



Measures of Australia's Progress

MAP 2.0

Future directions for measuring Australia's progress

PUBLIC SUBMISSION GUIDELINES



Preface

Setting out a suite of social, economic and environmental indicators that aim to measure a country's progress continues to be one of the most important and challenging tasks that a national statistical agency undertakes.

In April 2002, the Australian Bureau of Statistics made a major contribution to measuring whether life is getting better in Australia with the release of the first issue of *Measures of Australia's Progress* (MAP), then called *Measuring Australia's Progress*. At that time, the Bulletin referred to this publication as a revolutionary set of indicators which provided great insights on how life is improving, and at what rate.

Public interest in the relationships between the economic, social and environmental aspects of life continues to grow nationally and internationally. For example, building in part on the MAP initiative, the OECD, in partnership with a range of other international institutions, established the *Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies* and has since hosted three major international dialogues and debates on measuring societal progress. More recently, reports by the *Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* and the European Union — *Beyond GDP*, to name just two, have recommended a rethink of measurement systems and encouraged a national and global dialogue on what we care about, whether what we are striving for is achieving what we care about, and whether this is adequately reflected in our national and international metrics.

Although *Measures of Australia's Progress* has presented, side-by-side, measures of economic performance, social wellbeing and the environment since 2002, the question remains as to whether these measures adequately represent what most Australians care about. For this reason, and to take account of the international work in this area, the ABS is conducting a wide consultation in 2011 and hopes to generate a national conversation about progress. This work will allow the ABS to evaluate whether our approach focuses on those aspects of national progress that matter most to Australians.

To know whether Australia is progressing, it is important to understand what aspirations Australians hold. For example, is it important to aim for the provision of adequate housing for all Australians, and for clean air and waterways, as well as for economic growth and stability? While there are a range of such aspirations underlying the statistical indicators included in *Measures of Australia's Progress*, the ABS would like to hear from Australians about these ideas, and to make them more transparent in its conceptual framework for measuring progress. This will also allow us to assess where there is the need for new statistical measures to be developed.

About this booklet and the submission process

The ABS's aim in requesting feedback through this submission process is to gather the thoughts of Australians on what they see as important in life, and on important aspirations for national progress. This booklet provides you with background and guidance to providing this feedback.

Your submission should define the aspirations (or broad goals) that you think are important for Australia's progress. You may wish to organise your aspirations under the following 4 main identified areas of progress. Your submission can focus on one or more, or all of these areas :

- Social progress
- Economic progress
- Environmental progress
- Governance progress

This booklet provides a wealth of information to assist you, and I also encourage you to visit the *Measures of Australia's Progress* page on the ABS Website, www.abs.gov.au/about/progress and the MAP 2.0 Blog, www.abs.gov.au/about/progress/blog.

Submission Format

To assist us in collating the submissions we recommend you follow these guidelines:

- **Identify the main area** of progress you are addressing, e.g. Social, Economic, etc.
- **Express your ideas as statements** of aspirations or broad goals e.g. 'Australians have access to high quality education' or 'Australia has healthy air, land and water'
- **Clarify concepts** contained in your statements – e.g. clarify what you mean by 'access', 'high quality', 'healthy', 'stable', 'secure' if you refer to these in your statement
- **Provide any other comments** you wish to make to further explain your submission

Please also indicate whether you wish your submission to remain confidential.

Your submissions are most welcome. Please send your submission of no more than 1500 words to the Director of Social and Progress Reporting section by:

Email: measuringprogress@abs.gov.au or by

Mail: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Locked Bag 10, Belconnen ACT 2616

Closing date for submissions is 30 November 2011.

Sue Taylor
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What is MAP 2.0?

MAP 2.0 will be a refreshed version of the ABS flagship publication *Measures of Australia's Progress* (MAP) (cat. no. 1370.0). MAP was first released in 2002 in response to a growing interest in the relationship between the economic, social and environmental aspects of life, and in presenting a more complete picture of progress than was possible with traditional economic measures such as Gross Domestic Product. The aim of MAP has been to help answer the question 'Is life in Australia getting better?'

