

Attachment A: Measuring What Matters: Consultation Feedback form

To be completed by meeting host after each meeting and returned to measuringwhatmatters@treasury.gov.au by 26 May 2023.

Meeting details

Meeting host name Bianca Tini Brunozzi, Policy & Advocacy Officer

Meeting host organisation: NSW Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network

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Meeting host

- ☐ Member of Parliament
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ Non-government organisation
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Academic
- ☐ Community group
- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Other Click or tap here to enter text.

Meeting date: 22/05/2023

Meeting location (in-person or virtual): In-person

Participants attending:

- ☒ Member of a community organisation
- ☐ Businesses
- ☐ Academics
- ☐ Union members
- ☐ Individuals
- ☐ Other Click or tap here to enter text.

Number of participants: 9

What matters to Australians?

1. Did the five emerging policy themes Prosperous, Inclusive, Sustainable, Cohesive and Healthy resonate with meeting participants?

☐ Yes ☒ No if not, why not The issue of safety has been lumped under the cohesive policy theme. Safety must be a standalone policy theme to ensure that receives adequate consideration and monitoring.

2. Which of the following themes are most important to you? (Select three)

☐ **Prosperous:**

A growing, productive and resilient economy

☒ **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

☒ **Cohesive:**

A safe and cohesive society that celebrates culture and encourages participation

☐ **Healthy:**

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

3. Which themes or descriptions were most frequently discussed? (Select three)

☐ **Prosperous:**

A growing, productive and resilient economy

☒ **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

☒ **Cohesive:**

A safe and cohesive society that celebrates culture and encourages participation

☐ **Healthy:**

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

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

Our organisation is the NSW Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network ('AWAN'). This submission is made after consultation with AWAN's Secretariat, as well as AWAN's Executive Council. AWAN was established in 2022 and is auspiced by Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre – a State-wide service operating since 1997. AWAN operates as a mechanism to drive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led policy solutions to Closing the Gap Target 13. Target 13 is the Government initiative to reduce the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children by at least 50% by 2031, as progress towards zero. AWAN centres the most important issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children's future wellbeing in our submissions.

Gendered violence in Australia is disproportionately targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The primary cause of harm to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is Australia's Anglo-patriarchal culture. This manifests in a multitude of harms, including:

- Violence from society, at work, at home and online. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women:

- Are 5.7 times more likely to be killed from family violence,¹
- Are 33 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence,² and
- Have a 23% higher chance of experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.³

- Intergenerational trauma.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women having a reduced life expectancy by around 10 years.
- Overrepresentation in child protection. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 9.7 times more likely to be living in out-of-home care.
- Lack of perpetrator accountability and victim-survivor supports in the criminal legal system.
- Lack of culturally safe and accessible support services, particularly within health and justice sectors.
- Lack of accessible education, awareness and allyship around domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Shame felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Underrepresentation in decision-making, data sovereignty, and funding allocations for plans and programs to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

The significance of the gendered and racialised nature of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is not satisfactorily captured by the emerging policy themes. A primary issue related to this is that safety is lumped under the cohesive policy theme.

The NSW Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network strongly recommends that safety must be a standalone theme to ensure that it receives adequate consideration and monitoring.

AWAN is also concerned that the Measuring What Matters indicators fail to acknowledge the climate crisis at hand, Australia's responsibility in contributing and addressing that crisis, and the impacts of that crisis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their lands. The NSW Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network is particularly concerned about environmental impacts on and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, women and children in Australia. We note that:

- It is a cultural practice and desire for Elders move back to country and remain on country in the later stage of their lives. The strength of this cultural connection to stay on land can outweigh the push to leave despite the health risks from unsafe environmental factors.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are spending their formative years subject to unsafe environmental conditions, the current and future health impacts of which are concerning. Environmental issues are also impacting access to cultural practices. For river people, for example, clean water is a critical element of cultural practices and activities, such as fishing, hunting and swimming with family and community.

¹ Based on Commonwealth of Australia data, *Budget 2023-24: Women's Budget Statement*, (9 May 2023, p 42).

² Ibid.

³ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces* (2018, p 28).

- Research shows that environmental crises heighten gender inequality, including gender-based violence against women and girls.⁴ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls are bearing the burden of climate crises in Australia.

An example of environmental concern is Walgett's water insecurity which is felt more than some communities in Bangladesh.⁵ The community has been living off *emergency* bore water on a long-term basis and for roughly five years. This is despite evident health concerns of extremely high sodium levels in the water. The Minister for Water, Rose Jackson acknowledges that the water security issues in Walgett are due to "*overall declining river health – exacerbated by the impacts of droughts and flooding events.*" Due to being a remote town, the costs of purchasing drinkable water are burdensome – especially for people on disability or other pensions.

