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Submission to

**The Senate Inquiry on Sustainable Development Goals**

by

**Australian National Development Index (ANDI) Limited**

and

**The University of Melbourne**

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## **Introduction**

1. This submission is made by Australian National Development Index (ANDI) Limited and the University of Melbourne, partners in the development of a community and research based national index of progress, wellbeing and sustainability. Details of the project and the partnership are summarised below, and in the Appendix to this submission.
2. The submission briefly addresses aspects of the following Terms of Reference of the Inquiry:
  - (a) the understanding and awareness of the SDG across the Australian Government and in the wider Australian community;
  - (b) the potential costs, benefits and opportunities for Australia in the domestic implementation of the SDG;
  - (c) what governance structures and accountability measures are required at the national, state and local levels of government to ensure an integrated approach to implementing the SDG that is both meaningful and achieves real outcomes;
  - (d) how can performance against the SDG be monitored and communicated in a way that engages government, businesses and the public, and allows effective review of Australia's performance by civil society;
  - (h) examples of best practice in how other countries are implementing the SDG from which Australia could learn.

## **What ANDI is and why it is relevant to the SDGs**

3. ANDI Limited is a not-for-profit company incorporated in 2012 for the purpose of developing an ongoing national community and research based index of Australia's progress, wellbeing and sustainability. This proposal was strongly supported at the Australia 2020 Summit in 2008, and has been developed over a decade with input from a wide range of national and international partners, including the OECD and the Canadian index of Wellbeing. ANDI's Australian partners include over 60 organisations and peak groups across a broad range of interests: welfare, environmental, trade union, business, indigenous, academic, ethnic, religious, youth

and children, local government and human rights. ANDI Directors and Ambassadors include eminent Australians Professor Fiona Stanley, Rev Tim Costello and Sir Gustav Nossal.

4. In late 2016 ANDI entered a 5-year agreement with the University of Melbourne (UoM) under which the University will take on the role of long-term research partner in the project, and will help to develop research and community-based teams across each of 12 'progress' domains: 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. These domain teams will produce an annual index of progress and a status report in their field, each released in different months, to maximise publicity, discussion and policy relevance, and aggregated into the national wellbeing index. UoM's role will be to oversight the research program and build a powerful national research collaboration ultimately involving perhaps 8-10 universities, each working in a particular progress domain.
5. This research will be directed and underpinned by an extensive and inclusive national community engagement program directly involving over 500,000 Australians across the nation through a wide range of platforms (see below).

#### **Why we are making this submission**

6. The ANDI-UoM partnership strongly supports the SDGs and acknowledges their critical global importance for peace, justice and sustainable progress. We will seek to ensure that the ANDI project is developed in ways that will help to promote and support the SDGs, while at the same time maintaining our focus on Australian priorities for 'the kind of Australia we want' (which in any case, we expect to be very similar to the SDGs: as shown, for example, by the fact that around 70,000 Australians voted for similar priorities in the UNDP MyWorld2015 survey: see: [www.myworld2015.org](http://www.myworld2015.org) , Results, Australia and New Zealand).

In fact, ANDI and the SDGs cover very similar ground in terms of their key subject matter: although ANDI has 12 'domains' (above) and the SDGs have 17 goals, and their descriptors are different, collectively they deal with the same broad issues of equity, sustainability, and wellbeing and most of the same specific policy areas.

7. In the process of developing the ANDI project over the next five years, we expect that there will strong, mutually beneficial opportunities (in community engagement, research, statistical analysis) to advance both projects and we are keen to work with DFAT and our university colleagues and community partners in this task. Thus a key purpose of this submission is to inform parliamentary and government decision-makers about the ANDI project both in its own right (as a national project with important and similar goals) and as a possible resource and partner for the successful implementation of the SDGs (in terms of research, networks, community education and engagement).

8. Our submission briefly addresses the terms of reference above in our comments below, with more detail given to the issues of: the role of government; publicity and education for the SDGs; the need to prioritise the SDGs; and possible best practice models.

