of working can find a paid job' (5.1)

3. 'Having access to high quality rail, road and transport networks' (5.2)

4. *'Having access to a high quality health system' (5.2)*

5. 'Being a society in which people from different backgrounds all get on well together' (5.3)

6. 'Providing adequate support for people who need it' (5.3).

The gap between the perceived importance of particular progress areas and our perceived performance in that area was seen to be greatest in the areas of:

1. 'High standards of honesty in politics and public life' (with a gap of 5.2 between mean priority of 8.9 and mean assessed performance of 3.7 on scales of 0-10), followed by

2. 'Providing enough job opportunities' (gap 3.9);

3. 'Everyone having access to a high quality health system' (gap 3.9)

4. 'Having access to high-quality rail Road and transport networks' (gap 3.6);

5. 'Everyone being treated equally by the law' (gap 3.6)

6. 'Adequate support provided in Australia to people who need it' (gap 3.4);

7. 'Maintaining a fair and democratic system of government where everyone has a voice' (gap 3.3);

8. 'Everyone having access to a high quality education system' (gap 3.2)

9. 'Being a society in which people from different backgrounds all get on well together' (gap 3.2)

One of the most striking findings from this study came in the responses to the question 'Thinking about the sort of country you would like Australia to be in the future, do you agree or disagree that we are currently heading in the right direction?'. The mean response was 4.7 (on a 0-10 scale indicating strong disagreement to strong agreement), suggesting 'that a majority of people registered overall dissatisfaction with the direction Australia is heading in and a disconnect between what is perceived to be the nation's current settings and our preferred future' (Pennay and Wild 2013: 19).

The reasons given for low 'heading in the right direction' scores are set out in detail in the study and then correlated with previous responses on the importance and

performance of key priorities as well as personal attitudes and life circumstances. The researchers found that poor standards of government, leadership and politicians was the most frequently mentioned reason for dissatisfaction with Australia's current direction, followed by: negative views on immigration policy and loss of national identity; the perception that current government is unresponsive to the needs of citizens; and then a range of lesser reasons including law and order, jobs and employment and cost of living concerns.

Overall conclusions about attitudes to progress

(1) 'There is widespread dissatisfaction with our current progress, for reasons identified (dissatisfaction with government /leadership, negative perceptions about the impact of cultural diversity and immigration and a clutch of economic concerns around the cost of living, national debt, foreign ownership, poor infrastructure and unemployment).'

(2) 'While economic concerns are a major factor in shaping Australians' perceptions of whether or not the country is heading in the right direction, Australians do, in fact, have a multi-layered view of our national priorities and the attributes that are important if Australia is to be the sort of place we want it to be. 'Economic growth and national prosperity' ranked 16th out of 22 national priorities for progress with a mean score of 8.4 out of 10, while the environment (mean 8.6) ranked 12th. Respondents were evenly divided when trying to balance environmental protection and economic growth (as shown above)'.

(3) Five dominant 'value propositions' appear to be shaping respondents' perceptions as to the sort of country they would like Australia to be. These can be broadly categorised as: benevolent, economically successful, tolerant, egalitarian, and traditional. From this it seems that 'an Australian future which is based on a well-performing economy achieved through hard work would need to be achieved within a framework that is tolerant, egalitarian and

caring in order to be broadly in accord with Australian values.' However, 'these values co-exist in a culture which seemingly gives low importance to foreign aid and Indigenous wellbeing and has a high level of concern with regard to the perceived negative impact of immigration and cultural diversity'.

(4) There was a relatively high correlation between the desire for 'high standards of honesty in politics and public life' and perceptions as to whether or not Australia is heading in the right direction. This suggests two things: that Australians want to be well led; and that the prevailing political debate is influential in shaping perceptions of progress. The current political dialogue is undoubtedly a major influence; but the survey also showed that concerns for the wellbeing and development of our children are central to the dialogue about Australia's future, and other concerns such as social cohesion, social justice, equality and democracy are also strongly associated with respondents' perceptions about whether Australia is progressing. These suggest that 'Australians have a multi-dimensional view of what it will take for Australia to be the sort of country they want it to be.'

(5) Respondents' perceptions about our overall national progress were more highly correlated with the way they rated our national performance across a range of national priority areas than they were with the respondent's personal circumstances or local area perceptions. This suggests that respondents were generally able to elevate national issues over personal and local factors when considering whether or not Australia is heading in the right direction.

Lessons for AP21C

(1) While the non-directive approach used for these initial group discussions was in line with the objectives of this stage of the pilot study, a more directive approach, with groups dedicated to particular themes and domains, is recommended for the next phase of the project.

(2) Further reflection on the 22 national priorities identified for this study suggested to the research team that some of these items are in fact 'instrumentalities', 'enablers' or 'prerequisites' (i.e. 'means') for our future progress and some reflect national goals or aspirations (or 'ends'). For example, 'preventing war from occurring on Australian soil', 'ensuring we have a safe banking and financial system', 'everyone having access to a high quality education system' and items relating to national infrastructure can all be seen as prerequisites for our vision of Australia's future. In contrast, 'aspiring to adequate support for people in Australia who need it', 'striving to achieve a reasonable work-life balance', 'being a society in which people of different backgrounds get on well together' and 'everyone being treated equally and fairly by the law' are all aspirations that reflect our underlying values. Some thought should be given to structuring national priorities along these lines, as this would enable a more nuanced questioning to evolve which would better distinguish between prerequisites for our future and aspirations for our future.

This comment reinforces a similar point made by AP21C adviser Dennis Trewin: he has argued that in developing progress measures, and in seeking community input, a clear distinction needs to be made between 'goals for progress' and the 'enablers' (policies, resources etc) needed to achieve those goals:

> One of the distinctive characteristics of ANDI is that it is based on what the community thinks is important. However, I think you need to go beyond what the community thinks important to understand what is necessary for that goal to be achieved … for example, health is regarded as important but for Australians to have a healthy future you need to look at primary factors such as obesity and secondary factors such as the level of health services. In this context economic growth (usually measured by GDP) is an important enabler because high growth allows more in the way of policy interventions and services.[27]

(3) It is suggested that future iterations of the survey ask respondents to rank a reduced set of items (perhaps pre-classified into prerequisites and aspirations) in terms of their importance. This approach may provide new insights into the values and priorities that underpin Australian's hopes for the future.

(4) The research team suggested that the 'single word value' grid (Question 2) used for this survey should be reviewed before being used in a future study. While it proved useful to enable the underlying qualities nominated by respondents to be grouped into a set of aspirational factors, the words included in the grid were not balanced across domains, were not drawn from the preceding qualitative research and there were notable omissions from the word set, for example, 'sustainable'.

(5) Consideration should also be given to adding a standard measure of 'optimism' to the survey questionnaire to enable the correlation between underlying optimism and perceptions for Australia's future to be measured. This will provide important information about the validity of the current underlying measure (i.e. is it measuring what it purports to be measuring?).

(6) With respect to the future development of the survey questionnaire, the SRC strongly recommended that a sufficient time and budget be provided to enable formal cognitive testing of the questionnaire.

(7) The research team believes that the kind of questions asked of respondents and the cognitive nature of the tasks involved are most suited to a self-completion mode of data collection. This suggests that, when a representative sample of the population is required, consideration should be given to approaching the Australian Electoral Commission to request access to the electoral roll for sampling purposes and/or investigating alternative address-based sampling methodologies.

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27 Email comments on draft report, 15 July 2013.

D. LISTING OF WELLBEING MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS (DEAKIN UNIVERSITY)

In the first months of the pilot project, the Project Working Group commissioned a review of Australian and international population surveys measuring different aspects of well-being. This study[28] was undertaken by Robert Cummins and Shannon Choong of Deakin University's School of Psychology. Professor Cummins is an eminent scholar in Quality of Life Studies.

The aim of this study (in the words of its authors) was to 'document some of the most easily accessible population surveys concerning the measurement of wellbeing. This information is then available to assist both the preliminary qualitative investigation and subsequent decisions regarding the identification of 'wellbeing domains' for the on-going quantitative measurements'.

The Deakin study identified over 120 different surveys or measurement frameworks on quality of life and related themes across the world. The models listed range very widely in their level (local, national international), content and purpose. For each survey or framework, detailed information was provided on the country or organisation developing it , the domains measured, the development method, the sample size of the survey (if applicable) and the source or website, and whether the framework had a qualitative element.

This study has proved a useful resource for the development of the survey and the later analysis of leading models and domain frameworks by the SPRC.

E. CRITICAL REVIEW OF MEASURING PROGRESS PROJECTS (SPRC, UNSW)

Professor Peter Saunders and Dr Melissa Wong of the Social Policy Research Centre of the University of New South Wales were commissioned to undertake a study entitled "Australia's Progress in the 21st Century: Pilot Program on Measuring Social Progress".

