

Measuring what matters

Attachment A: Measuring What Matters: Consultation Feedback form

Consult hub

Response received at:
26 May 2023, 1:29am

Response ID:
sbm26ebc53b9bacf50411696

1 Meeting Host Name

Victor Perton

2 Organisation (if individual please enter N/A)

The Centre for Optimism

3 Email

victor@victorperton.com

4 Phone

[REDACTED]

5 Meeting host

Community group

6 Other

Not answered

7 Meeting date

23 May 2023

8 Meeting location

Virtual

- 9 Location/City/Town
Not answered
- 10 State
Not answered
- 11 Participants attending
Individuals
- 12 Other
Not answered
- 13 Number of participants
120
- 14 1. Did the five emerging policy themes Prosperous, Inclusive, Sustainable, Cohesive and Healthy resonate with meeting participants?
No
- 15 If not, why not (200 words)
Some did, some didn't.
- Prosperous, for instance, has the odour of traditional economic indicators. Optimistic, Thriving or Hopeful would be better terms.
- More to say but box only allows 200 charac'
- 16 2. Which of the following themes are most important to you? (Select 3)
Inclusive: A society that shares opportunities and enables people to fully participate
Sustainable: A natural environment that is valued and sustainably managed in the face of a changing climate for current and future generations
Healthy: A society in which people feel well and are in good physical and mental health now and into the future
- 17 3. Which themes or descriptions were most frequently discussed?

(Select 3)

Sustainable: A natural environment that is valued and sustainably managed in the face of a changing climate for current and future generations

Healthy: A society in which people feel well and are in good physical and mental health now and into the future

Cohesive: A safe and cohesive society that celebrates culture and encourages participation

18 4. What do you see as the most important issues for future wellbeing? Are these captured by the emerging policy themes?

We see "Measuring what Matters" as the start of restoring Australia's optimism.

As the Prime Minister has said, optimism is at the core of the Australian identity, and he set himself the challenge of leading a government in which optimism and hope were the key messages it communicated to the people and the world.

As mentioned in the Centre's first submission, we welcome the Prime Minister's extensive use of the language of optimism and hope about "The Voice" and other matters, including alliances.

Our document "Framing a Positive National Narrative" identified Collaboration, Vision, Community, Measurement, Economic Development, Institutional Change and Framing around Optimism as keys to positively building national wellbeing.

In response to Treasury's request to rank its 5 "Emerging policy themes and draft descriptions", the Centre surveyed its membership, and they rated the suggested themes in this order: Healthy; Inclusive; Sustainable; Cohesive; and Prosperous.

Our members place a premium on personal and societal health and wellbeing, with optimism as a core driver.

We see optimism as a value to Australians getting a 'fair go' (see below).

The latter is synonymous with Australia's way of life and character, but it also resonates with government and corporate decision-making on a personal level.

While the five elements contain critical components underpinned by optimism, optimism is neither explicitly included nor its opposites - pessimism, despair and depression.

The Centre for Optimism believes strongly that optimism should be regarded as a fundamental mainstream element in its own right. This is because optimism is the wellspring of hope, vision and forward-thinking, positivity, innovation and inclusivity.

Optimism drives entrepreneurship, leadership, risk-taking, improved economic prosperity and human wellbeing.

For example, various studies and the work of the Centre itself show that optimism is the key indicator of healthy longevity, leads to better mental and physical health, to the transformation of businesses and improved performance of corporations both in terms of the bottom line and staff empowerment, as well as leadership and to more engaged communities.

The Centre for Optimism believes that a values-driven approach is inextricably linked to optimism. These values are unique, intrinsic ones to Australia.

19 5. How might the descriptions be amended to best reflect our priorities?

Replace Prosperity with Optimism and Hope for The Future

20 6. Are there any indicators and existing data sources that will be critical to inform the emerging policy themes?

Measuring Optimism

There exists a multitude of methods for measuring optimism. Assessing personal optimism is crucial in determining overall individual, regional and national wellbeing.

So too, optimism about community, nation and the world are essential measures of Australia's world-view and the effectiveness of its governments and institutions.

