

Measuring the Future We Want

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Speech at the launch of the ACOLA-VicHealth-ANDI Pilot Project 'Australia's Progress in the 21st Century', Deakin University City Centre, 555 Bourke Street, Melbourne. 30th August 2013.

Vice Chancellor, distinguished guests, representatives of ACOLA and VicHealth, friends and partners of ANDI: welcome to you all.

I want to begin with three brief acknowledgements. First, to recognise the original owners of the land on which we meet, the Wurundjeri people, and their elders past and present. Second, it is a great honour to have Sir Gus Nossal launch this report. Much has been said already about the qualities of Gus Nossal in the Vice Chancellor's introduction and far more could be said. I will say simply this: he has achieved a unique double. In Australia, there is no scientist more eminent, and no citizen more respected. We particularly appreciate that Gus stood in at short notice for Fiona Stanley, who sadly had to withdraw tonight because of ill health in her family. Third, our thanks to the Vice Chancellor and Deakin for hosting this launch, and at these very salubrious premises.

My task tonight is to give an overview of the pilot project whose report we are launching tonight, and whose full title is 'Australia's Progress in the 21st Century: Measuring the Future We Want'.

In effect that report lays the foundations for a major national, collaborative research strategy to underpin the development of an Australian National Development Index.

So it's necessary to say something about ANDI and ACOLA; about the pilot project, how it developed and what its findings were; and how it will contribute to the development, not just of ANDI but, we hope, of better research and policymaking and stronger democracy in Australia.

The timing of this launch was accidental, but has proved meaningful. Unless you are supporters of the Essendon Football Club, you will have noticed we are in the middle of an election. At an election, as an engaged citizen you might have expected a focus on the question of our vision for Australia and our long-term goals. If so, you will be disappointed. But that is exactly what this project is about. The central question ANDI asks is 'What kind of Australia do we want?' and the project's sub-title is 'Measuring the future we want'.

The Global Movement for 'Progress Beyond GDP'

So let me first introduce you to ANDI - the Australian National Development Index project.¹ ANDI is an Australian initiative but it's also very much the child of a wider international process. So it is first necessary to say something about this.

In the past thirty years, as we relate in detail in our report, a global movement has developed to redefine progress beyond GDP. This movement starts with a question: what is true progress for a society? This is a question with a long history and much debated, but of great practical importance .

¹ For more details, see ANDI's website: www.andi.org.au

How national progress is defined in any society and who defines it has a very direct influence on the policies and wellbeing outcomes of that society.

For nearly 60 years now, the key measure of national progress around the world has been GDP, or Gross Domestic Product. GDP's inadequacies as a measure of national progress and wellbeing are now well recognised; and indeed it was never intended to be such a measure.

GDP essentially measures the total market value of our economic production and it counts everything that is produced as a positive, whatever its social or environmental cost. At the same time it takes no account of the qualities of a society, the wellbeing of its people or the state of its environment. Robert Kennedy put this very poetically in a famous speech just weeks before his assassination:

GDP does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything in short except that which makes life worthwhile.²

These things are the real wealth of nations.

Over many decades, this global movement gradually came together like a mighty river from many separate streams converging: environmentalism, the women's movement, the United Nations Development Program, world leading projects such as Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and many others. Australia has played an important role too, especially through the Australian Bureau of Statistics project 'Measuring Australia's Progress' which has influenced statistical agencies around the world.

In 2004 the OECD set out to become the convenor of this world movement through its global project, 'Measuring the Progress of Societies'. The OECD project prompted the European Union project 'Beyond GDP' in 2007, the Stiglitz International Commission in 2009; and a key UN workshop in 2011. It organised four World Forums from 2004 to 2012 each attracting up to 1500 people.

Today there are hundreds of such projects around the world. You have probably heard of the Gross National Happiness program in Bhutan, a tiny state in the Himalayas. But I wonder if you know about the '*Felicidade Interna Bruta*' or Gross National Happiness project in Brazil; or the '*Benessere Equo e Sostenibile*' ('Equitable and sustainable wellbeing') project in Italy.