Aim: This study was designed to provide a critical overview of national and international work in the field of measuring progress over the last 20 years or so, including its likely future development and implications for policy making, with some recommendations for further development and relevant best practice models for Australia.

Areas reviewed

The SPRC report provides:

- a listing of current work being undertaken in Australia on the measurement of well-being and social progress, including that being conducted by the ABS and by independent research institutes;

- a comparison of the key features of well-being and social progress measurement systems in a limited range of countries (features compared include: the framework used; the scope of well-being measured; efforts to engage the community in the development of new measures of progress; and whether or not a composite index is used; the countries selected are those which have most in common with Australia or are otherwise seen as 'best practice' models);

- a summary of the main features of the OECD Better Life Initiative and related work being undertaken by leading international agencies;

- a critical review of the alternative approaches and some of the main implications for developing and disseminating new measures of social progress in Australia;

28   Cummins, R and S. Choong. 2012. 'A listing and content of extant population surveys to measure aspects of wellbeing: Australian and International', School of Psychology, Deakin University, Burwood.

- a brief assessment of the main policy and other applications of new progress measures and the implications for government; and

- advice as to how future work in this area could be developed under a fully funded project.

From this information, the SPRC drew out the answers to four broad questions of particular relevance to the AP21C project:

- How is the scope of social progress identified in the different Australian and international approaches and what domains of progress are identified?

- Are progress domains aggregated into a single index and, if so, what weighting scheme or schemes are used?

- What form does engagement with the community take and how are the results of community engagement integrated into the measures used?

- What are the key issues for the application and future development of a social progress index in Australia?

Despite its considerable compression, the SPRC report provides a very useful overview of the context of the research, policy and

democratic issues relevant to the AP21C project. Set out below is a summary of the key points and recommendations from the report, broadly arranged around the four main questions indicated above.

Lessons for AP21C

Identifying domains of social progress

The SPRC report compares eleven national progress measurement projects in Australia, the UK, Canada, New Zealand, Italy and Bhutan as well as the OECD on the international scene. The projects examined include four in Australia, two well established and two emerging: the ABS's Measures of Australia's Progress', The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index; ANDI (the Australian National Development Index) and the Herald/Age Lateral Economics (HALE) Index of Well-being.

As might be expected, these systems tend to have different features according to the purpose and history of their development, but for the most part they have quite similar constituent domains of progress. The report finds that there are twelve "domains" which are common in many of these progress measurement frameworks. After these, there are a group of domains found in a relatively

BOX 6: COMMON DOMAINS OF PROGRESS

MOST COMMON	LESS COMMON
Health (frequency: 11 out of 11 cases)	Personal economic well-being (4/11)
Family, community and social cohesion (11/11)	Housing (4/11)
Governance and citizenship (11/11)	Personal achievements & life satisfaction (3/11)
Education (10/11)	Research and innovation (2/11)
Environmental quality (10/11)	Psychological well-being (1/11)
Work (7/11)	National security (1/11)
Culture and leisure (7/11)	Quality of services (1/11)
Crime and safety (6/11)	Children's well-being (1/11)
Living standards (6/11)	Indigenous well-being (1/11)
National economic conditions (5/11)	Justice and fairness (1/11)
Time use and work life balance (5/11)	Policy and institutions (1/11)
Subjective well-being (5/11)	Productivity (1/11)

Source: Saunders and Wong 2013 (adapted).
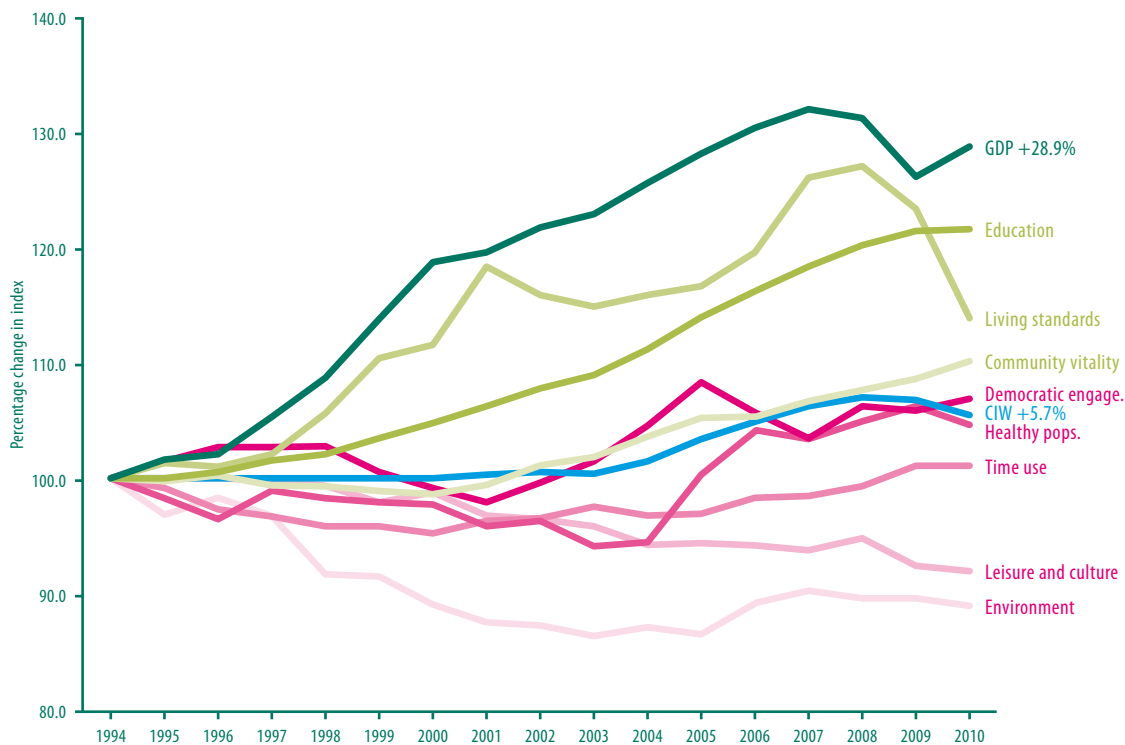
Source: Canadian Index of Wellbeing (2012).

small number of the measurement systems examined (albeit most would people might regard these as important factors for progress) although in some systems, such issues are included, but as indicators rather then full 'domains'). The children's, indigenous and justice domains are found only in the ANDI project, and the 'Policy and institutions' domain only in the Italian BES project.

The value of a composite index of progress

The SPRC report provides a useful discussion of the structure and the effectiveness of indexes. Of the 11 models it surveyed, six have developed a composite index and a seventh is considering doing so; four of these seven are using or considering some system of weighting for their index.

The researchers conclude that systems of 'headline' or 'dashboard' indicators which present an array of different indicators that are not linked or aggregated (such as used by the ABS MAP and a number of models) do not easily allow users to form any summative judgment about overall progress; they tend to leave this decision to the users based on

their own evaluation of different indicators. In contrast, the report says, the two best developed index models (the Canadian Index of Well-being and the OECD Better Life Index) by virtue of aggregating and summarising progress measurement across different domains and within domains, can present a more compelling and ultimately useful picture of progress, which over time will have greater value for policy making and planning as it becomes more accepted. The OECD Better Life Index in particular is unique in that it allows online users to change the waiting of each domain according to their own preferences thus allowing citizens to participate in the debate about progress[29].

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing shows that an index can have very significant benefits in terms of its explanatory power and the interest which it generates in public decision discussion and policy-making. As the SPRC

29 However, as the OECD agrees, the same methodology could be used to determine a community-wide weighting: for example, a representative national survey would allow a national mean weighting to be calculated for each domain, say on a scale 0-10 (Martine Durand, OECD Statistician, in discussions with Mike Salvaris, May 2013).

report shows, the CIW Index is able to demonstrate the rates of change (growth or decline) in overall Canadian wellbeing and (the quite striking differences) in individual domains of wellbeing compared to Canada's GDP growth rate over a period of 16 years. Figure 1 below shows that in the case of two domains (education and living standards) there was reasonably strong growth (10% plus) in wellbeing over this period growth; in community vitality, democratic engagement and healthy populations, wellbeing grew by less than 10%, while 'time use hardly grew at all and leisure and culture and environment declined overall – in the latter case by more than 10%'. Perhaps most notable of all is 'the very different picture of progress that is revealed by the two indexes. In overall terms, the 28.9% increase in GDP over the period was around five times greater than the 5.7% growth in CIW' . (Saunders and Wong, 12). This gap prompted the conclusion by the CIW report's authors that 'from 1994 to 2010, while Canada's GDP grew by a robust 28.9%, improvements in Canadians' wellbeing grew by a considerably smaller 5.7%. Despite years of prosperity, our economic growth has not translated into similarly significant gains in our overall quality of life. Even more concerning is the considerable backslide Canadians have experienced since (the global recession of) 2008.' (CIW 2012, 1)

Engaging the community in progress measurement

The SPRC report suggested a number of key principles for optimal community engagement in the development of a new national progress index:

- Community engagement is essential to ensure that new measures capture whatever is important to ordinary people: this is part of the objective of rethinking measurement systems.