#### **Need for clear government decision about the status and role of the SDGs**

9. There is currently some confusion and ambiguity about the relevance and applicability of SDG's in Australia.
10. The Terms of Reference of the Inquiry make clear that the SDGs are important both for Australian domestic policy and for our international aid and relations, which is indeed true. However, the implications of fully implementing the SDGs domestically as against implementing them through aid and foreign relations are very different. The former task will require considerably more resources and organisation. While it is very encouraging to see DFAT taking a strong and supportive stance on the SDGs, as a single federal department mostly working outside domestic policy, it is unlikely to have the traction and resources to develop and promote the SDGs domestically unless it is joined and strongly supported by other key federal departments, as well as state and local governments and the wider community.
11. This suggests that the first step needed for successful implementation of the SDGs is for the federal government as a whole to take an explicit decision and develop a unified policy as to how it treats the SDGs: are they a set of goals that we can use to help other less well-off developing countries (i.e., primarily as a tool for Australian's overseas aid program)? Or are they a set of goals and measures that are directly relevant to Australia and can help us to improve our own society, progress, wellbeing and sustainability? For governments concerned about the difficult political implications of the latter, it would not be difficult (given current public views, indicated below) to represent the SDGs as primarily an issue of overseas aid policy. In fact, the SDG's (as distinct from the MDG's) are specifically designed as goals and standards for sustainable development for all countries to achieve in their own country.
12. We believe that, as part of this first stage, the federal government as whole should make a serious long-term commitment to implement the SDGs within Australia and indeed to take a prominent position of national leadership on the issue. To do this successfully, the government needs to be seen to be working side-by-side with local and state governments, business, trade unions, local government and community stakeholders and NGOs. It is unlikely that we will achieve success in implementing (rather than simply monitoring) the SDGs unless all these sectors are working together. This also implies the need for deeper community engagement, perhaps starting off at the local and school level and working through major community organisations.

#### **Need for publicising and educating the SDG's**

13. We believe that the second task in a successful SDGs strategy is to communicate what the SDGs are and why they are important for Australia. At present, our impression is that most Australians would be unaware of the SDGs; and if they are aware of them, they would in many cases regard them critically or unfavourably, either on the ground that they are only relevant to very poor countries, not countries like Australia; or perhaps because they would see them as an example of the United Nations (once again!) interfering in Australian domestic life and telling us how to run our country.
14. So perhaps the first step needs to be a major national publicity and education campaign to educate Australians in the SDGs, to explain what they are and why they are relevant to Australians and how they can improve our country and the life of our people if we set about implementing them systematically.

*An example of a national publicity campaign*

15. The example of United Nations MyWorld 2015 is a strong and relevant one for Australia on implementing the SDGs. In the MyWorld campaign (which was a prelude to the Paris summit) citizens all over the world were asked to vote on 6 out of 17 sustainable development goals or priorities (in fact in fact over 9 million did so). At the same time, a campaign was carefully worked out around this survey, whereby businesses, community organisations, trade unions, local authorities et cetera all took on the responsibility of promoting discussion on sustainable development priorities within their organisations and their communities, including asking them to hold meetings, promote the survey, encourage blogs and discussions, make videos et cetera. This is the kind of campaign we need in Australia if we are to create a favourable climate and a strong level of awareness for the SDGs, which would in turn support and enable government action - federal state and local - and would combat the potential hostility that many Australians might feel if the whole SDGs issue is seen as an external and interfering campaign by the United Nations and against the will of Australians.

**Need to review and prioritise the SDG's for Australia**

16. Prioritising the SDGs for Australia is the third step needed. Perhaps the strongest policy basis to implement the SDGs domestically, and at the same time combat the idea that they are not relevant to Australia, is to carefully analyse the SDGs, separating out (1) those SDGs which are plainly only applicable to poorer countries and which we can say we have largely achieved from (2) those which are directly relevant to Australia and in particular, to issues and problems in current Australian life and development. This is what the Bertelsmann Foundation started to do in its 2015 report, below.
17. This is a task that will take some time, but good national leadership, whether in government or business or NGOs, should emphasise that the SDGs represent a set of long-term goals for all countries, rich or poor, which if we pursue them will make for a better world and better societies for all.

