

I am a research associate of the Land Values Research Group (LVRG) and my training is in real estate valuation. As erstwhile director of the LVRG, I collated real estate sales data from the states and territories back as far as 1972. The data was either freely or cheaply available from government sources or agencies. This is no longer the case. Most of the sales data has been 'outsourced' to companies such as Residex, RP Data Core Logic, and CPM, and they charge like wounded bulls for the data: thousands of dollars. My analysis of the data demonstrated a reciprocal relationship between productivity and rapidly-escalating land prices, and, using the Australian figures as a proxy for world economies, in 2001 I was able to forecast economic collapse by 2009. In 2005 updated data was provided in an address at Melbourne University, chaired by the Hon Brian Howe, AO. Both may be found at <http://thedepression.org.au/my-forecasts/> The latter is on video. In conjunction with the now director of the LVRG, Dr Gavin Putland, the Kavanagh-Putland Index was developed from these cheap real estate sales data. See <http://blog.lvrg.org.au/2009/03/introducing-kavanagh-putland-index.html> It is my contention that the privatisation and costliness of this most fundamental data is akin to the Australian Bureau of Statistics being outsourced. Genuine research by the LVRG is being circumscribed by the cost of what used to be free data. On behalf of the LVRG, I trust this Productivity Commission inquiry is able to remedy this travesty.