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MEDIA RELEASE

Measuring the Future Australians Want

Sir Gustav Nossal AC will today launch a new report from ACOLA and VicHealth which is part of a growing global movement to redefine how we measure societal progress.

Australia's Progress in the 21st Century for the first time provides a scientific foundation to develop an indicator of progress that goes beyond gross domestic product (GDP) to measure how we are doing as a country and as a society, not just an economy.

Report author Professor Mike Salvaris said "GDP growth has become a proxy for progress because we know how to calculate it, but GDP does not account for some of the negative effects of economic growth and fails to measure the quality of society and true national wellbeing at all."

"GDP is also limited as it is retrospective. This new report sets the research foundation for the forward looking Australian National Development Index (ANDI). ANDI will set targets for the kind of future Australians want, based on extensive community engagement, tracking our progress along the way. It will enable us, in effect, to measure the future we want."

The *Australia's Progress in the 21st Century* pilot sets out an innovative plan for engagement with over 500,000 people to articulate the vision of Australians collectively. Because what we measure affects what we do, ANDI will monitor our progress with outcomes informing nationwide policy and decision making.

Sir Gustav Nossal said "ANDI brings a new paradigm to Australian democracy. For the first time Australians will decide on aspirations and goals for wellbeing and progress and ANDI will measure our progress against those goals, thus providing a powerful new tool to underpin new thinking and policy."

The report is available at www.acola.org.au/ACOLA/index.php/projects/ap21c

Report Partner Quotes

ACOLA Secretariat General Manager Jacques de Vos Malan said *"The AP21C pilot project has been a great opportunity for our organisation to collaborate with others. We have a solid track record in producing scholarly reports that draw upon the expertise of the more than two thousand Fellows of the Australian Learned Academies. Working with partners who are regularly engaged in grassroots community consultation has been instructive."*

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said *"A healthy nation is one where its citizens are involved and passionate about the future. Progress is more than economic growth, so we need to rethink how we measure it. This project is hugely exciting because it proposes an alternative, which recognises the value of community participation, equity and sustainability. All of these things are closely linked with health and wellbeing, so it's important to keep tabs on how we're tracking in these areas over time."*

For more information or to arrange an interview contact Rebecca Skinner on 03 9864 0925 or 0400 684 993 or rebeccaskinner@acolasecretariat.org.au

Today's launch is kindly being hosted by Deakin University, a key ANDI participant.

About Australia's Progress in the 21st Century

Australia's Progress in the 21st Century is a strategic national research pilot to create a sound scientific foundation to inform the development of the ANDI project. As project partners, ACOLA and VicHealth provided \$100,000 for the AP21C pilot project to develop key domains of progress, agreement of the most important themes within each domain, the initiation of a university progress research network and a communications strategy to engage ordinary Australians in having a say on what national progress means to them.

AP21C is a major national multi-disciplinary project with seven key project partners:

- [Australian Council of Learned Academies \(ACOLA\)](#)
- [Victorian Health Promotion Foundation \(VicHealth\)](#)
- [Australian National Development Index Limited \(ANDI\)](#)
- [Australian Conservation Foundation \(ACF\)](#)
- [Australian Council of Social Service \(ACOSS\)](#)
- [Foundation for Young Australians \(FYA\)](#)
- [Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre](#)

Read more about AP21C here: <http://www.acola.org.au/ACOLA/index.php/projects/ap21c>

About ACOLA

ACOLA is an independent organisation that supports evidence-based interdisciplinary research. ACOLA is the forum whereby Australia's four independent Learned Academies – Australian Academy of the Humanities, Australian Academy of Science, Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, and Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering – come together to contribute to inform national policy development and to develop innovative solutions to complex global problems and emerging national needs. www.acola.org.au

About VicHealth

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) is a pioneer in health promotion – the process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health. Its primary focus is promoting good health and preventing chronic disease. To this end, it creates and funds world-class interventions, conducts vital research to advance Victoria's population health, and produces and supports public campaigns to promote a healthier Victoria. VicHealth has had a long history of supporting and pioneering new measures of progress and wellbeing that combine community engagement with research and policymaking, at levels from local and state to national. www.vichealth.vic.gov.au

About ANDI

ANDI – the Australian National Development Index – is a major national initiative of leading community organisations: national peak bodies, businesses and faith-based organisations universities and independent citizens. Member-owned and incorporated in 2012 as a non-profit company, ANDI's Board includes Prof Fiona Stanley and the Rev Tim Costello, and its partners have members and clients totalling over 2 million Australians. Closely based on the pioneering Canadian index of Wellbeing, ANDI will develop an ongoing national index of progress, wellbeing and sustainability based on extensive community engagement over two years and a broad ranging research programme involving universities across Australia, anchored at Deakin University. ANDI's composite index, and separate indexes in 12 key 'domains' of progress (such as health, education, justice etc) will tell Australians at a glance whether we are making progress towards the goals we value in all key areas of life: the economy, society, environment and governance. www.andi.org.au