MAP 2010 The progress 'dashboard' - a summary of change

Society

-  Health
-  Education and training
-  Work
-  Crime
-  Family, community and social cohesion
-  Democracy, governance and citizenship

Economy

-  National income
-  National wealth
-  Household economic wellbeing
-  Housing
-  Productivity

Environment

-  Biodiversity
-  Land
-  Inland waters
-  Oceans and estuaries
-  Atmosphere
-  Waste

Legend

-  Progress has generally been made in this headline indicator compared with ten years ago
-  This headline indicator has generally regressed compared with ten years ago
-  There has been no significant movement in this headline indicator compared with ten years ago
-  There is either no headline indicator for this area of progress or no time series

What is the MAP 2.0 Consultation?

During 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics is conducting a national consultation. The purpose is to generate a national conversation about what Australians care about and whether those aspects of life are reflected in our national progress statistics. Feedback from the consultation, including from the submissions sought through this booklet, will feed in to a refreshed approach to measuring national progress, and will guide how MAP evolves into the future.

What are the main themes?

The ABS hopes to gather information about the **aspirations** Australians hold for national progress in Australia (see p. 8). To measure progress, it is important to define what we want to progress towards. By asking the public what their aspirations are for Australia, the ABS hopes to better reflect what Australians care about in the measures it selects to indicate whether we are progressing as a nation.



How will the submissions be used?

The information the ABS collects will assist us to develop a new framework for MAP – to provide an underlying structure that guides data collection and presentation.

The current MAP has a broad framework – identifying three main areas of interest: social, economic and environmental. However, in light of rapidly increasing national and international interest in measuring societal progress and community wellbeing, and in the course of reviewing the publication, the need to develop a more exacting framework has arisen. A more specific framework will ensure the ABS is collecting data that targets key issues. It will also make it easier for people using the data to see how Australia is progressing.

Where can I find more information?

For a more detailed discussion of future directions for MAP, and of the consultation process, please read the MAP 2010 Feature Article 'Future directions for Measuring Australia's Progress'. This article explains the plans for MAP 2.0 step by step. It can be found on the ABS website – www.abs.gov.au – use the Measures of Australia's Progress link (on the left hand navigation bar), then follow the Future Directions link (again on the left). You can also access the article from the MAP Downloads link. Please also contact Serhat Turut on (02) 6252 5367 from the MAP Team if you have more questions or would like to discuss your submission.

The ABS hopes to gather and help articulate information on the aspirations Australians hold for national progress, so we can better measure Australia's progress.

What should the submission cover?

Four main topic areas of interest

Because measuring societal progress is a broad and diverse topic, the ABS has identified some key areas of interest to focus on in the MAP 2.0 Consultation. The four main areas of interest are:

- the natural environment
- human society and culture
- the economy, and
- Australia's governance

We are interested in **the aspirations, or broad goals, Australians hold for national progress** in each of these four areas. You may choose to focus your submission on one of these areas, or on two or more areas.

What do we mean by "aspirations"?

"The day will come when nations will be judged not by their military or economic strength, nor by the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings, but by the well-being of their people: by their levels of health, nutrition and education; by their opportunities to earn a fair reward for their labours; by their ability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives; by the respect shown for their civil and political liberties; by the provision made for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged; and by the protection afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children."

The Progress of Nations, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), viewed 2010

We are hoping the aspirations articulated during this consultation reflect what Australians care about and indicate directions they consider important for the future and wellbeing of Australian society. As an example, in its *The Progress of Nations* (above), UNICEF makes broad statements that articulate widely held values and reflect universal principles, such as:

- High levels of health, nutrition and education
- The opportunity to earn a fair reward for labours

- The ability to participate in decisions that affect our lives
- Respect for civil and political liberties
- Provision for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Protection for the growing minds and bodies of our children