Over time, a consensus has gradually developed around six key conclusions, embodied in the Istanbul Declaration 2009 and the Delhi OECD World Forum Communiqué in 2012, and now widely accepted:

- The GDP may be a good measure of economic output but it is a poor measure of the quality and wellbeing of society as whole.
- Measures of true societal progress must integrate the economic, social, cultural, environmental and governance dimensions of progress.
- And they must consider the subjective wellbeing of people and the qualities of the society, such as equity and sustainability, not just the material outcomes.

² Robert Kennedy, speech at the University of Kansas, 18 March 1968. Kennedy died on 6 June 1968.

- A new model of societal progress is needed, not just new measures. True progress is an increase in equitable and sustainable wellbeing, not just in economic production.
- This is a critical issue for democracy. New measures must engage citizens and this process can be an important new tool to strengthen democracy, reverse apathy and alienation, and create new shared visions of national progress.
- Lastly, it is now time to apply these new measures and processes in practice, to planning, policy-making and government, in the media and the community.

The implications of this last lesson are profound, not least for our political system. As a recent European commentator suggested:

The development of sets of indicators of national well-being currently under way in many countries is bringing to light six far-reaching consequences for political actors: (i) a new culture of accountability is making its way into politics; (ii) political debates are once again being put on a more factual basis; and (iii) evidence-based policy measures are resulting from the more prominent role of well-being indicators. For political parties in particular the progress debate offers a number of possibilities: (iv) they are being given an exceptional opportunity to develop an overarching narrative; (v) what really separates the different parties is becoming more evident; and (vi) the issues of the current debate can counteract widespread disenchantment with politics and inspire people once more to take an interest in the issues about how we want to live together as a society.³

The current state of the global movement is best summed up in a statement by the OECD Secretary General quoted at the very start of our report :

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.⁴

ANDI's development

So back now to ANDI. ANDI has had a long gestation, of nearly 20 years. ANDI's people have made a significant contribution to the global movement. We've worked with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing; we've been part of the OECD Global Project; and we helped develop the ABS's Measure of Australia's Progress.

In fact we were working on this project well before the OECD's project and many other countries. In 1994 we helped launch an important Senate Inquiry into a new system of national wellbeing and citizenship indicators.⁵ We co-hosted the first national inter-disciplinary conference on 'Measuring Progress' held in Canberra in 1998. We helped build the first state project to develop community based progress measures in 2000, Tasmania Together. In 2004 VicHealth commissioned a key report on the strategic development of Australian progress and wellbeing measures at local, state and national levels. A year later, a national progress research network was set up. Then in 2008, at the

³ Kroll, C. 2011. 'Measuring progress and wellbeing: an opportunity for political parties?' Ebert Foundation, Berlin

⁴ Gurría, A. 2009, 'Charting progress, building visions, improving life', Keynote Speech, OECD 3rd World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, Busan, South Korea, 27–30 October.

⁵ Senate, Legal and Constitutional Committee, *Inquiry into National Indicators of Citizenship and Wellbeing*, 1993–1996

National Ideas Summit - surely some of you remember that? – a proposal by this network for a National Development Index was strongly endorsed. The year after, ANDI was launched in Melbourne and a National Steering Group formed in 2010.

ANDI in 2013: where it is going

So what is ANDI in 2013? And what are its plans for the next decade?

Today, ANDI is a major national community-led initiative. It's incorporated as a non-profit company with a Board of prominent and experienced Australians including Fiona Stanley, Tim Costello and Jan Owen. It has multiple partners – nearly fifty of them - representing a broad range of national interests and perspectives.

They include peak bodies such as the Australian Council of Social Service, The Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Human Rights Commission; faith based and service organisations like the Uniting Church, World Vision, and Red Cross Australia; business groups including ACIL-Allen Consulting and the Bendigo Bank; indigenous agencies such as the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency; philanthropic bodies like the Australian Communities Foundation and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund in Melbourne; youth groups including the Foundation for Young Australians and YMCA Australia; and academic bodies such as Deakin University, Griffith University, and the Australian Council of Learned Academies.

All up, ANDI's partners have members and clients totalling 2 million Australians.

We're going to be *very* busy in the next five years. Starting next year, we will launch a broad national community engagement program *and* a national research program to support it.

On the basis of these, we will develop and publish each year an ongoing National Index of Wellbeing and progress report bringing together twelve crucial areas of national progress and wellbeing (which we call 'domains'). These domains are: 1. Children and youth wellbeing; 2. Communities and regions; 3. Culture, recreation and leisure; 4. Democracy and governance; 5. Economic life and prosperity; 6. Education and creativity; 7. Environment and sustainability; 8. Health; 9. Indigenous wellbeing; 10. Justice and fairness; 11. Subjective wellbeing; 12. Work and work life.