- If new indexes are not seen to capture community priorities and aspirations, they will not be valued or seen as useful.

- Civic engagement is itself one of the domains of progress and therefore it would

The availability of statistical indicators of economic, social and environmental outcomes and their dissemination to citizens can contribute to promoting good governance and the improvement of democratic processes. It can strengthen citizens' capacity to influence the goals of the societies they live in through debate and consensus building, and increase the accountability of public policies.

Istanbul Declaration, Measuring the Progress of Societies, World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, Istanbul, 30 June 2007

be anomalous if the task of constructing new indexes did not engage the community.

- Indexes must necessarily include subjective as well as objective indicators and these can only be obtained by engaging with people.

A debate needs to be fostered on the fundamental meaning of progress … (C)ivil society, together with the other social and institutional players, should determine the arenas in which the progress of societies is to be gauged. The Economic and Social Committee of the European Commission believes that the legitimacy of public decisions cannot be assured only by official guarantees and systems– whether institutional, legal or constitutional– emanating from the State, but must necessarily be based on the contribution of civil society. Civil society's particular contribution to mapping out the prospects for development and well- being represents the necessary policy input not only into combining the participated dimension with the knowledge dimension, but also into pursuing the objectives set.

European Commission, 2012, 'GDP and beyond– the involvement of civil society', pp. 2-4

- The consultation process must be transparent and people need to be convinced that the outcomes of the consultation will be valuable and useful, not just the process.

- Although people differ about details, in general there is likely to be agreement and some stability in attitudes to broad domains and values over the long term.

- Careful thought needs to be given to the level at which community opinion is sought. "Ordinary people" are less likely

to have informed views about technical issues relating to indicators.

- Three broad groups need to be involved in the consultation process: citizens, users and experts.

- The three stages in the index construction process all have different requirements for community engagement: (1) identifying key domains; (2) identifying indicators within each domain; and (3) identifying the relative importance of indicators within domains.

- Different consultation methods will be appropriate for different audiences and different stages of the process. These methods will include general population surveys, small-scale workshops, and focus groups with targeted participants.

- Selective focus groups may be a useful way of reaching agreement on allocating weightings indexes it's important that the process is ongoing and iterative.

- For an index to remain relevant it will need to keep 'checking back' with stakeholders.

Application and development of a national progress index in Australia

The SPRC report identified "some of the key lessons relevant to promoting the use of an index of social progress in Australia in policy-making and other activities" and what these lessons imply for future work in the area:

- In the construction stage, the index must embody the views of the three groups discussed, otherwise it is unlikely the index will be widely used (the high regard for the Canadian Index is evidence of this).

- Widespread engagement means the index will have both the best evidence to build on and the strongest legitimacy and support.

- A dissemination strategy is crucial to raise community awareness about the value of the index but should be targeted to specific groups.

- Pressure on decision-makers to take account of the index will grow if it can be shown to have strong support and to offer new and different insights.

- The focus of a new index should be forward-looking and provide a basis for rethinking the meaning of progress and monitoring what has been achieved rather than describing past developments.

- The GDP is effective because underneath it, there is a huge amount of knowledge that can be useful in actual policy-making and predicting the impacts of economic changes. A social progress index should aspire to achieve the same status, so that it can forecast future movements in wellbeing and so that the impacts of different social policies and events can be predicted (although people's subjective attitudes will be harder to predict). Include great quote from OECD.

- The establishment and acceptance of a new social progress index is likely to take decades rather than years, just as the GDP did, and it will require patience and persistence.

The SPRC report underlines the potential value of an index of national progress in a number of critical respects. One of the most important of these is that it allows us to make comparisons about our national progress and performance against two different but important benchmarks:

international standards and best practice, as well as our own goals and values. It is in this respect that the focus of the index would be genuinely 'forward looking'. It may, of course, some take some time for such an approach to be accepted: as a nation we are more comfortable in comparing our national performance in areas such as sport or trade, rather than say, justice or health. Yet the power of such comparisons is clearly recognised in the OECD project:

> I think we should begin to work together to build a single platform to monitor progress. A system that would allow each and every citizen to see the progress in his or her society and compare themselves with others. This has the power to make quite radical changes to the world's democratic processes … We must develop better ways to bring indicators to the public … We need … to develop the tools that will engage citizens. Indicators of progress can tell some fascinating stories; they increase accountability; build knowledge, change behaviour and underpin democratic governance … It is vitally important for all our societies to develop a broader understanding of progress provided we can measure it. It is a unique opportunity to improve the ways in which our policies are made and it can breathe new life into democratic processes.
>
> *Angel Gurria, OECD Secretary-General, 2007, Closing speech, Istanbul Global Forum on Measuring the Progress of Societies*

RESEARCH FINDINGS: LESSONS FOR AP21C

6

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING: OPPORTUNITIES FOR AP21C

DURING THE COURSE OF THE PILOT PROJECT, DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD WITH A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS ABOUT THEIR INTEREST IN A POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIP WITH ACOLA, EITHER DIRECTLY OR AS PART OF ANDI'S RESEARCH PROJECT. THESE DISCUSSIONS SUGGESTED THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD PROSPECTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FOR THE FULL AP21C PROJECT.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY: RESEARCH COORDINATION ROLE

Over the past year or so, the ANDI project has been in discussions with Deakin University about an arrangement by which Deakin might become, in effect, the 'research home' for the ANDI project, and potentially, AP21C. This is a model suggested by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (with which ANDI has been closely associated) as an answer to the problem of how to coordinate and manage large scale interdisciplinary research projects made up of many different researchers and universities.

We affirm our commitment to measuring and fostering the progress of societies in all their dimensions and to supporting initiatives at the country level. We urge statistical offices, public and private organisations, and academic experts to work alongside representatives of their communities to produce high-quality, facts-based information that can be used by all of society to form a shared view of societal well-being and its evolution over time.

Istanbul Declaration, 2007

In Canada, the CIW project has developed a very large national research network of about 10 institutions across Canada but eventually decided that its research program would be better coordinated from a single university, Waterloo in Ontario. Waterloo was selected because it is a highly innovative university which already had strong links with the Canadian Index project.

There were a number of reasons for selecting Deakin: it was one of the earliest participants in ANDI's research program; it is one of the Australian universities whose research work is most focused on health and well-being; and most importantly, the university has expressed an enthusiastic interest in this role over several years at the level of the Vice Chancellor and senior research staff.

Currently, negotiations are underway to develop a formal agreement between ANDI and Deakin. Under this agreement, the university would provide a small research team of perhaps four senior researchers to underpin the research development of both ANDI and AP21C for an initial period of three years. It would also provide 12 part-time (0.2) senior (professorial level) researchers, to lead the 12 proposed domain research groups, as well as the usual administrative, management and research support. For Deakin, there are significant attractions in such an investment, in the form of future research income, national and international exposure and the inherent interest of coordinating a nationally significant interdisciplinary research project.

However, ACOLA's role in this proposal is also important. Throughout these negotiations, since AP21C was initiated, the discussions have been on the basis that Deakin and ACOLA might be partners. From Deakin's perspective, the project will be a major cross disciplinary research project and it will be more likely to succeed if it has the support, legitimacy and prestige of ACOLA to encourage cross disciplinary collaborative work from a range of different universities which are more often competing with each other and which would be less likely to join a programme perceived to be run by a single university.

ABS

The support and participation of the ABS in both AP21C and the ANDI project are vitally important. The ABS is regarded internationally as one of the most respected and innovative national statistics organisations, and within Australia, it enjoys unusually strong public regard for a government agency. The ABS has been a participant in, and a key national statistical adviser to, the ANDI project since its inception and is also a major participant in the AP21C pilot project. Former ABS head Dennis Trewin chairs the AP21C's expert reference group, the Project Reference Committee, which also includes ABS First Assistant Statistician, Ms Gemma Van Halderen.

There has been a long history of collaboration between the ABS and the research community in the development of the Bureau's pioneering programme *Measures of Australia's Progress* (MAP) which was in part the product of an inter-disciplinary research conference in the 1990's. This mutually beneficial collaboration has continued to the present, with the current MAP Expert Reference Group: the ERG advises the ABS on the development of its improved version of MAP (MAP 2.0) and includes four academic representatives (two of whom are also members of the AP21C Project Working Group).