### *Prioritising the SDGs for Australia: a model*

18. A good start has been made to the task of focusing and prioritising the SDG's for Australia. The Bertelsmann Report, below, includes an 'SDG Implementation Index' which ranks the performance of 34 OECD countries on the 17 SDG's measured against 34 selected indicators (selected on the basis of their relevance to developed countries). It should be noted of these 34 countries, the great majority are poorer than Australia.
19. On this index, Australia does not perform well, with an overall ranking of 18 out of 34 countries. We perform very poorly (ranking between 28 - 34) on six of the 34 indicators: obesity; municipal waste generated; domestic material consumption; production-based CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; greenhouse gas emissions per GDP; and, most notably for present purposes, **our capacity to monitor the SDGs**. We perform poorly (ranking between 21 - 27) on five of the 34: poverty rate; upper secondary education attainment; the gender pay gap; the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption; and income inequality (comparing top 10% to bottom 40%). (*Kroll, C. 2015. 'Sustainable development Goals: Are the rich countries ready?', Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gutersloh, Germany*).
20. This suggests that the SDG's are indeed relevant to the improvement of Australia's sustainable wellbeing and development, and that we have quite a lot of work to do to meet these goals
21. However, the Bertelsmann report is merely a quick overview. We need a more comprehensive and detailed analysis of Australia's current status in all of the SDG's, where we are and why, and what we need to do to improve. This should, of course, make clear those areas where Australia performs well, and those which are generally less relevant to Australia and other 'developed' countries, because they have been achieved for some considerable time. Here, though, there should be no cause for complacency: because there are some notable examples of developed countries in which basic wellbeing goals achieved decades ago are in fact showing signs of reversing, even in areas as basic as life expectancy and household income.

### **Best practice models**

22. In the ANDI project, we have worked for many years with a number of international partners, and especially those participating in the OECD's international network, the Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies (see <https://www.oecd.org/site/worldforum06>).
23. In our view, two world leading projects are 'ASVIS – The Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development' ([www.asvis.it](http://www.asvis.it)) and 'The Wales We Want' ([thewaleswewant.co.uk](http://thewaleswewant.co.uk)).
24. ASVIS is a group of projects under the general leadership of eminent Italian academic and politician Professor Enrico Giovanni, former head of the OECD Statistics Directorate and now based at the University of Rome<sup>2</sup>. The projects include: a community education and engagement program linked to a national sustainability

festival; a national framework for measuring progress (BES); a national 'Sustainable Universities' network; and most recently, legislation requiring sustainable development measures to be incorporated in national budgets.

25. 'The Wales We Want' is a visionary program to build sustainable development principles, goals and progress measures into Wales' long term development. It is legislated through a key Act, 'The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act'. This requires all government agencies to understand, plan for and evaluate progress by a set of key sustainable wellbeing and development principles detailed in the 'Wales – Sustainable Development Charter' and establishes a Commissioner for Future Generations.
26. A third project, currently in the planning stage but potentially a world-leader, is outlined in a recent announcement by New Zealand Prime Minister Hon Jacinda Ardern. This will develop a national sustainable wellbeing framework to guide budgetary and policy decision in New Zealand. See: <https://discover.wairc.govt.nz/otcs/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objaction=overview&objid=11766056>).
27. The ANDI-UoM project is currently moving to establish partnerships with all three of these projects over the next 12 months.

#### **ANDI's future involvement with SDGs development in Australia**

28. We have had initial discussions with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and believe that ANDI's development over the next few years can be planned in a way which will optimise the achievement both of ANDI's own goals and the similar and strongly overlapping goals of the SDGs. We will be developing with the assistance of the Australian Bureau of Statistics and many other community and university partners a set of 144 national progress measures, with 12 key outcomes and indicators in each of the 12 ANDI domains. Almost all of these will relate to specific SDGs and we expect to be employing in many cases indicators similar to those already identified by the UN statistics agency for the sustainable development goals.
29. ANDI's very substantial community engagement program will be planned to take place over around three years and will employ a wide array of engagement and education platforms, from social media, to a UNDP type survey (My Australia 2020), educational materials, film and video, local government-sponsored meetings and kitchen table meetings. There will be strong opportunities to engage Australian citizens in questions about sustainable development for Australia and the results from this process will inform both ANDI and the SDGs. There is thus a very strong opportunity to carry the work of the SDGs into the Australian community in favourable circumstances, rather than in conditions of potential resistance or hostility. We will devote a considerable amount of resources and research effort to ensuring that discussions in the Australian community are inclusive and accessible in their form and terminology and as interesting and engaging as possible.