We also plan to produce an annual index and progress report in each of these domains. These domain indexes will be released consecutively in a different month (health in January, justice in February, for example) so as to ensure regular national discussion and attention for the most important components of national progress.

In its design and operation, ANDI is based closely on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, and proudly so. The CIW started in 1995. It is now widely regarded as the world's leading national model and it has agreed to be a partner in ANDI. Like the CIW, ANDI will be majority owned, funded and governed by the community. And like the CIW, it will be built around three connected strategies or phases: community engagement, research, and knowledge mobilisation – which means applying these ideas and measures in practice. This phase will start in about three years.

ANDI's national community engagement program

Let me now give you a quick overview of ANDI's community program. We have four broad goals: to engage the Australian community as widely as possible; develop a shared vision of national progress; create input, legitimacy and trust for our Index; and strengthen Australia's democracy in the process.

This community program – we call it a ‘national conversation’ – will be built around one central question: what kind of Australia do we want?

It will be carried out over three years, and in this time we aim to directly engage 500,000 Australians. We will do this through a very wide array of programs and platforms: surveys, focus groups, town hall and kitchen table meetings, social media and blogs, school curricula, film and video. Australia Post has offered to send a questionnaire post card to every household in Australia. We will fully utilise the extensive networks of ANDI partners and their two million members. And there will also be citizen and stakeholder engagement in each of our twelve ‘progress domain groups’.

We estimate that the all-up cost of this program, without taking account of in-kind resources, will be around \$6.5 million. It will be one of the largest community engagement exercises in Australia in the past 20 years.

The role of research in new national progress measures

As I said earlier, the AP21C pilot project is effectively a blueprint for the national research program we need to underpin an Australian National Development Index. And before I describe that program, I want to say something briefly about the importance of research and research partners in this whole project. More specifically, why universities and researchers should be involved in community initiatives such as this.

There are at least three compelling reasons. First, because there are a number of important scientific and research issues implicit in the idea of community based measures of national progress: such as how we best identify and analyse community priorities; the effectiveness of different ‘best practice’ models; the technical development of an index; how to decide on the most direct and accurate measures of a particular priority or goal; or evaluate the relative impact of health or education on overall wellbeing.

A second reason is that academics have already made a critical contribution to new progress measures in the OECD and the UN, in the international Stiglitz Commission and in other countries such as the US, Canada and Italy – and we have the expertise in Australia to do it just as well.

There is a third, and, for me, even more powerful reason, and it concerns the role of universities in society. Universities are part of the community and they should work with the community to understand and solve major public and social issues of the day. Here I want to quote two great American educators, with different perspectives on this issue:

Ira Harkavy of Pennsylvania University warned us of the consequences of not engaging:

Universities cannot afford to remain shores of affluence, self-importance and horticultural beauty at the edge of inland seas of squalor, violence and despair.⁶

And William Greiner, President of the State University of New York, pointed to the tremendous untapped potential of community-university collaboration:

If every research intensive university in this country commits itself to changing a small portion of events in its own community, if every urban and metropolitan research university commits itself to addressing needs in its own city, then in the total of all our acts on behalf of our neighbours and our mutual future, we will be a massive and unparalleled force for the

⁶ Prof Ira Harkavy, Director, Centre for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania in ‘Universities and the inner city’, 1994.

good of our people and our country.⁷

The ANDI project is in fact at the convergence of some quite important debates about the role of universities in the 21st-century:

- research versus teaching
- applied versus theoretical research
- engagement with the community or withdrawal to the Ivory Tower (or ‘the landscaped campus’)
- vocational training of individuals versus nation-building and public interest
- integrated and cross disciplinary research or increasing specialisation.

Of course, none of these is a straight ‘either-or’ alternative. A good university will do all of these things. The real issue is the balance between them. And I for one would argue that in Australia we are in danger of tipping away from community and public interest projects, away from integrated, interdisciplinary and applied research, and towards the model of a more commercial and corporate university.