The Centre for Optimism's insightful survey questions, "What makes you optimistic?" and "What fuels your optimism?" have proven easy to administer across diverse settings such as institutional environments, door-to-door interactions, conferences, workshops, quick street interviews, and online surveys.

We suggest expanding this survey for annual evaluations across select communities and demographic groups. Notably, posing these questions has a heartening impact on the community.

Community-based and governmental organisations, including state governments, regularly conduct People Matter surveys within their workforce, which have questions that relate to optimism or could be modified to measure optimism more explicitly. In addition, many entities utilise instruments like Human Synergistics; thus, substantial data is already available. Likewise, psychometric testing data from universities and research corporations could provide invaluable comparisons between urban and regional sectors, among other demographic variables.

To gauge the effectiveness of government and community initiatives on wellbeing, we can measure optimism on scales spanning from local communities to the global stage.

For effective benchmarking, constructing a parallel pessimism index would be advantageous. This index would offer a vital reality check and provide markers to track the extent of necessary improvements, policy reforms, business transformations, and community participation. It could be applied to pre- and post-budget or policy contexts, thereby enabling a better understanding of community input, policy development, and outcome measurement. The resultant improved relationships and engaged communities can further aid the public sector in designing and implementing best practices and policies.

An optimism index could be published annually in conjunction with the national budget. It could also serve as a basis for ongoing dialogue with the community to shape a national vision and renewal agenda. This index should be adaptable, allowing for disaggregation at the state and regional levels and customisation to suit businesses, unions...

21 7. Is there any additional information you would like to see in the Measuring What Matters Statement? If so, please outline.

We propose Optimism, Hope, and Vision measures at the forefront of our submissions, as detailed in our previous responses. These elements are central to promoting a thriving society and nurturing individual well-being.

Mental Health: Deepen understanding by analysing metrics such as suicide rates, usage of anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medication, and relevant data on the treatment of mental health conditions by healthcare professionals, including doctors, psychologists, and allied health practitioners. References to rates of dementia and Alzheimer's and the promise of new treatments to delay the onset and progress of the diseases.

Physical Health Indicators: These could include average lifespan, prevalent illnesses, and

chronic conditions to gauge the overall physical health of the population.

Social Cohesion: Consider loneliness indices a barometer of community and social inclusivity.

Family Well-being: The strength of family relationships is a significant factor in overall life satisfaction. Indicators such as the proportion of individuals feeling supported in times of need by their immediate family or measures of time spent with family can offer insights into family well-being. These metrics can further complement child development and education data, family financial security, and housing stability.

Environmental Accountability: In addition to tracking carbon emissions reduction, include regenerative practices, tree canopy, shade cover, and integrated water management as measures of ecological stewardship.

Urban Well-being: Evaluations of urban livability, encompassing a range of factors from housing affordability to the quality of public services, environmental health, access to green spaces, and crime rates, could provide holistic insights into the state of our cities. Measures like walkability, public transportation access, air and noise pollution levels, and urban heat island effect could provide a more comprehensive understanding of urban life. Tools like the World Bank's City Performance Tool, the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index, and the Mercer Quality of Living Survey could be instrumental.

Job Satisfaction and Workplace Well-being: Beyond mere employment statistics, the quality of jobs, gauged via productivity levels and skills development opportunities, should be assessed. Additionally, factors like workplace joy and laughter, levels of stress, and burnout rates could offer valuable insights....

The Centre for Optimism

Response to Measuring What Matters Second Consultation Process

Answering: What do you see as the most important issues for future wellbeing? Are these captured by the emerging policy themes?

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As mentioned in the Centre's first submission, we welcome the Prime Minister's extensive use of the language of optimism and hope about "The Voice" and other matters, including alliances.

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Optimism drives entrepreneurship, leadership, risk-taking, improved economic prosperity and human wellbeing.

For example, various studies and the work of the Centre itself show that optimism is the key indicator of healthy longevity, leads to better mental and physical health, to the transformation of businesses and improved performance of corporations both in terms of the bottom line and staff empowerment, as well as leadership and to more engaged communities.

The Centre for Optimism believes that a values-driven approach is inextricably linked to optimism. These values are unique, intrinsic ones to Australia.

These values are a "fair go" and equality of opportunity, inclusivity and welcoming of diversity, caring and citizenry.