While this partnership is strong and likely to continue, it has some sensitivities which must be respected. MAP and ANDI share many common assumptions: for example, about key domains of progress, the need for community input, the importance of an integrated progress model 'beyond GDP', the core concept of equitable and sustainable well-being and the need for national progress to be measured against national goals and aspirations. However there are also some areas of difference: the ABS does not officially support the development of an index of progress, and is limited (because of both resources and its perceived apolitical role) in its capacity to mount an extensive national community engagement process, to coordinate a national research

collaboration or to advocate for policy changes (the essential and complementary strengths of the ANDI project).[30]

The future directions set out by the ABS for *Measures of Australia's Progress*[31] specifically refer to the need for collaboration with community organisations and research bodies, including ANDI. The ABS's 2012 consultation report "Aspirations for our Nation" sets out the likely new domains and themes resulting from the consultation (p 16). This proposes new measures in important but complex and unchartered areas such as: close relationships; community connections and adversity; a fair go; enriched lives; appreciating the environment; protecting the environment; sustaining the environment; effective governance; trust; participation; informed public debate; people's rights and responsibilities. However, as the ABS itself indicates, there are major data gaps in the desirable 'headline' indicators in many of these fields.[32] A strong research collaboration on these themes will be mutually beneficial.

Over the past twelve months or more, an informal Memorandum of Understanding is being developed between the ABS and ANDI which will specify the distinctive roles and the common ground for each project. The terms of the MoU being negotiated with the ABS can and should also include specific reference to the ABS role in AP21C and provide for mutual benefits (such as a commitment to undertake research work the ABS deems important for MAP 2.0 over the next 3 to 5 years).

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30 There is a parallel in the case of the US Government Accountability Office. The GAO has been the most powerful advocate of the proposed 'Key National Indicators' system in the US. However, as the then head of the GAO said, 'While GAO remains a strong supporter of key national indicators for the United States, there has to be a limit to our advocacy efforts in order to preserve our institutional independence. Going forward, others will have to take the lead on this issue'. (Walker, D. 2007, 'How Key National Indicators Can Improve Policy Making and Strengthen Democracy' (OECD Global Forum, Istanbul, 2007)

31 ABS 2010, *Future Directions in Measuring Progress*.

32 In its release of 28 June 2013, the ABS identifies 'data gaps' in the case of 2 out of 8 of the desirable 'headline indicators' in the 'Society' domain of national progress, 3 out of 6 in the 'Environment' domain, and 3 out of 5 in the 'Governance' domain: www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1370.0.00.003main+features1222013

VICHEALTH

VicHealth has been the most consistent and generous supporter of new measures of progress in Australia at all levels from local to national. It has had a long history of supporting innovative research in wellbeing (broadly construed), in the socio-economic determinants of health and in health equity. VicHealth is a founding partner in ANDI and a co-funder of the AP21C pilot project, and it is hoped that this partnership will continue over the three years of the full project.

ASSA

The AP21C pilot proposal provided for a national workshop of experts in various fields of progress to be convened to consider key issues of methodology, domain selection and index development. A proposal to host such a workshop was put to the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in 2012 by ASSA Fellow and committee member Dennis Trewin. This has been agreed in principle and a sum of around $7000 allocated for the purpose. However, it was not possible to convene this workshop as planned. It is now proposed to proceed with it later in 2013 when it is likely to be better resourced, since Deakin University has proposed to co-host it and provide venue and facilities. It may then also be possible to invite some eminent international participants (such as Marilyn Waring, Enrico Giovannini, Joseph Stiglitz, Doug May, Bryan Smale and Martine Durand).

CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING

Discussions have taken place in the past four months with Canadian Index of Wellbeing Director Professor Bryan Smale at Waterloo University, which may also have positive implications for AP21C. They include a proposal for a "sister University" arrangement between Waterloo and Deakin universities; exchanges of research staff between the two projects; and the Canadian Council of

Academies (ACOLA's equivalent body in Canada) becoming a partner, perhaps in an international study developed through AP21C.

OECD

The OECD has been the key driver of the global movement to redefine progress, and a pioneer in developing progress measurement frameworks and indexes. It is also the main international forum and organiser for global policy research work in this field. Many people associated with ACOLA and the ANDI project have worked with the OECD and its Global Project on *Measuring the Progress Of Societies*: for example, Fiona Stanley, Mike Salvaris, Geoff Woolcock, Bob Cummins, Barry McGaw and Robin Batterham. Strong links and partnerships with the OECD for the AP21C project would be good both for the project itself and for ACOLA.

At the 4th OECD Global Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy in Delhi in October 2012, ACOLA and Deakin University co-sponsored an important workshop of the OECD Global Progress Research Network and later, discussions were initiated between Deakin and the OECD for some form of partnership on measuring progress work that would benefit both sides. In the past few months, a detailed Memorandum of Understanding has been drawn up between Deakin and the OECD, which would also include ACOLA, the AP21C project and ANDI.

Under the agreement now being considered, Deakin University would provide research and technical support for the OECD's Wiki progress website (www.wikiprogress.org – currently the most important international research and information website on progress measurement issues) and for the further development of the OECD's Global Progress Research Network and proposed "Progress Universities Group" in the Asia-Pacific region (See Box 7 below). The OECD will provide technical assistance and information for the development of an Australian national progress index based on the OECD's Better Life Index. Both these objectives would benefit the development

BOX 7: LEADING UNIVERSITIES IN OECD GLOBAL PROGRESS NETWORK

- Cambridge University, UK
- Central European University, Budapest
- Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
- Florence University, Italy
- Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po) France
- Kyoto University, Japan
- Memorial University, Canada
- Oxford University, UK
- Princeton University, USA
- United Nations University (UNU), Tokyo
- Universidad de las Americas-Puebla, Mexico
- University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy
- Waterloo University, Canada

of AP21C. Closer links with the OECD would also facilitate international research exchange opportunities for ACOLA with Academies in other countries, and a proposal on these lines was prepared for the ACOLA Secretariat Board earlier this year.

COLLABORATION WITH MAJOR EUROPEAN PROGRESS RESEARCH PROJECTS

In the past six months, through the OECD Global Progress Research Network, discussions have taken place while the leaders of some key European projects with similar goals to AP21C. These include the Italian BES ('Equitable and sustainable well-being') project, the e-Frame consortium of European universities and progress practitioners; and the Brainpool project, which is looking especially at how new progress measures can be applied in practice, in policy making and planning. Each of these projects has expressed interest working with ANDI and the AP21C project, and there should to be good opportunities to create such partnerships, some of which might give access to the considerable research funds of the European Union.

REVIEW OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

An important part of the pilot project brief for the Project Working Group has been to explore opportunities for additional funding for the Pilot project itself and more broadly, for the full AP21C project over a three year period.

The pilot project began its life with a budget of $50,000 but soon secured a significant addition to this budget (from VicHealth). During the pilot, Cbus (the Building Industry Superannuation Fund) generously provided $50,000 for ANDI on the basis that around $35,000 of this could be used for the development of ANDI's research program and specifically for AP21C.

The Academy of Social Sciences in Australia has put aside a sum of approximately $7000 to support a national research workshop for AP21C.

As indicated earlier, both AP21C and ANDI's research program will potentially benefit to the extent of staff resources equivalent to $300,000 per year for three years, under the agreement being currently negotiated with Deakin University. As part of these negotiations, Prof Mike Salvaris has prepared an estimate of five-year funding options for an enlarged ANDI-Deakin-ACOLA research program. This review assumes that if ACOLA, Deakin and a number of other partners are applicants for a series of related domain progress projects or even perhaps a Cooperative Research Centre proposal (or the equivalent in the NHMRC scheme), a significant portion of these funds would be available for AP21C via a series of conjoint research proposals which would be effectively designed to carry out a common and agreed agenda in each of 12 progress domains.

More immediately, AP21C should be a strong contender for a major grant under the LASP 'Securing Australia's Future' (SAF) program. It appears to directly meet the requirements of this program and has already met with the in-principle approval of the Chief Scientist.

Taking all these options into consideration, there would appear to be solid prospects for funding AP21C scale which would permit a strong clustering of research expertise.

7

PLANNING FOR AP21C:
THE NEXT THREE YEARS

THIS FINAL SECTION ADDRESSES TWO ISSUES: FIRST, WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT FROM THE PILOT PROJECT ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF THE FULL AP21C PROJECT AND HOW IT MIGHT BEST BE CARRIED OUT?; AND SECONDLY, IF THESE LEARNINGS ARE POSITIVE, WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS ACOLA AND ITS PARTNERS SHOULD TAKE TO MOVE THE PROJECT FORWARD AS A FULL 3-YEAR PROJECT AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FULL PROJECT?