That is partly why we said in our report:

Re-defining Australia’s progress ... offers an important opportunity – and a duty – for the academic and scientific community: to work with policymakers, stakeholders and the broader citizenry, to shape (our national) strategies and shared visions.⁸

And it is why we concluded 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.⁹

So perhaps you can see why ANDI welcomed the AP21C project and partnership with ACOLA so enthusiastically. It was a wonderful opportunity to pilot a national research program that could engage the whole university and research sector through ACOLA, as well as community partners like VicHealth. And I must say here that VicHealth has been the most consistent and generous supporter of community wellbeing research at all levels for the last decade.

ACOLA and the AP21C project

So let me now – at last - introduce you to ACOLA and the AP21C project. First, ACOLA: who is it and what does it do?

The initials stand for the ‘Australian Council of Learned Academies’. This is a wonderful name which makes it sound rather like a mediaeval guild, but I can assure you that in fact it’s a very forward looking organisation.

⁷ Prof William Greiner, President, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1994, ‘In the total of all these acts: how can American Universities address the urban agenda’.

⁸ ‘Australia’s Progress in the 21st Century’, p 12.

⁹ Ibid, p 13.

ACOLA brings together the four main Academies (Science, Technological Science, Social Sciences and Humanities) and its members include more than 2000 of Australia's most distinguished academics in every conceivable field, most of them professors. It is, in short, a hugely valuable national resource.

On its website, ACOLA describes its role as 'a forum that brings together great minds, broad perspectives and knowledge, the nexus for true interdisciplinary co-operation, in order to develop integrated problem solving and cutting edge thinking on key issues for the benefit of Australia'.¹⁰

When we at ANDI first saw this, we rubbed our hands gleefully and said to ourselves 'ACOLA, have we got a great integrated, inter-disciplinary, cutting edge, public benefit issue for you!'

But on a more restrained note, I believe that the involvement of the academies in key national issues - especially those with long term strategic implications - is a powerful and appropriate use of such an important national resource. It's worth noting that in America, for example, the National Academy of Sciences and the Social Sciences Research Council have been centrally involved in researching and overseeing projects to develop key national progress measures for America; and this tradition goes back at least to the 1940s and 50s with President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends and President Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals.

How the AP21C project developed

How did the AP21C project come about? The short answer is, not overnight.

In 2011 Fiona Stanley put up a prototype version of the project to ACOLA. Fiona is a rare bird in ACOLA: she's actually a member of two Academies, Science and Social Sciences. On top of that, she's a brilliant health scientist in her own right and a former Australian of the Year.

An ACOLA committee was set up to examine Fiona's proposal. They liked her idea and decided that an ACOLA project should focus more on the work of ANDI, ABS and the global movement. And later that year, ACOLA became a partner in ANDI.

In September 2011, the current project proposal was approved by ACOLA's Council. In April 2012 ACOLA agreed to co-fund the first stage, a 12 month pilot project, with VicHealth and with ANDI as the third major partner. Other partners included the Australian Council of Social Service, the Foundation for Young Australians and the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre. The ABS was an adviser to the project and Cbus, the Building Industry Superannuation Fund, kindly contributed additional funding support. And it is that pilot project whose report we are launching this evening.

The essential goal of the full three year project is to create a sound, cross-disciplinary, scientific foundation that will enable us to understand and measure societal progress in Australia in the 21st century, as well as to plan and promote it.

This is a pretty tall order: so how will it be done? In three main ways:

First, by building a strong national research network. This will bring together and harvest the growing global and national research effort to redefine and re-measure societal progress 'beyond GDP'.

Second, by identifying the key fields or 'domains' of progress, and convening expert cross-disciplinary research teams in each of these domains. Their task will be to work with policymakers and community stakeholders to pinpoint the most important goals and outcomes for progress in each

¹⁰ <http://www.acola.org.au>

domain. From this base, they will develop key indicators and an index of progress in each domain area, as well as a composite index of overall national progress that we might call the index of 'Gross National Wellbeing'.

Thirdly, the project will develop a range of tools and information – such as an annual progress report in each domain and a state-of-the art national progress website. Together with the regular release of the progress indexes, these tools will be designed to have a major and ongoing impact on Australian policy and public life: by supporting policy recommendations to Government, promoting more informed and engaged public policy debate and contributing to more equitable and sustainable wellbeing for Australians in the 21st century.

