

**Submission  
No 39**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND DRIVING  
WELLBEING OUTCOMES IN NSW**

**Organisation:** Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

**Date Received:** 11 September 2024

The Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**Submission on framework for performance reporting and driving wellbeing outcomes in NSW**

Dear members of the Public Accounts Committee,

The Justice and Peace Office is an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, charged with promoting awareness, understanding and action in relation to justice, peace, ecology, and development as guided by Catholic Social Teaching. Envisioning a society that attends to the common good and to sustainable use of natural resources are primary concerns for our Office.

We are grateful for this opportunity to make a submission on the Government's proposed Wellbeing Framework.

To begin, we laud the Government's decision to move in this direction. The move towards wellbeing metrics is not perfect but is an enormous improvement from relying solely on GDP figures as a shorthand for whether we are moving forward as a society.

We feel that the introduction of this Framework presents an opportunity to increase both transparency in government and citizen participation, however, that will require more effort and thought around how the Framework can be accessed and used by everyday citizens.

We are concerned that the themes and outcomes are too greatly distanced from Government policies and are measuring very broad trends; so broad that they can't be said to be the *responsibility* of the Government.

- It would be better if the Framework were used as an opportunity to increase accountability by **naming and attaching government policies and programs to outcomes** and stating their expected impact and timeframes.

We are generally supportive of the eight wellbeing themes the Government has proposed, and the 28 outcomes. No doubt, graphic design and iconography will be developed to help readers take in the themes and their associated outcomes in one glance.

- We suggest that the **protection of biodiversity** warrants being named explicitly in the outcomes, alongside the transition to net zero. Language that “The environment ... is protected” is not specific enough.

We are glad to see acknowledgment in the Consultation Paper that the proposed indicators may still hide indigenous disadvantage and that there is a need not just for the ability to disaggregate data on First Nations people but, even before that, for culturally appropriate policy codesign. Australia has a long and unfortunate record of treating indigenous people merely as objects of Government policy, excluded from the decision-making process.

### **Dialogue not monologue**

Our other feedback is not about content but rather about the implementation of the Framework.

The Government ought to ensure that the Framework is a dialogue and not a monologue.

This is true for all citizens and not just indigenous Australians.

Rather than merely ‘presenting data’, the Framework is an opportunity to drive engagement on Government policy. Ways to make it more participatory ought to be considered from the outset: putting it where people will see and engage with it. For example,

- The eventual indicator dashboard could be built into the Service NSW platform and app. Users can view headline information on health education and transport outcomes in the same way that they have visibility over their taxation records, and how the money was spent, through MyGov.
- This could be toggled to a localised view about ‘How is my postcode faring?’ that would display data such as nearest hospital waiting times, transportation access and indicators of social cohesion (e.g. locally reported instances of domestic violence).
- A “My dashboard” feature would allow users to pin which of the 28 outcomes are of most interest to them. That would also give the Government intelligence on which outcomes are of more interest in which areas.

- Users can then be nudged towards the *Have Your Say* platform. If they have highlighted one of the outcomes, they can be notified when there are public consultations on those matters, with the ability to give feedback directly through the Service NSW app.

If the NSW Government is unwilling to set up such a feedback loop itself, a lower-cost alternative is to design the Framework and its reporting in an open architecture that allows civil society groups to take the data and present it, live, to their constituents.

With a little additional work, the Framework presents an excellent opportunity to increase both transparency in government and citizen participation.

Contact:

Dr Michael Walker  
Social Justice Facilitator  
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