30. The end goal of the ANDI project is very similar to that of the SDGs, but the process described will have the advantage of focusing much more closely and effectively on sustainable development issues and goals that are especially relevant to Australia and Australians. It will have the additional advantage that the measures which eventually become part of a progress index in key domains will have been arrived at through a process of intensive community education and awareness.
31. ANDI's goal at the end of the period of five years development is to have a system in Australia that is 'international best practice'. Our aim is to create a lasting and powerful policy tool that describes "the Australia we want" and enables us to measure our progress towards it regularly and transparently. We think this goal is as important for policy as it is for democratic reasons, at a time of declining trust in government and a diminished sense of a shared national vision.
32. We see the SDGs (which could be regarded as a 'problem' from a cynical perspective) as an outstanding positive opportunity to turn this situation around. Certainly, the SDGs could be an opportunity to strengthen ANDI's national project, but they could also be a way for all Australians to see the United Nations working at its best - improving fairness, sustainability and well-being across the globe and doing so in a collaborative and thoughtful manner.
33. We have begun discussions with DFAT and will be very willing to meet further in the next 12 months to explore ways to implement the SDGs. We expect to be able to put at the disposal of the SDGs program a large array of resources in the ANDI project, and we will also work with other SDGs-linked organisations such as the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Australia/Pacific, which we to belong to and strongly support.



## **Appendix to Senate Inquiry Submission**

Update: 22-9-17



## **THE ANDI PROJECT: MEASURING THE FUTURE WE WANT**

### **What is ANDI and what will it do?**

ANDI is a civil society and research collaboration, incorporated as a not-for-profit company. It has over 60 partners, many of them national peak organisations, representing a broad range of interest groups: welfare, environmental, trade union, business, academic, ethnic, religious, indigenous, youth and children's, local government and human rights organisations. Together, these organisations have combined members and congregations of over two million Australians. As a corporation, ANDI's Board of directors and supporters include eminent Australians such as Rev Tim Costello, Prof Fiona Stanley, Sir Gus Nossal and Simon McKeon. In the academic and statistical fields, ANDI partners and advisers include the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and several universities, with the University of Melbourne as the principal host and coordinating research partner.

ANDI's broad aim is to establish a set of goals and measures for Australia's progress 'beyond GDP', which represent a clearer, more considered and more holistic vision of the future we want, and are based on an inclusive national community engagement process and extensive national research.

Each year ANDI will produce an index of overall national wellbeing, and twelve separate indexes and status reports in key component 'domains' of progress. These domains are: Children and youth wellbeing; Communities and regions; Culture, recreation and leisure; Democracy and governance; Economic life and prosperity; Education and creativity; Environment and sustainability; Health; Indigenous wellbeing; Justice and fairness; Subjective wellbeing; Work and work life. These domain indexes will be released in different months, to maximise publicity, discussion and policy relevance, and aggregated into the national wellbeing index.

In its design and operation, ANDI is based closely on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) and 'best practice' projects in other countries. The CIW began in 1995 and is now widely regarded (including by the OECD) as one of the world's leading models of a holistic, community-engaged national progress and wellbeing index. Both the CIW and the OECD have agreed to be partners or advisers in ANDI. Like the CIW, ANDI will be majority owned, funded and governed by the community.

### **The need for ANDI: the key issues and the global movement**

In the past thirty years, a global movement has developed to 'redefine progress beyond GDP'. 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. Since World War II, the key de facto 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 economic production and it counts everything produced as a positive, whatever its social or environmental cost. At the same time, GDP takes no account of the positive qualities of a society, the wellbeing of its people or the state of its environment. As one recent example, the catastrophic Victorian bushfires of 2009 which killed 176 people and destroyed 11 towns actually made a 'positive' net contribution to national progress (by this measure) by adding around \$5 billion to GDP in reconstruction and compensation costs.