In April 2012 the pilot project started work. A steering committee was set up, which included representatives of the four academies, VicHealth and ANDI. To assist them, Dennis Trewin (the former head of the ABS) was asked to chair an expert reference committee which included academic and ABS members.

The main task of the pilot project was to map out what the full-scale project would look like, including the development of domains and indexes. To do this, it had to get answers to some hard but very interesting questions, such as:

- What is 'global best practice' in measuring progress?
- How do Australians talk about and understand progress?
- Is there a shared vision for Australia's progress?
- How can the community be engaged in developing new progress measures?
- How valid is an index of progress and how can we construct it scientifically?
- How can such a large research project be organised and funded?
- And especially, how can we best secure inter-disciplinary academic participation, not to mention agreement, across such broad and diverse topics?

In practical terms, this meant: reviewing existing work and identifying best practice models; developing a strategy for community engagement; piloting focus groups and a national survey; constructing a research plan and identifying potential partners and research participants, in Australia and overseas; identifying a support base or headquarters for the major project; and developing a funding plan for it. Quite a lot to ask from a moderately funded twelve-month project.

Early in its life the steering committee decided to commission five separate studies, each dealing with a significant component of the overall brief:

- a listing of well-being measurement models (Deakin University, Psychology Department)
- a critical review of domain and index models and international best practice (University of New South Wales, Social Policy Research Centre)
- focus groups exploring qualitative community attitudes to progress in progress domains (the Social Research Centre, Melbourne)
- a national online survey to provide quantitative data on community attitudes and priorities in progress (also by the Social Research Centre)
- a language guide to support community consultation on Australia's progress (Louisa Coppell, Melbourne-based communications consultant).

These studies were done well and together they have gone a long way to answer some of the key questions. ACOLA will publish the reports from each of them separately on its own website.

As well, during the pilot project we consulted directly with the OECD, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and Italy's national well-being measurement project, BES.

Findings

What were the main findings and recommendations from the pilot project? I won't go into these in too much detail because you can read them in the report.¹¹ But here is a quick summary.

- *What are our priorities for progress?*

What key domains of progress should an index should report? ANDI's initial selection of twelve domains was found to be broadly consistent with international experience, but should be further tested the community engagement and more detailed research.

We asked people in the community what they saw as the key priorities for Australia's progress, and there were some interesting and unexpected results:

- A slight majority believe that we are not currently 'on the right track' as a nation.
- Out of 22 possible priorities for Australia's progress, the five most highly rated in order were: peace in Australia; a high quality health system; the wellbeing and development of our children; a high quality education; and equal and fair treatment by law.
- At the lower end of the list, though still significantly important, were: providing our fair share of foreign aid; ensuring the wellbeing of indigenous Australians; diverse ownership and control of media; and access to arts, sports and leisure.
- Interestingly, in light of my earlier comments about GDP, 'increasing economic growth in national wealth' ranked 16th out of 22 national priorities (but still important with a ranking of 8.4/10)

We also asked people to rank our current performance in the areas that they thought important for progress. Here there were some big gaps, biggest of all in the area of 'high standards of honesty in politics and public life'. This had a priority of 8.9, a performance rating of 3.7/10, and a gap of 5.2. Next came 'providing enough job opportunities (with a gap of 3.9); and 'everyone having access to a high quality health system' (also 3.9).

When asked to select the most important qualities to describe the future Australia they wanted, people nominated: Secure (38% of all respondents), Peaceful, Productive, Hard working, Democratic, and Fair (28%).

A perennial issue in national priority surveys over the last few decades has been the balance between the environment and the economy, and here responses were pretty evenly divided. 41% favoured providing jobs and growth even it meant some environmental degradation, while 37% wanted the environment to be protected even if it cost some jobs and economic growth.

Encouragingly, people's views about whether Australia was broadly 'on track' tended to correlate more directly with their views about national performance in key priority areas, rather than for example, the positives or negatives in their own personal lives. This suggests they are willing to look at the bigger picture.

¹¹ The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.acola.org.au/index.php/projects/ap21c>

- [How do we engage the community in the conversation?](#)

The SRC, UNSW and Coppell studies when put together told us quite a lot about how to carry out a national community engagement program on Australia's progress. They told us about the importance of preparatory information and attention to language with focus groups; the benefits of focusing discussion in particular domain areas; and the advantages of having deliberative or three-stage focus groups rather than a single one. They suggested that a variety of different engagement and survey methods should be used; and warned of the limits of possible community engagement in the technical details of indicators. They advised that such a program must be accompanied by a well targeted public education program and will require substantial resources.