Another, more local example is the Tasmanian Government's *Tasmania Together* initiative, which articulates an overall vision and sets out 12 key goals, or aspirations, that are reported on annually. <http://www.tasmaniatogether.tas.gov.au/>

In many ways, the statistical indicators presented in the MAP product implicitly reflect societal interests and aspirations. For example, some aspirations that might be drawn from the commentary and indicators included in MAP 2010 are:

Social

- Population health is improving
- Our education and training supports individual development and a skilled workforce
- Families and communities support their members and are inclusive
- Crime is reducing and people feel safe

Economic

- People have equity of opportunity to enhance their material living standards
- People have access to the shelter, security, privacy and assets provided by adequate housing
- We have a productive and efficient economy
- Income and wealth are distributed effectively and equitably among Australians

Governance

- Citizens are able to participate in civic life and decisions that affect their communities
- We have a fair and effective judicial system
- Our democracy fairly represents the views of citizens

Environmental

- We have healthy native species and habitats
- Our freshwater is clean and is sustainably consumed
- We have clean air and activities that release greenhouse gases are reducing
- We have waste disposal and management that is safe for the environment and population

Some ideas that commonly recur in a range of other societal aspiration systems, include:

- We make provision for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged
- People are able to have a healthy balance between working and leisure time

These examples are meant as guides only, and we would like to hear about views that are not necessarily covered here. We also recognise that some national progress aspirations will span more than one area of interest, for example, goals associated with equity or sustainability.



Other aspects of measuring progress

Our main focus is to gather the thoughts of Australians on what they see as the most **important aspirations for national progress**. Later in the consultation we will also be considering other questions associated with progress measurement, such as:

- what specific outcomes demonstrate progress towards the aspirations identified?
- what measures best describe the extent of progress towards those outcomes?
- are there relationships of interest between the four areas?

**The intention of the consultation submissions
is that they should address the first step in measuring progress:
defining what aspects of life matter most to Australians.**

What do we mean by “progress”?

'Progress' has many different meanings. It has been connected with industrial development and economic growth, but also with 'progressive' social movements. It is often associated with newer concepts such as sustainability. In *Measures of Australia's Progress*, the ABS takes a comprehensive view of life in Australia, looking at social, economic and environmental aspects of life. It aims to help answer the question 'Is life in Australia getting better?'

However, for the purposes of the MAP 2.0 Consultation, we are defining progress more specifically as **the movement of society in a positive direction — an improvement**. This improvement implies there are one or more goals, or end points, which society is moving towards. Also inherent in this definition is the need to define these goals in order to know whether progress is occurring. For this reason we are asking that submissions to the MAP 2.0 Consultation focus on the aspirations that Australians hold for national progress.

National vs personal progress

An important aspect of progress is that it relates to Australia as a whole, not just of the lives of individuals. For this consultation, we are focusing as far as possible on the views Australians hold about national progress, rather than on their views about their personal situation, or that of their family. Such views are certainly important, and many aspects of individual lives are captured by the full array of statistics produced by the ABS. But the *Measures of Australia's Progress* publication focuses on statistics that allow national progress to be understood.

Other concepts related to progress include wellbeing, quality of life, sustainability and happiness. While these are sometimes used interchangeably, the ABS has chosen the word 'progress' as it can translate into an assessment of the nation's overall wellbeing. However, a good quality of life for all Australians, or a sustainable economy or environment, may well be aspirations identified by Australians in this consultation – and so be incorporated in a final product.

A conceptual framework: the first step in the statistical process

While most people associate statistics with numbers and data, before data can be collected, it is important to define exactly what aspects of life are to be informed by those numbers. For example, statistics about the labour market or economic activity are organised by conceptual frameworks: the Labour Force Framework and the System of National Accounts respectively. Before unemployment or national accounting measures were first

taken, the conceptual boundaries associated with these topics were delineated by these frameworks. In the same way, the ABS is taking steps to further delineate issues surrounding the concept of national progress, so the measures included in *Measures of Australia's Progress* can be assessed against this backdrop. If needed, new measures will then be developed, and their design will be informed by this preparatory work in understanding progress in the Australian context.