THE FEASIBILITY OF SPECIFIC AP21C GOALS

Perhaps the most direct way to assess the feasibility of the AP21C project is to review the key goals and objectives that it seeks to achieve and then ask what do the pilot project and the general expertise of PWG members in this field tell us about the feasibility of those goals and how they could be best carried out.

As has been seen, the specific goals that AP21C was intended to achieve were to:

- create a sound, cross-disciplinary scientific foundation for understanding, defining, promoting, planning and measuring societal progress in Australia in the 21st Century;

- develop critical policy tools and information to support policy choices by Government and the community, particularly an index of national progress and well-being;

- promote widespread community engagement and improve public awareness and debate on vital national questions about the progress, wellbeing and future development of the Australian nation and of its people, society, economy, environment and governance;

- contribute to more equitable and sustainable wellbeing for Australians in the 21st century;

- build a strong and effective national research network that enables Australia to participate in, and benefit from, the growing global and national research effort to redefine and remeasure societal progress;

- integrate the project into international activities and optimise existing international as well as Australian knowledge;

- help influence a long-term national policy agenda;

- promote collaboration and expert input over a wide range of academic disciplines, involving all four Learned Academies and key researchers from many universities, as well as other community and government partners;

- convene expert cross-disciplinary research teams working with policymakers and the community in each of the key domains of progress.

What follows is a brief summary of the pilot study's findings and the relevant experience and expertise of Project Working Group members in the field of measuring progress, as they relate to each of these specific goals.

The goal of **creating a sound cross disciplinary scientific foundation for understanding and measuring societies progress** seems readily achievable. As indicated above, there already is a vigorous and collaborative global research movement attempting to do this. Australia is a key participant in this global work, but also has additional advantages in its existing experience and research strengths in this field.

The subject of an **index of national progress and well-being**, as Saunders and Wong indicate, is not uncontroversial. However, their advice, supported by a substantial body of evidence (both in the increasing number of indexes being developed around the world and the growing research literature[33]) suggests that this is an achievable goal with advantages for public policy and democracy. For example, the SPRC study concludes from the Canadian project that a national progress index can have significant benefits in terms of its explanatory power and the interest which generates in public decision discussion and policy-making.

The pilot project has looked in detail at **community engagement and public awareness,** both because of its general importance in developing national progress measures and from the perspective of the platforms and processes by which it can be undertaken. The results suggest some essential guidelines: care needs to be taken in planning such engagement processes; different kinds of engagement 'platforms' will be needed for different groups; and the exercise will require extensive resources and well targeted information campaigns. If these criteria are met, the goals of promoting widespread community engagement and improving public awareness and debate on national progress would seem feasible.

In this project, Australia's national academies will support the building of a new index of national progress, based on community priorities and high-quality research. The central concept or hypothesis on which this index is to be based is the notion of

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33 See, for example: Bandura 2008, Hoskins et al 2006, Nardo et al 2005, Canadian Index of Wellbeing 2012, OECD 2013, Porter et al 2013. In June 2012 the Nossal Institute of Global Health at Melbourne University convened a research workshop entitled 'How does Australia fare in international indexes measuring well-being and what can we learn from them?', proceedings from which were published in *Australian Economic Review*, March 2013.

re-defining progress as 'an increase in equitable and sustainable wellbeing' rather than an increase in economic production. It would be reasonable to expect, therefore, that if the project is successful, it will over time help bring about policy changes that reflect this emphasis and hence contribute to improvements in actual **equitable and sustainable well-being for Australians**.

Australia already has the basis of a **strong and effective national research network** in this field. This network needs to be mobilised and organised; but with the additional prestige and resources that ACOLA's presence in this field could bring, and stronger links with the global progress research network of the OECD, this should be an achievable goal, and one that may be attractive to research funders.

A key part of the pilot project has been to investigate a series of **international partnerships and ways to link with international projects to optimise knowledge**. If the project is accepted as proposed, it would build on what is already a solid basis of international cooperation between Australian researchers and international universities and projects in this field.

The PWG and pilot study reviews of contemporary (national and international) projects for social progress measurement show that in many of these projects have as one of their key purposes, to bring together citizens and policymakers **to consider long-term visions and agendas** for their communities and society. As indicated earlier, this goal is central to the OECD global program and the Istanbul Declaration.

The pilot project has reviewed national and international experience on this question, and concludes that the task of developing new national systems of measuring 'equitable and sustainable progress' is both inherently and in practice one that demands a high level of '**cooperation across all academic disciplines and academies'.** The evidence presented in this report shows that such inter-disciplinary collaboration is occurring in practice and with excellent outcomes globally (for example, through the OECD, the UN, and the European Union and in Canada, Italy, and USA). As suggested earlier in this report, this is not always an easy task, given the residual segmentation of researchers within universities and research disciplines; but it can at least be said that this project has a better chance than most others of reversing this trend.

The process of **constructing domain progress research teams** is at the heart of both AP21C and the ANDI project. The pilot studies (SRC and SPRC) both confirm that Australian preferences for key 'domains' of progress align well with international models. Given the resources and the support of a key university such as Deakin, and the successful example of domain research teams in the Canadian index, this seems an achievable objective for Australia and one that will have significant long-term benefits for research generally: for example, in creating greater comparability in measuring progress across different fields.

ELEMENTS OF AN AP21C DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013-2015

ACOLA Council has agreed to fund this pilot project for the specific purpose of determining whether the full AP21C project was feasible and how it could be best carried out. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that if the pilot project has produced a positive verdict on the feasibility of the full Project, ACOLA's support for its next stage support will be forthcoming.

On this basis, it is possible to identify a number of important elements for the next steps and the outline of a two- to three-year plan. The following are the suggested stages in such a plan.

1. The current pilot project partners, and Deakin University, should be invited to become partners in the full project, and ABS should be invited as a key project advisor.

2. Assuming the Deakin University proposal is successfully negotiated, the proposed unit should be established at Deakin as soon as possible and this could become the de facto planning centre for an enlarged AP21C project. (However, as suggested earlier, there are important reasons why ACOLA should continue to have a prominent role as auspice and partner in the AP21C project, even if day-to-day management of the project is based at Deakin.)

3. The next task should be to set up Domain Group leaders and for these leaders to begin the task of identifying and recruiting outstanding academic participants and early career researchers to form part of perhaps 12 progress domain groups, on a similar pattern to the Canadian Index of Well-being. These domain groups should be conducted on agreed lines in order to ensure the same process of community engagement, indicator and index development, and annual reporting of progress in that field.

4. Arrangements for the ASSA workshop to proceed in late 2013 should be put in place. This could be a two-day workshop hosted by Deakin and ACOLA and additional funding could be sought to enlarge its participation to include prominent overseas academics and practitioners as well as at least 30 outstanding Australian researchers.

5. Domain research leaders should have as one of their earliest tasks to develop applications for ARC or NHMRC grants to fund the process of domain development in their field. In this task ACOLA should work with ANDI, which will be seeking funding for the community engagement component of the index construction task.

CONCLUSION

The Project Working Group believes that the pilot project has clearly demonstrated the feasibility of the AP21C project. It is undoubtedly a complex task, and a major research undertaking: but it can be done and it is worth doing.

The PWG has examined the key tasks that AP21C has set itself. It has developed strong institutional partnerships that would sustain AP21C and believes that the collateral community and partner support for this project, and the interest of key researchers, would also be strong. It believes that the project has excellent prospects of being funded on a substantial scale.

The PWG believes that ACOLA's leadership and prominent participation in this project will be an important prerequisite to its success.