- [Will an Index of progress work?](#)

The UNSW study was positive about the feasibility and the benefits of a national progress well-being index; but it stressed that it may take decades for it to be established and accepted and that in its development phase, it must engage with community experts and users. Most importantly, it must 'measure the future we want': that is, it must be forward-looking rather than a snapshot of the present compared to the past; this would be its key advantage.

A number of best practice models were examined from various countries and it was noted that many of these use an index and have had a successful community engagement process.

During the project, a meeting was held with the OECD, which has agreed that its respected 'Better Life Index' can be used as the model for an Australian index.

- [Other key findings](#)

National research network: During the project also the idea of a national research network was found to be feasible and is already quite well-developed.

Partners: There were a number of likely and willing partners for the full project, including: ACOLA; VicHealth; the ABS as adviser; and the OECD. A draft memorandum of understanding on cooperation has been developed with both the ABS and with the OECD.

Research base: During the project, negotiations with Deakin have led to an agreement in principle that it will act as the research headquarters for the project (more of that later).

Funding costs: The pilot project was asked to undertake estimates of the necessary budget for such an ambitious project and suggest how it might be funded. At this stage such figures can only be rough approximations, and will depend greatly on partner contributions and research funding policy. However in rough terms, the bottom line costs for the research program would be about \$19 million and for an extensive national community engagement program about \$6.5 million.

- [Bottom line: feasibility and value](#)

The bottom line finding of the pilot project is this: a full three-year project to set up a national index of progress and well-being with community engagement and extensive research support will be a major national undertaking. It will be complex and costly, and will require a large-scale national research effort. On the other hand, it is feasible; there are many good models to follow and strong research resources and networks already in place. Most importantly, the project is likely to generate considerable national and research benefits.

Last month, ACOLA Council adopted the report we are launching tonight and agreed to provide further support for the next stage of the AP21C project. I want to acknowledge tonight that a great deal of the credit for the success of this project belongs to ACOLA's talented and enthusiastic General Manager, Dr Jacques de Vos Malan.

Partnership with Deakin University

Now I should have said earlier that tonight is something of a doubleheader, because as well as launching the AP21C report, we are also launching an exciting new partnership with Deakin University: one we hope will be long-term and mutually beneficial.

Some background is needed here. In March 2011 – before the AP21C project - ANDI started discussions with Deakin about a possible partnership. We were looking for a university that would provide a home base for the extensive research program that is needed to develop an ongoing national progress index. In Canada, as some of you know, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing has developed such a relationship with Waterloo University in Ontario.

Why did we pick Deakin? Well, we liked Deakin. It was an early supporter of the ANDI project and it had specific qualities which we thought would sit well with the role we sought. It's research emphasis is in health and well-being; it is a smart and innovative university; and we felt that being middle sized was actually an advantage, giving it a certain nimbleness. Above all, we were attracted by the positive response of a number of people at Deakin and I want to acknowledge them now. Vice Chancellor Jane Den Hollander has supported this concept from the top; Pro Vice Chancellor Joe Graffam, Deakin's key negotiator, has been a great pleasure to work with; Pro Vice Chancellor Brendan Crotty of Health has provided solid faculty support; and Professor Bob Cummins deserves the credit for the whole idea of matching ANDI and Deakin in the first place.

ANDI and Deakin are currently finalising the terms of a five-year agreement under which Deakin will provide funds for a centre to be based at Geelong with a staff of four. It will be called '*ANDI@Deakin*' and its task will be to develop and manage the research necessary to underpin a national development index.

Deakin will also provide twelve senior academics to act as team leaders for each of the twelve progress domains and they will be given one day a week teaching relief. Their task will be to establish national community and research teams in each of the key domain areas, prepare applications and seek funding. Each team will develop community engagement programs, undertake best practice reviews and develop indicators and an index for that domain.

With Deakin's enthusiastic agreement, *ANDI@Deakin* will be promoted as a cross university project engaging with different faculties, researchers and students, and hopefully providing a unifying theme for the whole University.