The global movement to redefine progress and reform progress measurement has built gradually from the convergence of many separate streams: environmentalism, the women's movement, the World Health Organisation's work on the socio-economic determinants of health, local community renewal programs, the United Nations Development Program. It is embodied in world leading projects such as the UN's Human Development Index, Millennium Development Goals and (more recently) Sustainable Development Goals programs; the OECD's Better Life Index and the EU's Beyond GDP Program; and at a national level, Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Australia has played an important role too, as shown below.

In 2004 the OECD set out to become the convenor of the world movement for better social progress measurement through its global program, 'Measuring the Progress of Societies', sponsoring a series of international forums and projects. The OECD program prompted the European Union's 'Beyond GDP' program in 2007, the Stiglitz International Commission (on the measurement of economic and social progress) in 2009; and a key UN workshop in 2011; and its broad directions have been agreed by the World Economic Forum and the G20. The OECD has described this 'new global movement' as 'an explosion of interest', noting some seventy current projects developing new progress measures in countries as diverse as Japan, Thailand, Brazil, Germany, France, Italy, Korea, the UK and the US.

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

- a. 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 and using it this way can distort policy outcomes in practice.
- b. 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.
- c. Measures of true societal progress must integrate the economic, social, cultural, environmental and governance dimensions of progress; and they must take account of the subjective wellbeing of people and the qualities of the society, such as justice and sustainability, not just the material and quantitative outcomes.
- d. Developing new progress measures is a collaborative task that must engage citizens, scientists and policymakers. The process can be an important new tool to strengthen democracy and reverse citizen alienation (common in many democratic states), and to create new shared visions of national progress.
- e. 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.

Australia has played an important role in this global movement over many years and is well placed to develop a world-leading national progress measurement model that embodies the best features of international work, both in social progress and sustainable development. We have developed a wide range of local and state 'progress measurement' projects, and a strong national research capacity in this field. The ABS's pioneering 'Measures of Australia's Progress' (MAP) project, begun in 1999, was an acknowledged model for the OECD's global project. Unfortunately, MAP has been recently discontinued due to budget cuts – making the work of the ANDI project even more important.

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### How far has ANDI's work advanced?

ANDI was launched in 2010 and incorporated in 2012, but it has been nearly two decades in development. Members of its current board and partner organisations helped initiate a Senate inquiry into new national well-being measures in 1994, co-hosted Australia's first national interdisciplinary conference on measuring progress in Canberra in 1998, wrote a key report on the strategic development of progress and well-being measures in 2004, set up a national progress research network in 2005 and submitted a proposal for a national development index to the National Ideas Summit in 2008 – a proposal strongly endorsed by the summit.

In 2012 ANDI received a grant from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation to develop a long term Business Plan, which was completed with support from ACIL Allens Consulting. In 2013, a pilot project was undertaken for a national research program to underpin the development of a national progress index; the pilot project and report (*Australia's Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Measuring the Future We Want*) were co-sponsored by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), VicHealth and ACOSS (see details of the report below). Essentially, the development model proposed is similar to the Canadian Index and is built on three strategically connected stages: community engagement, research, and 'knowledge mobilisation' (the practical application and dissemination of new progress measures); but we are also planning significant improvements and innovations in this model. These include developing separate indices for each domain, released annually in different months (as described earlier), weighting domains according to community/expert priorities; and benchmarking progress against feasible 'best country' practice.

In November 2016 and January 2017, after negotiations lasting a full year, ANDI and the University of Melbourne (UOM) signed two agreements under which the University will become ANDI's principal and long term national research partner. This agreement is in two stages, a 'set up'/pilot period of 18 months, and a full development stage of 5 years (assuming the first stage is successful). Under this agreement, UOM will coordinate ANDI's national research program (below), ensure participation in, and support for, the ANDI project across all faculties and the University's fundraising and community engagement divisions, coordinate the participation of other universities and of the national Academies. The agreement provides that for the initial development stage, the University will provide \$250,000 and ANDI will match this sum from its supporting donations (this target was achieved well ahead of schedule, in August 2017). The research project is housed at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education in Carlton.