The situation in Walgett is *one* example of environmental crises occurring across NSW, Australia and the Torres Strait. These environmental crises are impacting the physical and mental health, financial security, and social and cultural well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Government has a responsibility to address these man-made environmental crises, and their impacts.

The NSW Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network strongly recommends that the Measuring What Matters indicators for sustainability are expanded with a view to improving Australia's climate and the quality of life of Australian people. In collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially women, the Australian Government must engage in climate, racial and gender-based action.

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

1. Prosperous

- Add: "People have access to safe and long-term, public and affordable housing, with priority given to women and children experiencing domestic, family, and sexual violence, as well as their families."
- Add: "Access and increased stock to public and affordable housing is prioritised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."
- Add: "An economy that is closing the gap to entry into the workforce and safety in the workplace for all people."
- Add: "Government funding is transparent and proportionate to the needs of society."
- Add: "Government takes affirmative action to properly regulate 'buy now, pay later' schemes and protect Australian people who have been made vulnerable by such financial schemes."

2. Inclusive

- Add: "A society where Governments, businesses and individuals engage in truth-telling about the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, and take affirmative action to close the gap."

⁴ United Nations Secretary General, *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes: report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations Economic and Social Council Report: E/CN.6/2022/3, March 2022).

⁵ For further information see ABC News - Carly Williams, *The Australian town where water insecurity is felt more than some communities in Bangladesh* (online, 13 April 2023), and ABC News – Kenji Sato, *Aboriginal elders to provide clean water for Walgett after NSW government short-term solution fails* (online, 24 May 2023).

- Add: "A society that adopts an intersectional approach to gender equality, and acknowledges the different barriers women experience based on racial and other forms of discrimination."

Add: "People are free from systemic racism at work and in society."

- Amend: "Gender equality, including at home, at work, online, and in the community."

3. Sustainable

- Add: "A society that respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and connections to Country as vital for sustainability and healing Australia."⁶

- Add: "Government takes action to address climate change and the man-made impacts of climate change on the financial, physical, mental, and cultural and spiritual well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

- Add: "Government that acknowledges and acts upon the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls, in particular those in vulnerable and marginalised situations."

- Amend: "A society and economy that is resilient ~~and adapting~~ to a changing climate, but committed to addressing climate change."

4. Cohesive / Safe:

- Separate "Safety" as a standalone policy theme to measure what matters.

- Add: "Families and households are safe, with priority given to eliminating violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children."⁷

- Add: "A society on track to end gender-based violence within a generation."⁸

- Add: "Children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture, with priority given to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care within a generation."⁹

- Add: "Women and children experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence are free from shame and their communities are equipped and skilled to support them."

- Add: "People are free from racial and other forms of discrimination at home, at work, online, and in community."

- Add: "A society where people are aware of their right to freedom from racial and other forms of discrimination, as well as the process for making complaints if those rights are encroached upon."

- Add: "Government addresses systemic racism within its own agencies and legal systems."

⁶ Aligns with the *State of Environment Report, 2021* (<https://soe.dcceew.gov.au/>, last accessed 25 May 2023).

⁷ Aligns with *Closing the Gap*, Target 13.

⁸ Aligns with the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022 – 2032*.

⁹ Aligns with the SNAICC, *Family Matters Report 2022: Measuring trends to turn the tide on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in Australia*.

- Add: "Government agencies and legal systems are culturally safe¹⁰ and operate in a gender and trauma informed¹¹ manner."
- Amend: "A society that is Closing the Gap with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, and values First Nations cultures."
- Amend: "A society that has close and safe relationships with family and friends."

5. Healthy:

- Add: "People experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence have access to the highest attainable standard of healthcare."
- Add: "People enjoy person-centred and empowered healthcare without discrimination."
- Add: "Health services operate in a gender-sensitive, culturally safe, and trauma informed manner."
- Add: "People have access to affordable and holistic healthcare."
- Add: "The medical profession engages in truth-telling about its mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and takes affirmative action to address the unequal access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to medical services in Australia."¹²
- Add: "Government acknowledges the link between environmental health and individual health, and takes affirmative action to have a healthier Australian environment for the benefit of healthier Australian people."

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

Australia has several national plans to address what matters for society. A harmony between those plans and these indicators is needed to ensure that Measuring What Matters is a worthwhile and useful tool to achieving our national goals.