Finally, it believes that the project itself has the potential to bring about significant and lasting benefits for research (especially inter-disciplinary and collaborative research); for public policy; and for democracy in Australia. It has been said of a number of international progress measurement projects that they have the capacity, in their countries, to help shape a shared vision of equitable and sustainable well-being. Australia has this chance too.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING

References are sorted alphabetically according to the following categories:

1. AP21 Project Reports
2. The global 'Redefining progress' movement and 'the idea of progress'
3. Measuring progress case studies, handbooks and best practice
4. National progress measurement models
5. Regional and local progress measurement projects
6. Composite indexes of progress
7. Australian projects and research
8. Democratic and human rights issues
9. Application of progress measures and policy issues
10. General reference

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APPENDIX B

TABLES AND CHARTS

B

APPENDIX

APPENDIX B-1
THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO REDEFINE PROGRESS: KEY DRIVERS AND MILESTONES 1950-2012

1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-
Critiques of GDP (Kuznets) (1950s on)	US Social indicators and social auditing initiatives (Bauer, Gross, Mondale) (1960s, 1970s)	UN Social Accounts project (Stone, Meade etc) (1970s)	WHO, 'Holistic health', Social Determinants of Health etc (Marmot, Wilkinson (1980s on)	Atlantic Monthly 'If GDP us up, why is America Down?' (Cobb et al) (1995)	OECD 'Measuring the Progress of Societies', Istanbul Declaration (2004 on)	G20 Leaders Statement on need for new progress measures (2009, 2010, 2011)
	Club of Rome, Environment movement and 'Limits to Growth' (Meadows et al) (1960s on)	UNDP, Human Development Index (ul Haq, Sen) (1970s on)	Women's movement (Waring, 'Counting for Nothing') (1980s)		European Union 'Beyond GDP' (2007 on)	UN General Assembly resolution on holistic wellbeing measures (sponsored by Bhutan) (2012)
		Bhutan, Gross National Happiness, (Buddhist worldview of progress) (1970s-)	Community indicators movement (local democracy, community planning) (1980s on)	ABS Measures of Australia's Progress (Trewin) (1999 on)	Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission' (2008-2009)	UN High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012)
		'Social Indicators Research' journal founded (1974)	Sustainable Development (Brundtland Report) (1987 on)	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting (1990s on)	Climate Change, Global Financial Crisis (2008 on): rethinking GDP as progress	UNDP Istanbul Declaration 'Towards an Equitable and Sustainable Future for All' (2012)
		Happiness economics ('Easterlin Paradox') (1974); 'Steady State Economics' (Daly, 1977)		Happiness and wellbeing research (Veenhoven, Kahneman, Frey, Cummins) (1990s on)		Rio+20: 'The Future We Want', Sustain- able Development Goals, UN General Assembly (2012)
		OECD Social indicators movement (1970s, 1980s)				OECD-Government of India 4th Global Forum on Measuring Progress, New Delhi, 2012

APPENDIX B-2
THE ISTANBUL DECLARATION (JUNE 2007)

We, the representatives of the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and the World Bank,

Recognise that while our societies have become more complex, they are more closely linked than ever. Yet they retain differences in history, culture, and in economic and social development.

We are encouraged that initiatives to measure societal progress through statistical indicators have been launched in several countries and on all continents. Although these initiatives are based on different methodologies, cultural and intellectual paradigms, and degrees of involvement of key stakeholders, they reveal an emerging consensus on the need to undertake the measurement of societal progress in every country, going beyond conventional economic measures such as GDP per capita. Indeed, the United Nation's system of indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a step in that direction.

A culture of evidence-based decision making has to be promoted at all levels, to increase the welfare of societies. And in the "information age," welfare depends in part on transparent and accountable public policy making. The availability of statistical indicators of economic, social, and environmental outcomes and their dissemination to citizens can contribute to promoting good governance and the improvement of democratic processes. It can strengthen citizens' capacity to influence the goals of the societies they live in through debate and consensus building, and increase the accountability of public policies.

We affirm our commitment to measuring and fostering the progress of societies in all their dimensions and to supporting initiatives at the country level. We urge statistical offices, public and private organisations, and academic experts to work alongside representatives of their communities to produce high-quality, facts-based information that can be used by all of society to form a shared view of societal well-being and its evolution over time.

Official statistics are a key "public good" that foster the progress of societies. The development of indicators of societal progress offers an opportunity to reinforce the role of national statistical authorities as key providers of relevant, reliable, timely and comparable data and the indicators required for national and international reporting. We encourage governments to invest resources to develop reliable data and indicators according to the "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics" adopted by the United Nations in 1994.

To take this work forward we need to:

- encourage communities to consider for themselves what "progress" means in the 21st century;
- share best practices on the measurement of societal progress and increase the awareness of the need to do so using sound and reliable methodologies;
- stimulate international debate, based on solid statistical data and indicators, on both global issues of societal progress and comparisons of such progress;
- produce a broader, shared, public understanding of changing conditions, while highlighting areas of significant change or inadequate knowledge;
- advocate appropriate investment in building statistical capacity, especially in developing countries, to improve the availability of data and indicators needed to guide development programs and report on progress toward international goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

Much work remains to be done, and the commitment of all partners is essential if we are to meet the demand that is emerging from our societies. We recognise that efforts will be commensurate with the capacity of countries at different levels of development. We invite both public and private organisations to contribute to this ambitious effort to foster the world's progress and we welcome initiatives at the local, regional, national and international levels.

APPENDIX B-3
PREAMBLE TO USA KEY NATIONAL INDICATORS BILL, 2010

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Measures of the nation's current condition are requisite for citizens and their leaders to establish appropriate national direction and commit resources to that direction.

(2) A key national indicators system consolidates the most important statistical measures of the current national condition and makes them readily available to the public.

(3) The Congress and the American people have a substantial interest in readily available, comprehensive and unbiased information on key indicators to assess the position and progress of the nation, both on an absolute basis and compared to other countries.

(4) Vast repositories of data exist in many public agencies, levels of government and among private for profit and non-profit organizations, but there is no single, interactive, trusted source of quality information on all of the issues required to fully assess the state of the United States on a regular basis.

(5) Rapidly evolving information technologies have created new opportunities at relatively low cost for the American public to have access to high quality, comprehensive information on the state of the nation from a single source.

(6) The American taxpayer funds and cooperates in producing statistical data for the benefit of the nation, but accessing and using the information drawn from these data is too difficult for it to be widely useful to the general public.

(7) Key national and local indicator systems are beginning to flourish in neighborhoods, communities, cities, counties, regions, and states across the nation. However, the benefits of such local and regional systems will be greatly enhanced if the Federal government provides a complementary national key indicator system.

(8) Complex and interrelated policy issues and the constituencies required to frame and resolve them need a shared factual foundation on changing conditions to advance policy debates and effective solutions.

(9) Neither government alone nor the private sector alone can assemble a comprehensive, credible, relevant, reliable, and responsible set of indicators on the state of the United States. To make this a reality requires a public-private partnership.

(10) With more readily usable, accessible, valuable information available from a single source, the American public can educate themselves to a greater level of understanding about their country and thus be better able to participate in and make significant decisions on public and private issues.

(11) The nation's schools, media, researchers and others will use such a resource to educate and inform a more numerate as well as literate citizenry. A higher level of citizen engagement and participation can promote a healthier democracy through improving transparency and enhancing accountability.

(12) In a rapidly evolving and competitive global economy, other countries are establishing such systems, and the capacity for a nation to assess its true progress will soon become a strategic competitive advantage in an innovative, knowledge-based economy.

(13) Widely shared information in a society improves market functioning and reduces social welfare losses.

(14) A key national indicator system has been extensively researched and recommended to Congress by the GAO. The GAO has also emphasized the importance of a public-private partnership. Furthermore, The National Academy of Sciences has been involved in planning, research, development, and advisory activities on issues and opportunities relating to the establishment of a key national indicator system.

(15) The Federal government's ongoing involvement in creating, supporting, advising and overseeing a key national indicator system is vital to growing and evolving it as a national resource to educate and inform the American people.

APPENDIX B-4
MAJOR GLOBAL 'BEYOND GDP' INITIATIVES

International Beyond GDP initiatives:

- **Beyond GDP** (website supported by the European Commission and Beyond GDP Partners): www.beyond-gdp.eu
- **GDP and Beyond** (Eurostat): http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/gdp_and_beyond/introduction
- **Measuring Well-Being and Progress** (OECD portal): www.oecd.org/measuringprogress
- **OECD Better Life Initiative:** (Composite index of wellbeing): www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org
- **Wikiprogress: (**Global website): www.wikiprogress.org
- **Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress:** www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/
- **Human Development Index:** www.hdr.undp.org

Official National Beyond GDP initiatives:

- **Australia** (Measures of Australia's Progress, ABS): www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1370.0
- **Bhutan** (Gross National Happiness): www.grossnationalhappiness.com
- **Ireland** (Measuring Ireland's Progress, CSO): www.eurireland.ie/news/measuring-irelands-progress-statistical-report-.1665.html
- **Italy** (Benessere Equo Sostenible, *Equitable Sustainable Well-Being*, ISTAT): www.misuredelbenessere.it
- **New Zealand** (The Social Report): http://socialreport.msd.govt.nz
- **UK** (Measuring National Well-Being Programme, ONS): www.ons.gov.uk/well-being

Other Beyond GDP initiatives:

