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# **TIME USE STATISTICS: MEASURING WELLBEING AND PROGRESS**

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Time use could be a useful indicator of well-being, having implications for income, health, equality of access to opportunities, and personal fulfilment. Specifically having too much to do, or too little to do, can both be seen as conditions of disadvantage, affecting income, health and morale. Persons living alone, for instance, who report no social contact and considerable stretches of time doing 'nothing' may not see themselves as fortunate. An unemployed person may prefer income-producing work to free time. However, having too much to do in some areas can interfere with adequate access to other uses of time. Someone who is caring for an elderly parent with a disability, for instance, may not have enough unencumbered time for income earning activities, with implications for that person's financial security in the future. Another person who works for income and also carries the main responsibility for parenting and housework may not have adequate leisure or rest time to maintain good health.

This presentation touches on whether time use statistics can be used to measure wellbeing and asks the question whether it can be used to measure progress. Preliminary discussions around the future directions for Measures of Australia's Progress have raised the idea of utilising more time based statistics. Primarily the Australian Bureau of Statistics is interested in:

- People who have too little or too much time on their hands; and
- Whether time can be used as the comparable measure for non-market activity.