

# Submission to Treasury

*Measuring what matters – Second consultation  
process*

May 2023

## Contents

Introduction.....	3
Recommendations .....	4
QNMU's responses to the online feedback form .....	4
What matters to Australians? .....	5
References .....	8

## Introduction

The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU) thanks Treasury for the opportunity to comment on *Measuring what matters – Second consultation process*.

Nursing and midwifery is the largest occupational group in Queensland Health (QH) and one of the largest across the Queensland government. The QNMU is the principal health union in Queensland covering all classifications of workers that make up the nursing and midwifery workforce including registered nurses (RN), midwives, nurse practitioners (NP) enrolled nurses (EN) and assistants in nursing (AIN) who are employed in the public, private and not-for-profit health sectors including aged care.

Our more than 71,000 members work across a variety of settings from single person operations to large health and non-health institutions, and in a full range of classifications from entry level trainees to senior management. The vast majority of nurses and midwives in Queensland are members of the QNMU. As the Queensland state branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, the QNMU is the peak professional body for nurses and midwives in Queensland.

Through our submissions and other initiatives, the QNMU expresses our commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve health equity and ensure the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives are heard. The QNMU supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the call for a First Nations Voice enshrined in our Constitution. The QNMU acknowledges the lands on which we work and meet always was, and always will be, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

Please see attached the QNMU's response to selected questions in the format provided.

## Recommendations

### QNMU's responses to the online feedback form

#### Measuring What Matters: Consultation Feedback form

To be completed by meeting host after each meeting and returned to [measuringwhatmatters@treasury.gov.au](mailto:measuringwhatmatters@treasury.gov.au) by 26 May 2023.

#### Meeting details

Please note the QNMU has provided this response without holding an additional meeting.

**Meeting host name/ organisation:** QNMU

**Meeting host contact details [phone or email]:** n/a

#### 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:** n/a

**Meeting location:** n/a

#### Participants attending:

- ☐ Member of a community organisation
- ☐ Businesses
- ☐ Academics
- ☐ Union members
- ☐ Individuals
- ☐ Other [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Number of participants:** n/a

### What matters to Australians?

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

The selected themes all cover important elements of what can be defined as societal wellbeing, also reflecting elements of a desirable future society. However, to see these as the indicators of wellbeing a more integrated approach (as a model arguing for inclusion and interrelatedness) would assist in the effectiveness with which these can be seen as representing wellbeing.

Further, the absence of key elements such as education, or more detailed factors such as housing affordability (rather than the very high-level descriptors, such as “resilient economy”, “close relationships with family and friends”) are notable and may mean that this approach may not resonate as well with those for whom perhaps the concept of a wellbeing budget could hold most promise, those for whom their wellbeing is limited by factors such as lack of access to health services, education or housing.

The QNMU provided a detailed comment in our submission (31/1/2023) on what we would see as appropriate metrics, and we suggest that this is further considered in ongoing assessments.

#### 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?**

In our 31/1/23 submission, the QNMU suggested an approach to wellbeing against a framework based around key Social Determinants of Health – Economic Stability; Education Access & Quality; Health Care Access & Quality; Neighbourhood & Built Environment; Social & Community Context (US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d.). While these are relatively similar to the five broad themes identified here, there are important differences.

Education rates only a minor note as a descriptor of “Prosperous”, and a specific factor such as “access to housing” isn’t mentioned at all. But real measurable elements of people’s lives are what will impact on their wellbeing, and their perception of it.

Associated with this difference will ultimately be the link between themes and metrics. The themes and descriptors presented, while providing a comfortable and positive picture of an ideal society, may not resonate for many people for whom a wellbeing approach would be most needed. Further, if the (ultimate) intent of this approach is to identify metrics to measure wellbeing, such metrics will need to be measures of a smallish number of elements that capture the scope of experience –described by a number of key themes.

Finally, while the Consultation paper does recognise that the themes will be interconnected this is not emphasised in the consultation approach that asks for the most important, or most discussed of the five themes. Surely the more important question is how people see wellbeing, do the provided themes/descriptors adequately scope this, and are (to be) identified metrics appropriate to provide an integrated measure of it?

The QNMU strongly stresses the need for an integrated approach to wellbeing. From our extensive experience in the health sector we are very aware that health issues are not simple, that a holistic approach to health is essential, and find the widely used social determinants of health an effective framework from which to assess and manage health issues. Presenting this or another integrated approach to wellbeing would seem valuable, ensuring the public see wellbeing not just about personal

elements that impact them, but as a suite of interrelated elements that define the concept.

One of the issues with this interconnected nature is that while one element might, to individuals or groups, seem “most important”, if such a representation led to prioritisation of resources to support such an element, overall wellbeing is likely to be negatively impacted – due to the connectivity of elements.

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

Before refining the descriptions of themes, it is important to ensure that the right suite of themes have in fact been identified – themes, scoped by descriptors and defining a model through which people can see how all factors are elements of overall wellbeing. It is disappointing that the consultation package didn’t take the opportunity to provide more detailed information about why the themes were selected, and how the scoping across possible descriptors was undertaken. Such information would have strengthened the capacity for more detailed consideration of these and thus more effective input.

Further, details of how Treasury would see such descriptors contributing to wellbeing overall – what form of a “model” represents this selection - would also assist in ongoing consultation on this issue.

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

As indicated in the QNMU’s prior submission, it was considered important that the direction for the development of a wellbeing approach (i.e., a Dashboard) should be agreed before stakeholders made additional comments on indicators.

Through the many data sources available to Treasury there will be viable areas of measurement that could be accessed to progress indicators – for example through the Australian Bureau of Statistics. While this current approach is progressing consultation on the five themes identified by Treasury it is suggested that the next stage would best focus on the measurability of final themes, with indicators of potentially available data sources raised for discussion.

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

The QNMU considers that more detail on the scope of the definition of wellbeing is needed, and in particular how individual themes or possible indicators relate to the Australian situation. The example of OECD metrics provided in the detailed brief for the initial consultation phase was extremely useful in introducing this aspect.

## References

US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). *Healthy People 2030*. Retrieved 2 May 2023 from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>