



SSROC Response to Public Accounts Committee Supplementary Questions

Public Accounts Committee

A framework for performance reporting and driving wellbeing outcomes in NSW

The following questions refer to NSW Treasury's Performance and Wellbeing – Consultation Paper (Consultation Paper) first published in June 2024 as part of the 2024-25 NSW Budget publications.

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?

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

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?

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

SSROC Response to the Supplementary Questions

SSROC welcomes the opportunity to provide further information and responses to the Public Accounts Committee to their Supplementary Questions.

Responses are provided where SSROC Secretariat considers we can make informed and positive contributions.

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?

1(i)

SSROC's submission argues for a ninth theme around *Place*. A new set of indicators would support this place-based theme to capture aggregated spatial aspects of wellbeing and performance.

It is in places (our cities, regions, towns and neighbourhoods) that an effective measurement system can determine whether adopted strategies and investments in infrastructure and services are actually maximising performance and improving wellbeing of households and businesses.

While spatial distribution effects can and should be usefully mapped for the eight proposed themes and their indicators (e.g. for health, housing etc), they can only partially capture the elements that contribute to wellbeing and performance being experienced by local households and businesses. They are issue-based and not place-based themes. Both are necessary. Individually, these theme indicators do not enable a holistic, integrated and comprehensive assessment. So, without some qualification, they can provide a misleading impression about local households' overall experience of wellbeing. State averages can hide localised outcomes and serious disadvantages and shortcomings.

A place theme and well-designed related set of indicators, configured for measuring wellbeing and economic performance, will help to capture the intersections, interactions and combined impacts of the 8 themes to show overall wellbeing and performance impacts on specific communities as experienced where they live.

Place-based wellbeing and performance indices will help to identify those places where wellbeing and performance outcomes are being enhanced, static or declining. They enable spatial mapping in a way that highlights coordination issues and priorities that would not otherwise be identified. This form of visual reporting can send strong signals to decision-makers, stimulating efforts to break down siloed decision-making and encouraging interagency and intergovernmental co-investment.

Six to seven years ago, SSROC commissioned and worked with SGS Economics and Planning on benchmarking liveability for SSROC area. We identified themes of liveability and then used a GIS based platform to map the liveability of each suburb or local government area based on data from the Australia Bureau of Statistics, administrative data from council, and other sources. When a particular stream, such as affordable housing or access to public transport, is selected, one can see visually, across SSROC's 12 member councils, the spatial expression of each of the theme. The liveability themes can also be overlaid to get a better picture of liveability or wellbeing assets of a place. This could be done with a performance and wellbeing framework. It will offer opportunity for integrated planning and wellbeing outcomes for the community. It would also offer opportunity for policy makers to see wellbeing from State, metropolitan, regional, local government area and suburbs levels.

1(ii)

Lead and lag indicators will be vital for effective infrastructure and services planning.

SSROC strongly recommends the addition of strategic waste management infrastructure indicators for inclusion in the framework, to help drive and coordinate government planning and investment in waste management infrastructure.

Effective waste management strategies are absolutely critical for the population's health and continued wellbeing. A looming crisis exists with Sydney's capacity to manage the growth of waste as the population increases. Waste management infrastructure is critical infrastructure that is often off the radar of NSW Treasury. An indicator that captures current and future capacity for waste management infrastructure will assist to highlight this need, its planning and the significant state government funding requirements.

Population growth and increasing housing will inevitably also increase waste generation into a waste management system that is already operating at close to capacity. In Sydney, putrescible (red lid bin) waste landfills are expected to be full by 2036 and non-putrescible waste landfill will close in 2028.

SSROC has found from many years' experience in waste, that strategic waste management and circular economy place based solutions will need a coherent regional approach and specific State strategy to be sustainable, efficient and effective. Coordinated regional responses, strategies and investment are critical to meeting local, state and national government objectives and successfully developing market-based responses that sustain people's welfare and wellbeing.

We have identified and recommend the indicators and metrics to the Parliamentary Committee.