### Community engagement program

ANDI's community program will engage the Australian community as widely as possible in order to develop a shared vision of national progress, obtain direct input on goals and priorities, build legitimacy and trust for the index and in the process, strengthen Australian democracy. This national program will be built around the central question 'What kind of Australia do we want?'. It will be carried out over two-three years and will aim to directly involve 500,000 Australians through a wide array of platforms and programs: surveys, focus groups, town hall and kitchen table meetings, social media and blogs, school curricula, film and video. To support the program, ANDI will seek to enlist a major national media partner and will fully utilise the widespread networks of ANDI partners and their two million members. The UN Development Program (UNDP) has given favourable consideration to ANDI adapting its successful global survey 'MyWorld2015' as a major interactive platform for ANDI. There will also be citizen and stakeholder engagement in each of the twelve 'domain' groups'.

### Research program

An extensive national research program will be developed, to support the community program and carry out a range of research tasks in each of the twelve progress domains within a centrally agreed framework. These tasks will include design and analysis of the community engagement program in each domain, review of current 'best practice' models in progress measurement, the development of an index of progress in each domain and the production of an annual 'status' report in that field which includes international comparisons and policy recommendations.

The University of Melbourne will become the key vehicle for ANDI's research program in its role as ANDI's 'Host University' (as the Canadian project has done, in the case of Waterloo University), with the support and sponsorship of the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) and the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA).

A key task for UOM will be to coordinate the research and oversight the development of community/research groups in each of the twelve domains. These groups will bring together high-level researchers and key community stakeholders from around Australia in each of the specialised domain fields. Discussions have also been initiated with the Australian National University to act as the supporting research partner.

## How will ANDI be funded?

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ANDI's Business Plan proposes that the project will be funded from three broad sources: philanthropic and corporate funders; research funds; and the in-kind resources and networks of ANDI partners.

### Community program funding

The community engagement program will be funded through a 'Community Funder Alliance', similar to that developed by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. This will include a number of major philanthropic trusts, some key corporations and selected high net wealth individuals. Plans for this Alliance are well in hand:

- An initial development grant of \$100,000 has been made by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, and further \$150,000 has been donated by the Australian Communities Foundation, under its Impact Fund for strategic social change. These two foundations have agreed to act as key sponsors and convenors of other major foundations and to organise a 'roundtable' of a dozen potential funders.
- A panel of eminent Australians (including Sir Gus Nossal, Prof Fiona Stanley and Rev Tim Costello and many other Australians of the Year) will act as 'champions' to lead ANDI's fundraising program.
- ANDI 'Funder Alliance' members will also be asked (where appropriate to their special interest, and on an 'arms length' basis to ensure integrity of the process) to contribute to, and perhaps co-sponsor, the annual index in a domain relevant to their interests. This would mean that part of their contributions could be directly applied to research, for example as 'Industry partners' in an ARC application.
- ANDI also plans to commission a major national fundraising organisation to develop a proposal for corporate sponsorship of domain indexes by appropriate companies (and subject to strong independence and probity requirements).

### Research program funding

Research funding will be sought from several sources:

- A major Centre of Excellence proposal for up to 10 years will be developed (see below).
- The participation of European and Canadian partners in this venture will enable access to EU and Canadian research funds available for international collaborations (a partnership with the University of Rome is currently being discussed).
- Two- and three-year ARC-NHMRC collaborative research grants will be sought to carry out research in key domain areas, with appropriate corporate and philanthropic partners contributing the partner cash component, as suggested above.
- In partnership with ACOLA or specific Learned Academies, strategic research funding will be sought through projects such as the current 'Learned Academies Special Program' for cross-disciplinary collaboration on projects of national importance. In February 2017, the Academy of Social Sciences (ASSA) co-hosted and funded with the University of Melbourne a national inter-disciplinary research workshop on the ANDI project.
- Start-up funding and in-kind support for the initial development phase has been provided by the University of Melbourne, as indicated above.