The MAP 2.0 Consultation will focus on the aspirations Australians hold for national progress, rather than on personal aspirations or statistical measures.



Key questions

Below are some short points relating to the four progress areas the consultation is focusing on. These are intended to stimulate discussion, and help draw out your thinking about national progress. Each is followed by a key question we would like answered. You may wish to base your feedback on these points, but you should not be limited by them.

Environmental progress

The natural landscape comprises land and water and the plants and animals that rely on them. The four are inextricably linked.

Land: The condition of soil has a critical impact on terrestrial ecosystems. Soil resources are a natural asset, and their degradation is a concern to farmers, governments and the general public.

Water: Water is fundamental to the survival of people and other organisms. Apart from drinking water, much of our economy (agriculture in particular) relies on water. The condition of freshwater ecosystems has a critical impact on the wider environment.

Biodiversity: Plants and animals bring economic benefits and are valuable in their own right. We rely on healthy ecosystems for clean air and water and healthy soil. Native bushland also has cultural, aesthetic and recreational importance to many Australians.

Human settlements and urban environments have an impact on the landscape and seascape that surrounds them, and can provide a home for native plants and animals. They also impact on the people who live and work within them.

Estuaries and oceans: Our beaches, estuaries and wider marine ecosystems play an important role in Australian life. Our seas also support a vast array of life forms and many of our marine ecosystems are globally important.

Contribution to international concerns: While the quality of Australia's environment depends to a large extent on the actions of Australians, it is also influenced by the actions of other countries. And we, in turn, can influence other countries' environments.

What are important **ENVIRONMENTAL** goals for Australia as a whole?

For example:

- Healthy habitats for native plants and animals.
- Diversity of native plants and animals
- The environment is managed so it can be sustained for the future
- Clean air, land and water (free of pollution)
- Healthy oceans and marine life and freshwater habitats
- Greenhouse gas emissions are within safe limits for the environment
- Waste disposal is managed so it is safe for the environment and people
- Materials are reused and recycled
- Healthy drinking water

Social progress

Social progress involves increases in the wellbeing of the population; a reduction of threats to, and increases in social cohesion.

Health: People generally hope to have a long life, free from pain, illness or disability. Good health for all brings social and economic benefits to individuals, families and communities.

Education and training help people develop knowledge and skills to enhance their living standards, contribute to society, extend cultural traditions, and gain a rewarding career. A skilled workforce supports economic development and improvements in living conditions.

Work: Paid work is the means by which people obtain economic resources, for themselves, and their dependent's daily living, and for their long term financial needs. Paid work also contributes to a sense of identity and self-esteem, and to economic development.

Housing provides people with shelter, security and privacy. Having a suitable place to live is fundamental to people's identity and wellbeing.

Financial hardship: Society generally accepts that people should have access to some minimum standard of consumption of goods and services. The presence of financial hardship that could preclude this minimum standard would be a societal concern.

Families and communities take on a large part of caring for people in society, providing vital services to complement institutionalised care. The family has a role in providing guidance on social values and community bonds often determine a society's resilience.

Crime can have a major impact on the wellbeing of victims and their communities, and the fear of crime can restrict people's lives and community interaction. Other costs include those associated with law enforcement and corrective services, and repairing damage.

What are important SOCIAL goals for Australia as a whole?

For example:

- Good education or training so everyone has opportunities
- Good health and healthcare for everyone
- Freedom to choose lifestyle and beliefs
- Everyone who wants a job, has a job
- Adequate housing for everyone
- Supportive families and communities
- People feel safe and secure from crime
- Access to services for everyone (eg, transport, health, community services)
- People are included in community life
- Our society encourages creativity
- Vulnerable or disadvantaged people are provided for
- Our society values our culture and heritage
- People can balance their work and leisure time

Economic progress

Economic progress equates to enhancing Australia's national income (broadly Australians' real per capita levels of consumption) while at least maintaining (or possibly enhancing) the national wealth that will support future consumption.

