ABSTRACT. This paper outlines a long term project on the quality of life in Australia and presents some initial survey data. The long term project is intended (1) to find which domains of life most affect the perceived well-being of Australians and the values/satisfactions people wish to achieve in these domains (2) to propose policy programs designed to enhance satisfaction with particular domains and (3) to assess the political feasibility of proposed programs. Policy programs intended to enhance satisfaction are termed positive welfare programs to distinguish them from conventional compensatory welfare programs. The survey data analysed here (national sample, N = 679) deal with the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of Australians, the correlates of perceived well-being and the links between domains and values. Perceived well-being is measured by Andrews and Withey's Life-as-a-whole index and Bradburn's Affect Balance scale. Satisfactions are measured on a 9 point modified version of Andrews and Withey's delighted-tem'ble scale. Readers familiar with American, British and Canadian findings will find the results reported here broadly similar. However, the linkage between people's sociological characteristics and their satisfaction levels appears to be exceptionally weak in Australia, which tends to confirm the view that Australia is a comparatively unstratified society.

The founder of Mass Observation, a British market research company, once wrote that, "You cannot yet take a census of love in Liverpool, or random sample the effect that fear of the future has on the total pattern of contemporary life in Leeds". Perhaps not, but social scientists now attempt something at least as ambitious when they try to measure people's perceptions of the 'quality of life' and even to discover the principal determinants of psychological well-being or happiness. The long term objectives of this research are (1) to discover the domains of life (job, marriage, leisure, etc.) which most affect the well-being of Australians and the values (high standard of living, close personal relations, a sense of accomplishment, etc.) Australians wish to achieve in these domains, (2) to propose public policy programs which would assist realization of values, and (3) to assess the political feasibility of proposed programs.

This project may be regarded as an attempt at political market research, based on the premise that governments, like private corporations, need to
know that their consumers want. As such it is a logical extension of current work on social indicators. Most of this work has been concerned with developing indicators of personal and social stress. So we know a good deal about trends in physical and mental illness, crime, marital problems, housing conditions, the conditions under which old people live and so forth. The policy programs intended to deal with these problems could be termed deficiency welfare or compensatory welfare programs in the sense that they are designed to alleviate misery and compensate for obvious deficiencies rather than positively to enhance quality of life and promote well-being. Some recent research, however, in Britain, Scandinavia and the United States, has moved away from this exclusive concern with 'problem areas' and towards investigating people's subjective satisfaction with different aspects of life and their sources of psychological well-being. In this project I am primarily concerned to draw out the policy implications of research on subjective social indicators and perceived quality of life. Its eventual aim is to provide market research data to enable future Australian governments to improve their understanding of the values people seek to achieve in different domains of life, so that positive welfare programs may be designed to promote these values.

Having stated these rather grandiose aims, I have to confess that at present I am only at the first stage of the project, and that this report will review the results of a national survey undertaken in Australia in March 1978; a survey which was designed to explore levels of satisfaction with different values and domains of life, to find the main correlates of psychological well-being, and to relate these results to people's demographic and political characteristics. It may be of some interest, however, to outline the methods of research which will be used at each stage of the project.

As suggested by Table I the national survey, and a subsequent Melbourne metropolitan survey, will be used for preliminary mapping operations. It is considered essential to select representative respondents from the survey samples, so that these people's values, expectations, aspirations, time budgets and 'objective' social conditions can be explored in depth and over a period of several years. Intensive interviewing, then, is required to provide a deeper understanding of results outlined by the wide-ranging but inevitably somewhat superficial survey data. Currently, the survey data are being subjected to various multidimensional scaling techniques, particularly cluster analysis, with a view to selecting respondents who are representative of sub-