### Centre of Excellence

The proposed Centre of Excellence will be designed as an international and national research centre on societal progress and its measurement. It will bring together high-level partners and sponsors including, internationally, the OECD, the UN Development Program, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, and nationally, the ABS, ACOLA and a range of business and university partners, and national community peak groups such as ACOSS, the ACF and the ACTU. A key feature will be a scheme to bring together outstanding young Australian researchers from many different disciplines to work together on 'the Australia we want' for varying periods.

Given recent and likely developments in the global movement and Australia indicated earlier, the establishment of a global and national research centre in this field will be a timely and important initiative. Initial plans for such a centre are already underway through a draft MoU with the OECD and the ABS, agreement from the CIW and favourable responses from a number of distinguished international academics and university partners. These include Professor Enrico Giovannini of the University of Rome Tor Vergata, former head of the OECD global project 'Measuring the Progress of Societies' and one of the most globally eminent academics in this field, who has agreed in principle to an adjunct or research fellow role, and several other distinguished colleagues from universities in Europe and Canada. The OECD has supported the Global Progress Research Network, convened by Australian researchers, and the development of a 'Progress Universities' group, which would facilitate partnership with several major global universities.

### Ongoing financial sustainability

ANDI is designed to be an ongoing program, and a key funding goal in its first few years will be to set up an expert group to advise on various options for long term sustainability. These will include consultancies; 'franchising' to state or local government (as the CIW does); partner subscriptions; and the donation of a major 'legacy' grant.

### Research, universities and the ACOLA pilot project

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The university and research community has played a critical role at every stage of the global movement to develop new societal progress measures. The Canadian Index from its earliest days established a national research group drawn from eight universities and appointed a university as research coordinator; the Stiglitz Commission was anchored by five Nobel prize-winning scholars; the OECD project draws on a global research and university network, as indicated above, and its Secretary General has continually stressed the crucial need for citizens, policymakers and scientists to work together.

The contribution of universities is important for two main reasons. First, the issues themselves are complex and challenging, and call for innovative and cross disciplinary research. Relevant research fields range from philosophy and politics to health and environmental science, law and justice, and the research work focuses on questions as diverse as the meaning of progress itself, the effect of future economic growth on sustainability, new ways to engage citizens, new methodologies for statistical indexes, and the likely impact of new progress measures on public policy. Second, universities ought as a matter of principle to be engaged with the community in solving common problems and on major social and public issues; and the development of new national progress measures for Australia and internationally – and perhaps a new model of progress - is very much such an issue.

A detailed blueprint for a national research programme to support the development of an Australian progress and well-being index was published in 2013, in the report *Australia's progress in the 21st-century: measuring the future we want*. This report examined the key research issues and analysed international best practice. It identified the major progress research domains, outlined community engagement issues, piloted a method for community engagement, and proposed a process for national and international research collaboration and potential partners in this process. The report also examined potential funding sources and the necessary role of a 'Host' or coordinating university'.

Overall, the ACOLA-VicHealth-ACOSS report established that such a national research project is both desirable and feasible. It concluded that:

*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 ... 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

## How will ANDI benefit Australia and Australians?

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ANDI will benefit Australia in three main ways:

### Better information

ANDI will provide clear, regular, reliable and independent information and reporting about the condition and progress of people, communities, society, government, the environment and the economy, in all areas of life that are important to Australians.

### Stronger democracy and citizen engagement

By engaging citizens in all walks of life across Australia in the meaningful task of identifying what matters for our future, and what should be measured, ANDI will help create a shared vision for Australia's future and a means to re-connect with citizens who are often alienated by political processes.

### Better government and greater transparency

By measuring 'true progress' in key fields against our enduring national goals and values, ANDI will provide an important tool for governments and other organisations for long term planning and policy evaluation and to improve scrutiny and transparency of government itself and the quality of public debate.

## For further information

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Visit our website at: [www.andi.org.au](http://www.andi.org.au)

## ANDI's key domains

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