National wealth: Along with the skills of the work force, a nation's wealth has a major effect on its capacity to generate income. Some produced assets (such as machinery and equipment) are used in income-generating economic activity. Some natural assets (such as minerals and native timber) generate income at the time of their extraction or harvest. Holdings of financial assets with the rest of the world (such as foreign shares, deposits and loans) return income flows to Australia. Other assets, such as owner-occupied dwellings, provide consumption services direct to their owners.

National income, reflects Australians' capacity to purchase goods and services, and is a key indicator of material living standards. It is also important for other aspects of progress. Not all income is spent on the current consumption of goods and services. Income that is saved can be used to accumulate wealth in the form of, say, houses, machinery or financial assets. These assets can directly satisfy individual and societal needs, or can generate future income and support future consumption.

Productivity: A nation's productivity is the volume of goods and services it produces (its output) for a given volume of inputs (such as labour and capital). The amount by which output growth exceeds input growth is the productivity improvement. Productivity is an important measure of economic progress and helps link changes in national income with changes in national wealth. Improvements in productivity mean the economy is using resources (capital, labour, energy or materials) more efficiently.

What are important **ECONOMIC** goals for Australia as a whole?

For example:

- Everyone can maintain an adequate standard of living
- Everyone has the chance to improve their standard of living
- The economy is secure
- Everyone has access to the housing market
- The economy is productive
- The economy is efficient
- National wealth is fairly distributed among all Australians
- A skilled workforce
- Peoples' skills are fully utilised
- Our standard of living can be sustained for the future

Governance progress

Since the first MAP publication in 2002 interest in governance as an important aspect of societal progress has been growing worldwide. The ABS has always included governance indicators and commentary in its MAP publications. However, to recognise this growing interest, the ABS would like to explore Australia's progress in the area of governance separately from its social progress.

National life is influenced not only by factors such as economic output and health, but also by qualities such as the fairness of society, the health of democracy and the extent to which citizens participate in decision making. These qualities are among those associated with the concept of governance.

There are a number of definitions of governance. For example, a broad definition is provided by [the World Bank](#):

"We define governance broadly as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised."

Governance also covers such areas as:

- Human rights
- Law and justice
- Administration of government
- Citizen participation in decision making
- The democratic process (eg, elections)
- Local government
- Regulation of public and private institutions

Other factors associated with the area of governance include the confidence citizens have in government and public institutions, and the extent to which they understand and uphold their rights and duties as citizens. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance also nominates: the effectiveness of political institutions such as Parliament, the fairness of elections, the existence of an independent judiciary, equal laws and a free press (IDEA, 2001).

Governance can also involve elements of society outside of government, for example corporate governance. According to the [Australia Securities Exchange \(ASX\)](#), corporate governance "encompasses the mechanisms by which companies, and those in control, are held to account."

What are important **GOVERNANCE** goals for Australia as a whole?

For example:

- Fair elections
- Everyone can have a say in government policies
- The justice system is fair
- Financial markets are regulated
- Freedom of speech
- Honest and trustworthy government
- Socially responsible corporations
- Australia is a responsible global citizen
- Equal treatment in law for all Australians
- A strong defence force

How can I participate?

In order to determine whether Australia is progressing, we first need to understand what aspects of national progress Australians most care about. You can participate by letting us know what aspirations you think are important for our country's social, economic, environmental and governance progress. You can do this by commenting on the MAP 2.0 blog or emailing or posting a submission to the Social and Progress Reporting section of the ABS.

Contact information: Where do I send my submission?

Your submissions are most welcome. Please forward your submission of no more than 1500 words to the Director of Social and Progress Reporting section by:

Email: measuringprogress@abs.gov.au or by

Mail: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Locked Bag 10, Belconnen ACT 2616

Closing date for submissions is 30 November 2011.

Please indicate whether you wish your submission to remain confidential.

Suggestions can also be provided via our blog www.abs.gov.au/about/progress/blog, or through participation in one of the many dialogues which will be conducted throughout Australia during coming months.

