Applying Natural Capital Accounting in Government Decision-Making:
*Principles, Processes … Just Do It?*

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Peter Burnett
PhD Candidate
ANU College of Law
Australian National University
peter.burnett@anu.edu.au
Policy as ends & means: Charting a course for ship of state

Where are we?

Are we on course?

Where do we want to be?

What’s the best way there?

Accounts as new generation instruments of navigation to:

• Measure position
• Help chart course to destination
• Measure progress
Consider the function of accounts as a bridge … … between data and analysis.
SEEA takes a *systemic* view … stocks and flows
Account Design Principles

Suggest also a *dynamic* view: accounts informing the *policy system*

Accounts Design Principles

Work from different angles:

Backwards from policy goals

... forward-cast for policy development

(and back-cast)

... and sideways from experience (national & business accounting).
... not to forget up and down (scalability).
But most importantly …

- Accounting a collaboration between users and experts

- New ground, so process will be experimental, iterative and involve risk: boldness needed
Can’t skip steps of learning process …

… but can speed up the evolution of knowledge!
In every field of knowledge the accepted explanations depend less on the marshalling of evidence and of preconceptions of what serves as a logical framework for the evidence. The framework dominates the evidence, because it dictates what evidence should be sought or ignored.

(From *The Causes of War*, by Geoffrey Blainey)