

A letter from Fiona Stanley

Dear Fellow Western Australian

I'm writing to ask your support for an exciting project which I believe is of unique importance for the future of our state.

This project is the Western Australian Development Index or 'WADI'. The WADI will be a 5-year collaboration between the community, government, research and philanthropic sectors in WA to design 'the Western Australia we want'.

It will develop a comprehensive index of progress and sustainable wellbeing for the state – an index aimed to be used as an ongoing and trusted tool to improve community wellbeing, state planning and development, and citizen engagement.



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Our foundation partners will include the University of Western Australia, the WA Local Government Association, the Western Australian Council of Social Service, consultants Ernst and Young WA and community peak bodies. They will work with local governments and relevant state departments (including the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries) under the guidance of the leading national not-for-profit corporation in this field, Australian National Development Index (ANDI) Limited. ANDI's Directors have included Rev Tim Costello and myself, and with support from eminent Australians including Dame Quentin Bryce, Sir Gus Nossal and Simon McKeon.

The WADI project will be developed as a 'best practice' model for other Australian states, and nationally. Here ANDI will draw on its close links with the OECD global project on measuring progress 'beyond GDP' and leading national models such as New Zealand, Wales and Canada.

The WADI index and progress measures will be based on an extensive and inclusive conversation with over 100,000 Western Australians across the state in all walks of life, asking them questions like 'What kind of WA do you want?' and 'What matters most to you?'

From these results and the work of our research, community and government partners, we will create a lasting community wellbeing and public policy tool that is built into government and budgets and enables us to continuously measure our progress as a state against our goals and values across all key areas of life: social, cultural, economic, environmental and democratic.

The Appendix and information website below explain in detail what the WADI is, what it will do and what benefits it will bring. As we begin to emerge from the Covid years, the WADI will help to provide a concrete and practical way to define and build a shared vision for a better, fairer and more sustainable future for WA.

How the WADI will be developed

We have spent nearly 18 months in developing a detailed 5-year Business Plan and costings for this project with our partner Ernst and Young (EY). We are very confident that it will bring significant benefits for WA and all Western Australians.

The plan shows clearly that the WADI will need broad support across the WA community and government. The total 5-year cost for the project's development is around \$13.7 million and we are looking to raise \$6.8 million from government and an equivalent sum from the community and philanthropic sectors. We are very confident that the combined value of the direct benefits for WA and the savings to government will greatly outweigh the initial investment in this project.

Over the coming months, our plan is to push forward across four fronts:

Developing partners: As well as the foundation partners indicated above, we will build further partnerships with key community organisations and sponsors.

Raising funds: Discussions have progressed with two major funding bodies, Lotterywest and the Angela Wright Bennett Foundation, and our applications will need to demonstrate community support to these bodies. Together they have indicated potential funding support of around \$6.8 m. We will also approach other funders for community engagement and research work.

Securing state government engagement: We need to build on our initial sponsorship by the former Minister for Local Government (who described this project as 'potentially transformative for WA') and secure broader Cabinet and whole-of-government support for the project. We have begun a series of meetings with key Cabinet Ministers in areas most relevant to the WADI, which will take place over the next 2-3 months.

Building a team of WADI Ambassadors: To achieve all these goals, we need more than a good plan. We need to demonstrate legitimacy, authority and support for the WADI project. We think that one very effective way to do this at the outset is to convene a diverse panel of distinguished Western Australians ('WADI Ambassadors') who agree with the project's goals and its importance for the State and are prepared to speak out publicly in support of it, to key funders, business and community organisations and Ministers, and can act as independent advisors to the project. This process is now underway.

Whatever your decision on supporting the WADI, I hope you will take this letter in the spirit in which it is offered – a shared concern for the wellbeing of this State and its current and future citizens - and I'm grateful for your attention.

with kindest regards



Fiona Stanley AC FAA FASSA FAHMS
Patron, Telethon Kids Institute
Distinguished Research Professor, University of Western Australia

Appendix: What a world best practice WA Development Index will look like

1 Collaboratively developed in WA: WADI will be a three-way collaboration between governments (state and local), the community and the research and policy sector in WA and this will be reflected in the project's governance structure.

2 Internationally advised for best practice: In developing the WADI, the WA government will participate in a select group of 'best practice' national and state governments working with the OECD to build well-being measures into government. This will make potentially make the WA the national leader in Australia in this field.

3 Built systematically in stages: The WADI will be developed systematically in six related stages over 5 years, each with identified goals and outputs: 1) planning and design; 2) community engagement on broad values and domains; 3) development of draft indicators and indexes in each domain; 4) promotion and further community engagement on these; 5) embedding WADI in government; 6) review, public education and sustainability of WADI.

4 Shared funding: A tri-partite funding model is proposed for the WADI's estimated 5-year cost of \$13 million, shared between funding and in-kind contributions from the State government, agencies such as Lotterywest and philanthropic sources.

5 Extensively engaging the community: WADI will be based on extensive and inclusive community engagement across the state. Using a wide range of different accessible platforms (local meetings, social media, surveys, film and video), it will engage many thousands of Western Australians iteratively to identify the values, goals and outcomes for 'the Western Australia we want' and validate the indicators proposed.

6 Based on the best data and research: WADI will establish a state progress research advisory group, and specialist researchers working with community stakeholders and the Australian Bureau of Statistics for each progress domain to ensure the WADI is based on the best possible information, data and analysis.

7 A special role for local government: As the state-wide governance network with closest links to its community, and with its own responsibilities for strategic community planning, local government will

have a special role in the rollout and maintenance of the WADI and the engagement of local communities.

8 Comprehensively measuring the State's progress: WADI will provide regular, comprehensive and reliable measures of the state's progress in at least 12 key fields of progress and well-being ('domains') spanning economic, social, environment and democratic dimensions of progress, such as health, education, justice, the environment, indigenous well-being, as well as tracking broad qualities (equity, sustainability etc.) that go across all domains.

9 Measuring both current and future wellbeing: WADI will measure both current well-being and the well-being of future generations: i.e., by measuring the stock and sustainability of human, social, natural and other forms of 'capital' available for future wellbeing.

10 Meaningful measurement against goals: Progress will be measured against clear and meaningful goals and, where possible, the performance of comparable countries or states (rather than just against previous state performance).

11 A strong public education and information role: WADI will produce regular public reports, fact sheets, videos and school material in an attractive and accessible format. Progress reports and indexes for each domain will be produced annually, each in a different month, as well as an annual overall progress index for the state.

12 Applied at local and regional level: WADI will be designed to have policy uses at regional, city and local level, including enhancing community engagement and strategic planning at local government level.

13 A multi-purpose policy tool built into government: When fully developed, WADI will be a powerful, multi-purpose policy tool that is built into and across government, to guide planning, budgets, policy evaluation, community engagement practice and legislation.

14 Used and trusted in the community: When fully developed, the WADI will be used and trusted in the WA community as a true measure of the progress of the state, its people, communities and environment, and a concrete expression of our shared vision for 'the W.A. we want'. In this way it will also increase community trust in government.

For further information:

<https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/department/news/news-article/2020/02/25/a-handy-guide-to-andi>