Table 1.8 Sustainable	NSW outcome	Indicator	Metric	Why is this important?	Direction
	A secure and sustainable transition to a circular economy and Net Zero	Local recovery, reprocessing and disposal infrastructure	Proximity to municipal density and growth or commercial precincts	Consumption is rising and waste disposal and processing facilities cannot cope with demand.	Down
	A secure and sustainable transition to a circular economy and Net Zero	Resource recovery and cost control	Waste transfer and aggregation facilities located on city fringe	High costs to community for long haul transport to region/non-urban based processing facilities	Down
	A secure and sustainable transition to a circular economy and Net Zero	Reuse and repair precincts, and second-hand purchasing	Reduction of waste generation per person	Circular transitions require options and opportunities to eliminate disposal option	Down
	Natural resources are used productively and sustainably	Compliant, large-scale food organics composted and used in metropolitan lands rehabilitation	Annual use of resources generated from food organics - for playing fields, re-vegetation and contaminated lands remediation	Beneficial reuse is a critical circular and decarbonisation benefit to the community	Up
Table 1.5 Secure	Communities are prepared and resilient to disasters and emergencies	Disaster waste aggregation and disposal preparedness	Designated and planned local sites for temporary storage of waste after disasters	Lack of preparation impacts public health, continuity of services and disposal capacity	Down

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

The proposal to have a 'Place' theme and indicators should be at the top of any hierarchy of themes and indicators.

This will enable the Government to better plan, co-ordinate agencies and partners, fund and co-invest to achieve goals for wellbeing and lift performance.

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?

NSW Government priorities for the framework should be routinely informed by a thorough, transparent public consultation process. The development and implementation of the framework will require continuous improvement and ongoing stakeholder consultations.

Initially, consultations around strategic priorities should sit alongside or be part of the new Six Cities Region Plan public consultations to ensure policy and strategic alignments and avoid costly duplication of data collection and stakeholder engagement processes.

Special consultation and detailed consultation provisions should be made with, and for, local councils. Local councils have a critical role in planning and providing community infrastructure that sits alongside, and needs to seamlessly integrate with, state and federally funded infrastructure.

If this initiative is successful and sustained, it is envisaged that local councils will become key users of the outcome information. They will want to analyse the performance and wellbeing reporting applicable to their context to inform their own strategies and investment plans.

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

If councils are to be involved in new data collections and reporting to support the framework's implementation, that are outside their existing reporting requirements, then local councils will need to be adequately funded by the State Government to cover the costs of delivering these additional administrative duties for a new state initiative.

Special care should be taken to use and align existing data collections to minimise duplication for councils and other stakeholders.

As the data and indicators will need to apply across the entire state, the initial data collections for the framework should draw heavily upon the existing State and Commonwealth data sources.

Please also note Mark Nutting's response to the Public Accounts Committee Question on Notice following.

Question on Notice to Mark Nutting

Are you aware of any councils that have taken their own approach to wellbeing budgeting or wellbeing reporting?

A number of SSROC member councils (for example Canada Bay, Woollahra and Randwick) have used the services of Place Score. <https://www.placescore.org>

SSROC does not endorse or promote Place Score, this is an example only. For a fee, Place Score collects data directly from the people connected to a place. They have a number of products that provides insights into places, the public domain (parks, neighbourhoods and main streets) and their communities.

Every two years Place Score facilitates the Australian Liveability Census. They partner with local and state governments, the private sector and not-for-profit organisations to invite the Australian community to share what is important to them and how local neighbourhoods are performing.

Resilient Sydney

Resilient Sydney is a local government led program hosted by the City of Sydney on behalf of all 33 councils of metropolitan Sydney. The Resilient Sydney Strategy (2018) is the first resilience strategy for metropolitan Sydney, which calls for business, government, academia, communities and individuals to lead and work as one city to improve liveability and resilience. Engagement with residents and organisations highlighted the system connections between people, organisations and critical infrastructure and our vulnerabilities to shock events. An effective Performance and Wellbeing Framework will need to capture these connections and a community's access to transport, affordable housing, education and employment opportunities. A place theme could highlight the cumulative impact of these inter-relationships for communities.

The vision is for Metropolitan Sydney to be connected, inclusive and resilient.

One of Resilient Sydney's projects is the Resilient Sydney Platform. Launched in 2019, the Platform hosts data, indicators, visualizations and tools to enable local governments to understand the key environmental impacts and performance spatially in their communities. It has the potential to help focus council efforts correctly, make projections, report on progress, etc. (see: <https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/speaker-series-11-data-for-climate-action-the-resilient-sydney-platform/#>) For example, the data is informing: the conversion of internal combustion vehicles to electric vehicles; increasing tree canopy to mitigate urban heat; and identifying priorities and strategies for moving to net zero.

Following a data development process, all councils share the same data. The data came in different geographies, different sectors, different subsectors, but the platform software and methodology enable it to be transformed in a consistent framework so cities and local councils and council officers can use it to inform planning, decision-making and investments.

Mark Nutting