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The Treasury
Measuring What Matters Team
Via email: MeasuringWhatMatters@Treasury.gov.au

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Dear Measuring What Matters Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on how the Government can better measure what matters to improve the lives of all Australians.

A truly prospering society is not only one where everyone can access the basics of food, housing and a liveable income, but also where people are happy and healthy. Yet in reality, Australia is facing growing inequality, with the cost of living rising faster than wages or income support payments. More and more people from increasingly diverse backgrounds are turning to Anglicare Australia Network services for help. Coupled with housing that is more expensive than ever, the pressure on those on the lowest incomes has never been greater. If we do not change course, we risk leaving many Australians behind and denying them a stake in our prosperity, and indeed in compromising that prosperity for all.

Anglicare Australia commends the government's commitment to creating a Wellbeing Framework to inform a Measuring What Matters Statement to prioritise equitable, sustainable, and holistic outcomes over economic growth. Trials and evaluations of wellbeing frameworks in other jurisdictions have shown that they can be effective in promoting these goals. Wales, for example, has retrofitted 650 social housing units in Swansea with renewable energy technology to tackle fuel poverty, create jobs and decarbonise homes.ⁱ Anglicare Australia's feedback focuses on how the Statement could be used to measure living standards and poverty, and gauge the success of Government interventions in these areas.

Include indicators that focus on equity gaps

The Treasury statement proposes OECD Indicators as a starting point for thinking about what matters to Australians wellbeing. Yet if the Statement is to have an impact on the lives of Australians, it will need to be expanded to include indicators that can measure inequality, poverty, and access to support and services. For example, the ACT Wellbeing Framework includes a indicators that seek to understand people's experiences, with tangible data on access to housing, living costs, income levels, and financial position.ⁱⁱ These measures create accountability on government priorities, and help gauge whether government interventions are improving people's lives.

We recommend including the following in Measuring What Matters Statement:

- Income and wealth inequality
- Poverty, including child poverty
- Digital inclusion
- Equity of education outcomes between cohorts and income levels
- Access to health services
- Rental stress, housing stress, and the availability of affordable homes.

The inclusion of indicators to measure environmental well-being is also crucial for a sustainable future. These indicators should assess the impact of human activities on the environment to ensure its preservation for future generations.

It is also critical to understand the impact of Government policies and interventions in each of these areas. Anglicare Australia further recommends that the Wellbeing Framework include a short analysis of how Budget measures and other Government policies affect each of these areas.

Ensure effective oversight and accountability

Effective implementation of wellbeing frameworks is crucial for progress to be made. Poor reporting and accountability can impede the successful integration of sustainable development principles into government and public services.

To address these issues, Anglicare Australia suggests that the government appoint independent commissioner to exercise oversight. This approach could be modelled on the Welsh Future Generations Commissioner and tasked with ensuring the accuracy of reporting against the Statement, holding the government accountable for their wellbeing commitments, and supporting best practice. It is also crucial that data is collected and published in a timely manner, and can be disaggregated to identify vulnerable groups and enable more effective interventions.

To avoid common pitfalls and learn from best practices, the Government can draw on data and evidence from other jurisdictions when designing and implementing the Framework. Commonwealth bodies such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Australian Bureau of Statistics may also be able to contribute existing datasets, while agencies such as the Australian National Audit Office could assist in measuring the impact of Government policies.

Budgets and national priorities are often affected by short-term political cycles. To ensure that wellbeing, poverty and living standards remain a long-term focus, the government should consider embedding the Framework in legislation. This can help ensure that it remains a priority. For example, in Wales, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires all public bodies to comply with seven wellbeing goals and five ways of working while carrying out their duties.ⁱⁱⁱ

Finally, if key measures are worsening over time or Government policies are worsening outcomes, the Statement should include a response from Government on how it plans to improve outcomes over time.

Include lived experience in design and consultation

While Anglicare Australia welcomes this process, we are concerned that the consultation on the Framework is limited to written submissions and only advertised on the Treasury website. This approach may not elicit a diverse range of opinions beyond traditional stakeholders such as think tanks, community service organisations, unions, and academics. In order to truly understand the wellbeing needs of all Australians, the consultation process must include meaningful engagement with different communities, who will have unique priorities, values, and needs. People are experts in their own lives, and their direct lived experiences must be taken into account.

To gather these perspectives, the consultation process must be accessible, easy to understand, tailored and delivered through appropriate channels. An example of this is the Australian Capital Territory's wellbeing framework consultation, where nearly 3,000 Canberrans were engaged through various strategies, including morning teas with seniors, pizza parties with young people, and surveys at food pantries.^{iv} These tailored approaches allowed for the voices of those who may not be adequately represented in conventional consultation processes to be heard.

Anglicare Australia looks forward to working with Treasury on developing a Wellbeing Framework. If the Measuring What Matters Team would like to discuss anything raised in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us at anglicare@anglicare.asn.au

Yours sincerely,



Kasy Chambers
Executive Director

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- ⁱ Pobl (2020) [‘Transformative’ Swansea energy retrofit scheme kicks off.](#)
 - ⁱⁱ ACT Government (2023) [ACT Wellbeing Framework: Living Standards.](#)
 - ⁱⁱⁱ VicHealth (2022) [How to create a well-being economy.](#)
 - ^{iv} ACT Government (2020) [ACT Wellbeing Framework: Consultation Report.](#)