Measuring what we do or doing what we measure: challenges for Australia

NatStats 2010 Conference

16 September

Ken Henry
“... what we measure shapes what we collectively strive to pursue — and what we pursue determines what we measure”

Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress
China and India’s contribution to world growth

Chart 1

Percentage points

China
India
Rest of World

1981 1983 1985 1987 1989 1991 1993 1995 1997 1999 2001 2003 2005 2007 2009
3Ps of real GDP per person

- Share of population 15+
- Participation rate
- Unemployment rate
- Average hours worked
- Labour productivity
- Real GDP per person

Percentage contribution

- Past 40 years
- Next 40 years

Chart 2
"I’m searching for my keys."
“... what we measure shapes what we collectively strive to pursue — and what we pursue determines what we measure”

Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress
Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts

Albert Einstein
People’s knowledge of official measures of economic performance

Chart 4
Where do people get information from?

Chart 5
Curtin 2007
Financial market data

Chart 6

US LIBOR/OIS

UK LIBOR/OIS

AUS 90-Day Bank Bill/OIS
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