We support the recommendations of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation ('NACCHO') from January 2023 that:

¹⁰ *Cultural safety* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires Government agencies and legal systems, and the professionals involved, to provide services in a manner that acknowledges the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their treatment in Australia, that is respectful of their culture and beliefs and that is free from discrimination. Being free from discrimination requires conscious efforts to identify and address direct discrimination, as well as indirect discrimination born from unconscious biases within the system and its family law professionals against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Affirmative action and committed efforts must be undertaken to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the services that represent them are genuinely listened to and heard.

¹¹ *Gender and trauma-informed practice* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, means operating in a culturally safe manner, and with consideration towards the gender-based violence or other harms and barriers that an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman or girl may be experiencing.

¹² We note as examples of truth-telling by the Australian medical profession that NSW Health issued an Apology in May 2022 to the survivors of the Stolen Generation apologising "...for the impact of the role NSW Health had in the forced removal of Aboriginal children from our hospitals and institutions." The Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery of Australia and New Zealand also issued a National Apology in August 2022 acknowledging the role of nursing and midwifery in contributing to the harm and ongoing suffering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives and their communities.

1. “the *Measuring What Matters Statement 2023* be drafted in accord with the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement;
2. the *Commonwealth Closing the Gap Annual Report* be incorporated into the *Measuring What Matters 2023* framework;
3. the *Measuring What Matters Statement 2023* affirm international and Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles for data collection and use;
4. the *Measuring What Matters Statement 2023* include the agreed measures for the Four Priority Reforms and 17 Socio-Economic Targets, and anticipate including the results of new measures as they emerge;
5. the *National Agreement Data Development Plan* and Data and Reporting Working Group inform the drafting of the *Measuring What Matters Statement 2023*.”

With regards to NACCHO’s fifth recommendation, we note that there is still work being done and to be done in relation to the data plan and the methods of progress. Our Network is concerned for example that the data indicators may fall short of being able to capture the true prevalence of family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

We stress the importance of Outcome 13 of Closing the Gap that, “*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe*” for Measuring What Matters. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children are subject to the highest rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia. Measuring progress to eliminating this violence is fundamental to improving Australia’s status as a prosperous, inclusive, sustainable, safe, cohesive, and healthy society.

In the design of data development agendas relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Measuring What Matters must support data sovereignty capacity building. As explained by Palawa woman and data sovereignty expert, Maggie Walter (2021), “*Good Indigenous policy is reliant on good Indigenous data, and both must be conceptualized through the lens of Indigenous rights, needs, and aspirations.*”

We acknowledge the Government’s comments that the OECD Framework for Measuring Well-being and Progress is not tailored to individual countries’ specific circumstances, and must be adapted as such. However, there remains significant value in the OECD Framework gender equality indicators and the country rank reporting for Measuring What Matters. We note our particular concern, from the OECD data, over Australia’s ranking of 37th out of 37 OECD countries for the gender gap in feeling safe indicator.

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

The NSW Aboriginal Women’s Advisory Network wants the Treasury to prioritise people and communities disadvantaged by the system in each policy theme. Across the board, but particularly with regards to safety and cohesion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children are the most impacted.

The NSW Aboriginal Women’s Advisory Network advises that Measuring What Matters must be informed through ongoing dialogue between the Treasury and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must have decision-making influence and representation in the design, monitoring and progress of the Measuring What Matters Statement.

The NSW Aboriginal Women’s Advisory Network also seeks that the Treasury is intentional and transparent about how data is being designed, collected, analysed, stored and disseminated. As previously discussed, the Treasury must respect and uphold principles of data sovereignty in Measuring What Matters.

Whilst this a social measurement tool, the impacts of the discussed issues have real social and economic consequences to Australian society. The outcomes of Measuring What Matters will be a key indicator for

where the Government needs to invest to better Australia. As such, the Government should commit in the Statement to taking into account the Measuring What Matters outcomes when determining funding allocations in future Budgets. In particular, funding must be proportionately allocated to the disproportionate harm felt in Australian society by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children across each area of prosperity, inclusivity, sustainability, safety and cohesion, and health. A practical example and commitment towards achieving this would be to improve access and increase stock to public and affordable housing with priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The NSW Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network thanks the Treasury for the opportunity to make a submission to the Measuring What Matters – second consultation process. Our Network is available for subsequent consultation direct with Treasury representatives. Our Network consents to this submission being published on the consultation process webpage of the Treasury website.