- **Adjusted Net Savings** (World Bank): http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/ENVIRONMENT/
- **Australian National Development Index**: www.andi.org.au
- **Australian Unity Wellbeing Index** (Deakin University, Australia): www.australianunity.com.au/about-us/Wellbeing/AUWBI
- **Calvert-Henderson Quality of Life Indicators:** www.calvert-henderson.com
- **Canadian Index of Well-Being** (Leading national wellbeing index): www.ciw.ca
- **Community Accounts Newfoundland Labrador**: www.communityaccounts.ca
- **Community Indicators Consortium** (Community based wellbeing measures): www.communityindicators.net
- **Ecological Footprint** (Global Footprint Network): www.footprintnetwork.org
- **Eframe – European Framework for Measuring Progress** (EU FP7 project): www.eframeproject.eu/
- **Environmental Performance Index** (Yale University): www.epi.yale.edu
- **Environmental Pressure Index** (Ecologic): www.ecologic.eu/4202
- **European System of Social Indicators** (GESIS): www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/social-indicators/eusi/
- **FEEM Sustainability Index** (FEEM): www.feemsi.org
- **Felicidade Interna Bruta** (*Gross National Happiness*, Brazil): www.felicidadeinternabruta.org.br
- **Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index** (Gallup): www.well-beingindex.com
- **Good Childhood Report** (Children's Society, UK): www.childrenssociety.org.uk/well-being
- **GPI Atlantic** (Canadian Atlantic provinces wellbeing measures): www.gpiatlantic.org
- **Happy Planet Index** (New Economics Foundation, UK): www.happyplanetindex.org
- **Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** (The Chinese University of Hong Kong): www.cuhk.edu.hk/ssc/qol/eng/hkqol

- **Humankind Index** (Oxfam Scotland): http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/poverty-in-the-uk/humankind-index
- **Human Sustainable Development Index** (UN University): http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/the-2010-human-sustainable-development-index
- **Jacksonville Community Indicators** (Jacksonville Community Council Inc, USA): www.jcci.org/indicators
- **Legatum Prosperity Index** (Legatum): www.prosperity.com
- **Measure of America** (Social Science Research Council, USA): www.measureofamerica.org
- **National Accounts of Well-Being** (**nef**): www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org
- **Progress Index** (Centre for Societal Progress): http://fortschrittszentrum.de/veroeffentlichungen/2011-12_Progress_Index_2011
- **Regional Quality of Development Index** (Lunaria, Italy): www.sbilanciamoci.org/quars
- **Social Progress Index** (Social Progress Imperative Washington): www.socialprogressimperative.org
- **Shifting the Dial** (Carnegie UK Trust : success factors for wellbeing measures): http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/2012
- **State of the USA:** www.stateoftheusa.org
- **Sustainable Society Index** (Sustainable Society Foundation): www.ssfindex.com
- **WellBeBe, Belgium:** www.wellbebe.be
- **Wellbeing and Resilience Measure** (Young Foundation, UK): http://youngfoundation.org/publications

Source: B*rainpool Project, European Union*, www.brainpoolproject.eu/links/ 2013, adapted.

APPENDIX B-5
COMPARISON OF KEY PROGRESS THEMES IN DIFFERENT PROJECTS

	Society	Economy	Environment	Governance
Australian National Development Index (ANDI)	• Children and young people • Communities and regions • Culture, recreation and leisure • Education and creativity • Health • Indigenous well-being • Subjective well-being	• Economic life and prosperity • Work and work life	• Environment and sustainability	• Democracy and governance • Justice and fairness
Australian Bureau of Statistics Measuring Australia's Progress	• Health • Close relationships • Home • Safety • Learning and knowledge • Community connections and diversity • A fair go • Enriched lives	• Opportunities • Jobs • Prosperity • A resilient economy	• Healthy natural environment • Appreciating the environment • Protecting the environment • Sustaining the environment • Healthy built environment • Working together	• Trust • Effective governance • Participation • Informed public debate • People's rights and responsibilities
Canadian Index of Well-being	• Community vitality • Education • Healthy populations • Leisure and culture • Time use	• Living standards	• Environment	• Democratic engagement
OECD	• Education and skills • Health • Housing • Personal security • Social connections • Subjective well-being • Work-life balance	• Income and wealth • Jobs and earnings	• Environmental quality	• Civic engagement and governance
The ACOLA community consultation	• Community connections and diversity • Cultural diversity • Immigration • Close relationships • Social relationships and support networks • Home • Housing • A fair go • Social welfare and social security • Transport • Enriched lives • Leisure and recreation • Work-life balance • Safety • Neighbourhood and community safety • National security • Health • Health • Learning and Knowledge • Education • Technology and information	• Opportunities • Employment • Trade and industry • Prosperity • Wealth and materialism? • A resilient economy • Banking and finance	• Protecting national resources	• Governance and the political system • Standards in public life • Policing • The justice system

APPENDIX B-6
UNPROMPTED AND FAVOURABLE DOMAIN COVERAGE BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPING

↑ = mentioned as a 'positive'
↓ = mentioned as a 'negative'

Note that blank cells indicate the subject or topic did not arise without prompting

ANDI Domain List	Group 1 Retired	Group 2 Families	Group 3 Young Adults	Group 4 Working age no dependents	Group 5 Disability/ health problem	Group 6 CALD	Group 7 Regional
Community well-being		↑			↑	↑ ↓	
Cultural diversity		↑		↑	↑ ↓	↑ ↓	
Democracy and governance	↑ ↓		↑	↑ ↓	↓	↑	↓
Education	↑ ↓	↑ ↓	↑	↑	↑ ↓	↑	↑ ↓
Environment and sustainability	↑			↑	↑	↑	
Financial security (economic life and prosperity)	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑ ↓	↓
Health and well-being		↑ ↓		↑	↑	↑	↑ ↓
Infrastructure (investment, traffic/transport, utilities)		↓		↓	↓	↑	↑ ↓
Justice and fairness				↑	↓	↑	↓
Personal relationships (family and friends)					↑ ↓		
Recreation and leisure time				↑	↑		↑
Safety and security	↑ ↓		↑	↓	↑		
Technology and innovation					↓		↑ ↓
Work and life (employment opportunities, work/life balance etc)	↓	↑	↑ ↓		↓	↑ ↓	
Children and young people							
Indigenous well-being							
Additional 'domains'							
Food/produce	↑			↑		↑	↑ ↓
Climate				↑	↑		↑
Freedom	↑	↑	↑		↑		

APPENDIX B-7
MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES FOR AUSTRALIA'S PROGRESS

Most important qualities	%
Secure	38
Peaceful	36
Productive	33
Hard-working	29
Democratic	28
Fair	27
Free	26
Stable	24
Prosperous	23
Equal	21
Tolerant	21
Happy	19
Independent	18
Caring	16
Innovative	12
Competitive	12
Unified	11
Traditional	10
Spiritual	9
Diverse	8
Clever	7
Open	7
Creative	6
Giving	5
Other	2

APPENDIX B-8
NATIONAL PROGRESS PRIORITIES: IMPORTANCE RATINGS. (BASE: TOTAL SAMPLE: N=1012)

Priority	Domain	National priorities	Mean (0-10)
1	Social	Preventing war from occurring on Australian soil	9.2
2	Social	Everyone has access to a high quality health system	9.1
2	Social	Ensuring that our children grow up healthy, happy and well educated and can reach their full potential	9.1
4	Social	Everyone having access to a high quality education system	9.0
4	Governance	Everyone being treated equally and fairly by the law	9.0
4	Economy	Providing enough job opportunities so that everyone who is capable of working can find a paid job	9.0
7	Governance	High standards of honesty in politics and public life	8.9
7	Economy	Ensuring we have a safe banking and financial system	8.9
9	Social	Having access to high quality rail, road and transport networks	8.8
9	Governance	Maintaining a fair and democratic system of government where everyone has a voice	8.8
11	Social	Adequate support provided in Australia for people who need it	8.7
12	Environment	Preserving the natural environment	8.6
13	Social	As a population, finding a balance between paid work and the other things in life	8.5
13	Social	Protecting the freedom of speech of all people, even for those with whom I may not agree	8.5
13	Social	Being a society in which people from different backgrounds all get on well together	8.5
16	Economy	Increasing economic growth and national wealth	8.4
17	Social	Everyone having access to high quality information and communications technology	8.3
18	Social	Having an independent and high quality media	8.1
19	Social	Access to a range of arts, sport, leisure and recreation activities that all people have the opportunity to get involved in	7.8
20	Social	Having diverse ownership and control of the media	7.7
21	Social	Ensuring the wellbeing of Australia's Indigenous people	7.6
22	Social	Making sure that as a country we provide our fair share of foreign aid to people around the world in need of help	6.6