The Centre for Optimism is heartened by the Treasurer's essay earlier this year calling for a reframed, values-driven capitalism.

Measuring Optimism

There exists a multitude of methods for measuring optimism. Assessing personal and community optimism is crucial in determining overall individual, regional and national wellbeing.

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So too, optimism about community, nation and the world are essential measures of Australia's world-view and the effectiveness of its governments and institutions.

The Centre for Optimism's insightful survey questions, "What makes you optimistic?" and "What fuels your optimism?" have proven easy to administer across diverse settings, such as institutional environments, door-to-door interactions, conferences, workshops, quick street interviews, and online surveys.

We suggest expanding this survey with broader questions around optimism on wellbeing for annual evaluations across select communities and demographic groups. Notably, posing these questions has a "heartening" impact on the community and inspires better leadership and collective support for initiatives and programs.

Community-based and governmental organisations, including state governments, regularly conduct People Matter surveys within their workforce, which have questions that relate to optimism or could be modified to measure optimism more explicitly. In addition, many entities utilise instruments like Human Synergistics; thus, substantial data is already available. Likewise, psychometric testing data from universities and research corporations could provide invaluable comparisons between urban and regional sectors, among other demographic variables.

To gauge the effectiveness of government and community initiatives on wellbeing, we can measure optimism on scales spanning from local communities to the global stage.

For effective benchmarking, constructing a parallel pessimism, despair and depression study would be advantageous. Data in government hands include PBS prescriptions for anti-depressant and anti-anxiety medication. However, other global and national surveys on business confidence and consumer confidence can be factored into the final analysis of the general wellbeing outcome to provide a 'whole of nation' perspective.

An optimism index could be constructed for the Measuring What Matters document. It could also serve as a basis for ongoing dialogue with the community to shape a national vision and renewal agenda. This index should be adaptable, allowing for disaggregation at the state and regional levels and customisation to suit businesses, unions, industry, not-for-profit and other stakeholders.

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While data for some components of the index are publicly accessible, others may necessitate the use of new survey tools. The government could also collaborate with organisations already conducting similar assessments, such as the Westpac-Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research consumer sentiment survey, McKinsey and the Lowy Institute and The Centre for Optimism.

As you know, Bhutan and Finland revel in titles of the "Happiest Country". Australian language and dry humour won't get us from 12 to 1 on that ranking. So why not try for the "Most Optimistic Country"?

Other Measures to be Included in "Measuring What Matters."

As detailed above, we propose Optimism, Hope, and Vision measures at the forefront of our submissions.

These additional elements are valuable measures for the government to transparently report on its effectiveness in promoting a thriving society and nurturing individual wellbeing:

Mental Health: Deepen understanding by analysing metrics such as suicide rates, usage of anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medication, and relevant data on the treatment of mental health conditions by healthcare professionals, including doctors, psychologists, and allied health practitioners. References to rates of dementia and Alzheimer's and the promise of new treatments to delay the onset and progress of the diseases.

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Job Satisfaction and Workplace Wellbeing: Beyond mere employment statistics, the quality of jobs, gauged via productivity levels and skills development opportunities, should be assessed. Additionally, factors like workplace joy and laughter, levels of stress, and burnout rates could offer valuable insights into the emotional health of workers and the organisational cultures they are part of.

Community Engagement: Quantify engagement in volunteerism and not-for-profit activities as a measure of social involvement.

Diversity Acceptance: Evaluate societal embrace of differences across age, gender, race, and other categories, supporting the principle of equity.

Happiness: Incorporate measures from the World Happiness Report and subjective wellbeing measures, which gauge overall life satisfaction and daily emotions. Indices like the OECD's Better Life Index, which considers work-life balance, education, and skills, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of happiness in our society.

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Homeownership: Finally, assess the fulfilment of the quintessential Australian dream by tracking homeownership rates.

Socioeconomic Insights: In an affluent society like Australia, happiness and joy are not solely determined by wealth and income. Therefore, comprehensive socioeconomic comparisons are needed to evaluate wellbeing.

In conclusion, the "Measuring What Matters" statement should encompass various parameters that paint a comprehensive picture of societal wellbeing beyond purely economic measures.