Deakin will not do all of this research itself, though it will do quite a lot: in cases where other universities or researchers have greater expertise, it will contract or partner with them. This means we will see the involvement of many other universities across Australia.

This partnership will also extend to the wider academic and research community through our links with ACOLA and hopefully, Australia's Chief Scientist. We are planning for Deakin to co-sponsor an Academies workshop later this year.

ANDI's agreement with Deakin also involves the University supporting the national community engagement process and developing an international partnership with the OECD and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Under the current draft MoU with the OECD, Deakin will provide technical and research support for the OECD's global progress research network and its global website Wikiprogress, currently the world leading site for progress measurement research.

The agreement also provides for Deakin to develop what we might call a 'sister University' relationship with Waterloo University in Canada and for a special relationship with the community of Geelong, that will involve, for example, piloting surveys and developing local well-being projects with local government and community organisations.

We really believe that this agreement is a win-win one arrangement for both parties. Deakin will benefit from new cross disciplinary research and additional research income; from increased collaborative opportunities; and from the enhancement of its reputation internationally and locally. ANDI gains a research base, access to extensive research expertise across 12 domains, and generous arrangements as to staffing and support services.

It is, I think, an extraordinary collaboration, quite a historic one, and Deakin has shown both generosity and leadership in getting us there. I want to say tonight to the Vice Chancellor from the ANDI board that we express our gratitude and pleasure in this arrangement and assure you that we will do all we can to make it a success for both parties.

Conclusion: progress and the future

Today is something of a red letter day in the life of ANDI, with two major milestones: the launch of both a long-term research program and a new partnership with Deakin.

We believe that the benefits will extend well beyond the participating organisations. They will be national and long term.

An ongoing national index of true progress for Australian society - if it is built on extensive national research and drawn directly from the views of hundreds of thousands of Australians - must bring powerful benefits for the nation: for knowledge; democracy; policy; transparency; and for universities.

- for knowledge: by giving us a more detailed understanding of the true state and wellbeing of our people, our communities and our land, as well as our goals and values;
- for democracy: by engaging and empowering citizens, enabling them to participate in a meaningful and inclusive national conversation; helping to overcome apathy and alienation; and improving the quality of media and political debate;
- for policy: by articulating a cleared and shared vision of national progress with specific goals and targets, which can become a fixed point of reference for planning and evaluation, indeed the ultimate form of quote evidence-based policy;
- for transparency in government: by producing regular and reliable reports on real progress in all the dimensions that matter to Australians and thereby holding governments to account;
- for universities: by providing a practical and direct way for them to engage them with communities, promoting excellent cross disciplinary research and perhaps helping reverse the trend to corporatisation within the university sector.

Our hope ultimately is that this project will help to change and energise politics in Australia - not in a partisan sense, but in the best sense of active and informed democracy.

We should recall that the Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul was one of the earliest to see the democratic possibilities of citizen engagement in new progress measures. Nearly twenty years ago, he said

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.¹²

So what then of the ANDI project? Are our hopes too high? Our plans too ambitious?

Certainly, it won't be achieved overnight. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing has taken ten years and is still not complete. But ultimately, how we should judge the value and feasibility of projects such as this depends on what is at stake, and what is the cost of doing nothing.

Don't let anyone say it can't be done. Rather we should say it must be done; and it is being done right now, right around the world, not just in Canada but in many other places. Why not us? In fact, in Australia we are in the fortunate position that we can probably do it better than anyone.

The distinguished American futurist John Schaar said: "The future is not some place we are going, 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."¹³

The sub-title title of the report we are launching tonight is 'Measuring the future we want' and it was chosen partly with John Schaar in mind.

This is because, amongst many uncertainties, there are two things that are certain about the future: if we can't agree on the future we want, we won't achieve it and it will be made for us; and if we can't define it, we can't measure it.

Let me close with a quotation we used in the report, which I think conveys both the global relevance, and the true challenges, of this issue. It is taken from a visionary United Nations report which anticipated the global movement by a decade:

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.¹⁴

Thank you.

¹² Saul, J. R. 1997, *The Unconscious Civilization*, Penguin, Ringwood, Australia

¹³ Quoted in Daley, B. 2002 'Continuing professional education: creating the future', 2002, *Adult Learning*, v 13, 143

¹⁴ United Nations, Development Program (UNDP), Human Development Report, 1996