APPENDIX B-9
NATIONAL PRIORITIES: PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE COMPARED TO PERFORMANCE

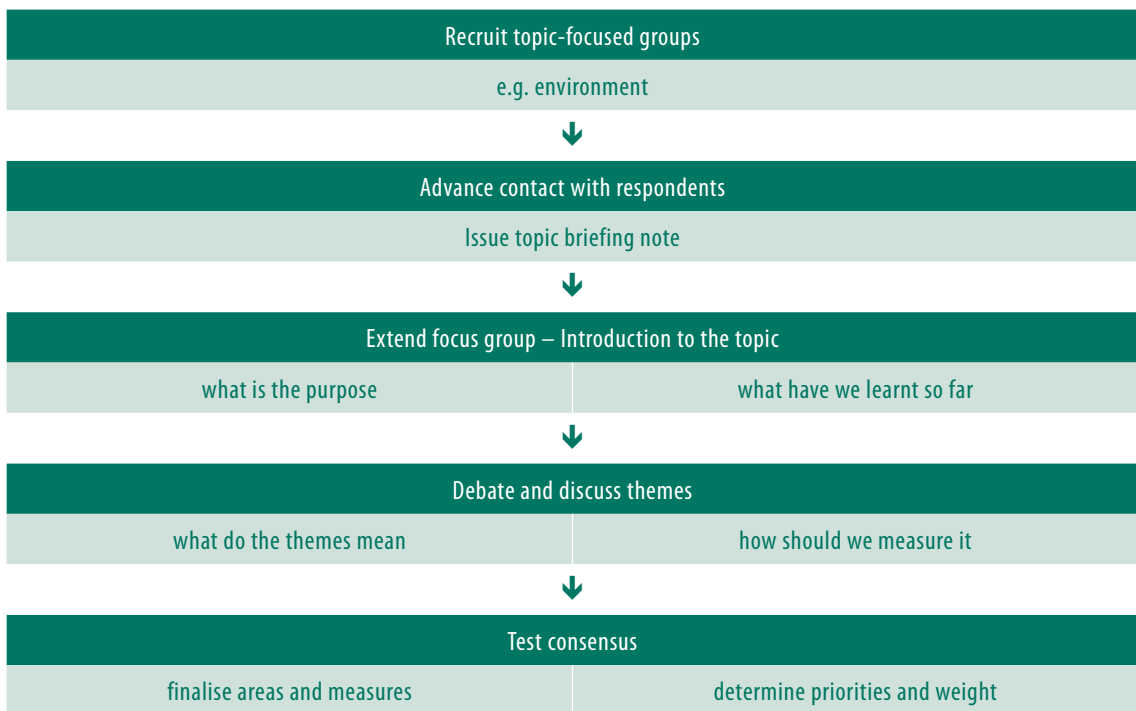| National priorities and performance	Priority Mean 0-10	Performance Mean 0-10	Gap
High standards of honesty in politics and public life	8.9	3.7	5.2
Providing enough job opportunities so that everyone who is capable of working can find a paid job	9.0	5.1	3.9
Everyone has access to a high quality health system	9.1	5.2	3.9
Having access to high quality rail, road and transport networks	8.8	5.2	3.6
Everyone being treated equally and fairly by the law	9.0	5.4	3.6
Adequate support provided in Australia for people who need it	8.7	5.3	3.4
Maintaining a fair and democratic system of government where everyone has a voice	8.8	5.5	3.3
Everyone having access to a high quality education system	9.0	5.8	3.2
Being a society in which people from different backgrounds all get on well together	8.5	5.3	3.2
Ensuring that our children grown up healthy, happy and well educated and can reach their full potential	9.1	6	3.1
Preserving the natural environment	8.6	5.8	2.8
As a country, finding a balance between paid work and the other things in life	8.5	5.8	2.7
Increasing economic growth and national wealth	8.4	5.7	2.7
Protecting the freedom of speech of all people, even for those with whom I may not agree	8.5	6.2	2.3
Having diverse ownership and control of the media	7.7	5.4	2.3
Everyone having access to high quality information and communications technology	8.3	6.1	2.2
Having an independent and high quality media	8.1	5.9	2.2
Preventing war from occurring on Australian soil	9.2	7.1	2.1
Ensuring we have a safe banking and financial system	8.9	7.0	1.9
Ensuring the wellbeing of Australia's Indigenous people	7.6	5.9	1.7
Access to a range of arts, sport, leisure and recreation activities that all people have the opportunity to get involved in	7.8	6.7	1.1
Ensuring that as a country we provide our fair share of foreign aid to people around the world in need of help	6.6	6.7	-0.1

APPENDIX B-10
CORRELATION BETWEEN 'HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION' AND PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Base: Total sample (n=1,012)

Correlations – National priorities	r	p-values
High standards of honesty in politics and public life	.542	<.001
Increasing economic growth and national wealth	.532	<.001
Providing enough job opportunities so that everyone who is capable of working can find a paid job	.483	<.001
Ensuring that our children grown up healthy, happy and well educated and can reach their full potential	.481	<.001
Being a society in which people from different backgrounds all get on well together	.459	<.001
Making sure adequate support is provided in Australia for people in need	.457	<.001
Maintaining a fair and democratic system of government where everyone has a voice	.453	<.001
Everyone being treated equally and fairly by the law	.445	<.001
Everyone has access to a high quality health system	.435	<.001
Finding a balance between paid work and the other things in life as a country	.434	<.001
Having access to high quality rail, road and transport networks	.413	<.001
Protecting the freedom of speech of all people, even for those with whom I may not agree	.398	<.001
Everyone having access to a high quality education system	.394	<.001
Preventing war from occurring on Australian soil	.388	<.001
Performance on preserving the natural environment for future generations	.386	<.001
Everyone having access to high quality information and communications technology	.374	<.001
Ensuring we have a safe banking and financial system	.301	<.001
Access to a range of arts, sport, leisure and recreation activities that all people have the opportunity to get involved in	.234	<.001
Having an independent and high quality media	.217	<.001
Having diverse ownership and control of the media	.217	<.001
Making sure that as a country we provide our fair share of foreign aid to people around the world in need of help	.182	<.001
Ensuring the wellbeing of Australia's indigenous people	.157	<.001

APPENDIX B-11
PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR DOMAIN-SPECIFIC EXTENDED GROUPS

Recruit topic-focused groups
e.g. environment

⬇

Advance contact with respondents
Issue topic briefing note

⬇

Extend focus group – Introduction to the topic	
what is the purpose	what have we learnt so far

⬇

Debate and discuss themes	
what do the themes mean	how should we measure it

⬇

Test consensus	
finalise areas and measures	determine priorities and weight

APPENDIX B-12
CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR AP21C

1. What is 'world's best practice' in measuring progress?

What are currently agreed as the international "best practice models" in national progress measurement (i.e., considering (a) their conceptual framework, (b) the nature of their progress 'domains', (c) how the community was engaged in their development, (d) the measures of progress they use including composite indices, and (e) how such progress measures are used and applied policy making)? What can Australia learn from them?

2. How do people talk about and understand progress?

How do "ordinary Australians" understand and talk about the idea of national progress? How comfortable are they with these discussions and what are the apparent underlying values and assumptions behind them? What kind of language is needed for effective but unbiased communication by researchers?

3. Is there a consensus or 'shared vision' for Australia's progress?

Is there any kind of consensus amongst the Australian people about the broad goals for our nation's progress (a 'shared vision')? What do we actually know about people's preferred goals and priorities for progress and what things that they think are important for it ? Are there different views according to divides of income, gender, locality, or education? And if so, how can they be reconciled?

4. How to engage people in the process of developing new progress measures?

If the aim is to engage the community in a national community discussion about progress, what are likely to be the most effective and inclusive ways of doing this? How can such methods be constructed without being overly directive or creating a bias or a power imbalance? How much information is needed for people to be able to participate in an informed way? What kind of platform will work best for what kinds of people (focus groups, social media, surveys, deliberative forums, film and video etc)? How can people be encouraged to participate at a time when many feel alienated from political processes? What role can community organisations and NGO's play in such a national process? What model or mix of partners will best secure both legitimacy and community reach?

5. How can progress best be measured and how valid is an index of progress?

How scientifically valid is the idea of a national progress index? Which countries are using such an index now and how successful are they? How could such indexes be used in public policy making and community debate? What are the technical problems in constructing such an index and how can they be overcome (for example, weighting the index according to different community or scientific views as to their importance for progress)? Are other forms of indicator (such as 'headline' indicators) preferable to, or can they complement, such an index?

6. How to organise and manage such a large research project?

How can such a major cross-disciplinary research project best be structured and managed? Is this best done from a single base? How could it be sustainably funded?

7. How to get academic participation, or agreement?

Can academics and scientists themselves agree about national progress, what it is and how we get there? Can researchers in widely differing specialist 'silos' and cultures come to agreement about such a broad topic? How can they be persuaded of the benefits of participating in such an exercise?? What role should ACOLA have in coordinating, partnering or sponsoring such a project?