

**October 9, 2024**

## **Centre for Policy Development Supplementary questions**

### **1. How would your organisation improve the performance indicators included in NSW Treasury's Consultation Paper, including to ensure:**

**i. The right number of indicators are included to capture a holistic, integrated set of Outcomes?**

**ii. Both lead and lag indicators are included, and that there is an appropriate balance between the two?**

The Centre for Policy Development (CPD) does not have a position on the number or balance of indicators asked about in this question.

### **2. How would your organisation structure the indicators and/or metrics in a hierarchy to effectively measure wellbeing in NSW?**

Each indicator should represent a point of value without which opportunities for current and future wellbeing. CPD recommends that rather than seeing indicators as existing on a hierarchy, acceptable minimum thresholds are considered for each. Progress should be understood not just in progress over time, but progress towards (or beyond) an acceptable threshold which itself may be regularly revised through engaged consultation with the people of NSW. For some indicators where there are set targets (for example carbon emissions), thresholds can be set regarding progress towards those targets. In other cases, acceptable thresholds will need to be developed as part of the process to build the framework.

Showing the areas in which a minimum threshold has been achieved, and where it has not will help with government priority setting, and in the case of trade-offs - priority should be given to making sure each threshold is met.

Beyond meeting thresholds, long-term outcomes and prevention should also be prioritised. The purpose of the framework as stated in the consultation paper is "more effective allocation of our collective resources, allowing us to achieve more with less, thereby improving our collective wellbeing." The evidence shows that investment in prevention and early intervention is the most effective way of achieving these goals. This should be central to the design, implementation and use of the framework, with each portfolio being tasked with focusing on what they can do to contribute to preventing wellbeing harms. For example, transport can play a significant role in improving health outcomes via interventions that actively promote healthy lifestyles (eg investment in increased uptake of active transport) and that reduce factors harmful to health (eg transport air pollution).

During the discussions at the inquiry, it became noticeable that the framework's performance and wellbeing aspects were considered as separate elements. The primary focus should be on the top-level wellbeing outcomes, beginning with thoroughly identifying them as wellbeing goals and not themes. A key question is whether the framework is primarily a performance measurement tool that falls under the wellbeing themes or a goal approach where indicators can be helpful as a decision and performance framework. A deeper State-wide conversation would be highly valuable in shaping the broader wellbeing goals and how they should be understood by the framework.

### **3. What should the NSW Government do to ensure that there is appropriate consultation and continuous feedback on the themes, indicators and outcomes in the Consultation Paper?**

CPD recommends that this framework be developed from a comprehensive, inclusive, and mixed-method consultation with the people of NSW. Understanding what wellbeing means to the people of NSW and what they envision for themselves, their children, and future generations is crucial. Such a democratic, multi-partisan conversation will improve public trust in and the sustainability of such a framework.

We strongly recommended and provided details in our submission and at the inquiry that NSW conducts a deep and inclusive consultation process. Additionally, we tabled the '*A National Conversation on Measuring What Matters in Australia*' report at the inquiry, which outlines the clear benefits of this comprehensive consultation process, including lived experience, democratic mandate, and bipartisan support. These benefits are reinforced by the success of the ACT Wellbeing framework, *The Wales We Want* consultation, and the current work by the Thriving Places Index to ensure that as many voices are heard and considered as possible.

Jurisdictions that have implemented wellbeing frameworks consistently review and update them. For instance, the ACT reviews its wellbeing framework every two years. Similarly, the Thriving Places Index reviews its indicators biennially, recently updating 43 indicators, replacing or adding 20 new ones, and enhancing existing measures such as volunteer data and cultural participation. CPD recommends that NSW implement a regular review process.

### **4. Does your organisation have any other feedback or comments on the Consultation Paper?**

We commend the NSW government on taking this first step, and we hope to continue to support the state's work embedding this framework and the principles it captures into government. If this framework is to bring about positive and effective change, the NSW government will need to focus not only on the framework and indicators but also on the new ways of working that are essential to achieving these goals. Our research shows that cultural change is a pivotal factor in the success of effective wellbeing frameworks. Further details on this have been provided in our submission.

Local government jurisdictions should also actively participate in the Performance and Wellbeing Framework. They need to be involved in data collection, data sharing, and collaborating with the State to deliver services. A successful example of this approach is the Thriving Places Index in the UK. Initially starting as a program for cities, it now monitors regions across England. Despite differences in governance between their system and Australia's federated model, there are valuable learnings that can be adapted. This approach can help align missions, establish shared goals, foster collaborative decision-making, and enable the pooling and connecting of budgets.

For more information, the latest Wellbeing in Action report can be found here:

[Thriving Places Index](#)

[Wellbeing Economy in Action Report](#)

*As per our recommendations of creating broader wellbeing goals, please find feedback on current "themes" and specific components:*

### **Skilled**

The theme description misses the importance of the broadness of education and educational opportunities that extend beyond a specific focus on vocational training. A broad educational base will be crucial when facing the changing and unknown nature of future jobs.

Recommended addition: "A well-educated population with broad educational opportunities throughout life that support adaptability which will be crucial when facing the changing and unknown nature of future jobs."

### **Prosperous**

The theme talks about jobs but does not make mention of decent work. Similarly, the idea of 'productive jobs' is hard to interpret, and represents a risk for example in productivity being seen as low in caring roles.

Current wording: "People have access to jobs and opportunities"

Recommended amendment: "People have access to decent, fair work and opportunities."

Current wording: "Everyone has access to productive and rewarding jobs."

Recommended amendment: "Everyone has access to decent work and rewarding jobs."

### **Secure**

Current wording: "Communities are prepared for and resilient to disasters and emergencies."

Recommended amendment: "The impacts of natural disasters and emergencies on communities is minimised through prevention, preparedness, resilience and recovery."

## Healthy

The theme description overlooks the importance that the environment (built, natural, social etc.) plays in determining public health outcomes.

Current wording: "A society where people have good physical and mental health, and can access the information and services they need to make improvements."

Recommended amendment: "A society where people have good physical and mental health and can access the information and services they need to make improvements, supported by an environment that promotes long-term and future health

- Recommend adding an indicator of total native vegetation coverage (loss). Natural heritage protection must go beyond areas specifically managed for conservation if it is to be effective.

## Sustainable-performance

- Transition to a circular economy
  - requires much more than improved recycling.
  - Recommend adding components that address right to repair, programs that increase product lifespans and reduce planned obsolescence (including a reduction in fast fashion etc.)
- Environment and Heritage Protection
  - Recommend adding an indicator that measures biodiversity loss (protection), including, but not limited to threatened species.

## Sustainable - wellbeing metrics

- Add a metric about access to nature and/or about tree cover in urban areas. Both are highly correlated with wellbeing (and urban cooling). Processes that link urban greening with nature conservation (i.e. by using local native vegetation) have co-benefits for human and non-human flourishing.
- Add a metric for equitable access to sustainable consumer goods. Sustainability should not be a luxury but a default.
- Either broaden the air quality metric to include other pollutants (such as PFAS) or create another metric for broader exposure to known pollutants.

## Housed wellbeing metrics

- Add a metric (or two) that measures the energy efficiency and climate resilience of existing housing stock. Australia's housing stock is poorly suited to our current climate, causing premature death and illness among many. Our housing stock is even more poorly suited to the climate extremes that will be experienced in coming decades. Housing upgrades are critical to the future wellbeing of NSW residents.