



Measuring what matters

A submission to the Australian Treasury by
Australian National Development Index (ANDI) Limited

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1: Introduction

ANDI (Australian National Development Index Limited) is a registered Australian not-for-profit and public interest corporation. ANDI's constitutional mission is to develop a comprehensive framework to measure national progress and wellbeing and promote the use and application of such frameworks, in government and the community, across Australia. Our approach is based on citizen engagement and democratic practice, partnerships, high quality research, and a central focus on equitable, sustainable wellbeing. ANDI and its predecessor body have worked in this field for over 25 years in Australia and internationally, and its partners include organisations in the community, local and state government, environment, human rights, indigenous and university sectors. Its key expertise includes community development, research and public policy and it has worked in an advisory or consultant capacity with governments, community organisations and research bodies in Australia and internationally. More information about ANDI's work and organisation is provided in the 'Notes' section below and on ANDI's website: www.andi.org.au

Mike Salvaris is director of ANDI Limited and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, and has worked for over thirty years in public policy and the measurement of progress and wellbeing.

Prof Fiona Stanley is a distinguished epidemiologist, founder of the Australian Research Alliance on Children and Young People, a former Australian of the Year and ABS Board member, and currently ANDI's principal Ambassador.

Dr Geoff Woolcock is an adjunct professor at the University of Southern Queensland and has worked extensively in the areas of community development and wellbeing measurement. He is currently Chair of ANDI Limited.

Further details of the authors are provided in the Notes section below.

This submission responds to the Treasury's request for submissions in 'Statement 4: Measuring what matters' of the October 2022-23 budget papers. It provides an overview of the issues and context underlying the Treasury statement in the field of progress and wellbeing measurement in Australia and globally; it analyses the Treasury statement and the government's plans for the more comprehensive development of a national wellbeing measurement framework, with a focus on the key issues that will need to be addressed if Australia is to achieve a 'world best practice' model. The submission concludes that the proposed project potentially is of major national importance to the future wellbeing of Australia, but success will require a collaborative model of development, strong government leadership, high quality research and extensive community engagement, underpinned by detailed planning and substantial resources over a sustained period.

2: The Treasury Statement: context and overview

This is an important and unusual statement from the Treasurer, and clearly intended as a first step towards a larger and longer-term national project. Fully developed, we believe that such a project could make a significant contribution to the kind of nation Australia becomes over the next 20 years and beyond.

From the statement's introduction, the immediate objective appears to be relatively narrow: to develop an integrated and holistic framework for measuring national progress and community wellbeing that can be set alongside (but not replace) the currently more influential but limited economic indicators (such as GDP).

The Statement is not a detailed plan. It is evidently intended primarily as a discussion paper and a brief overview or summary of some relevant models and options for the development and application of such a framework, with particular focus on the work of the OECD, which is generally quoted with approval.

But throughout the statement, it does provide (pp 128-134) a clear indication of a number of wider and more ambitious purposes which it envisages a fully developed framework might serve and these stretch well beyond the traditional Treasury remit. It is intended to:

- be 'the foundation of a conversation about how to measure what matters to Australians'
- 'provide an important foundation for our efforts to improve living standards, intergenerational mobilities and opportunities'
- 'track and achieve our national progress'
- 'better understand our economy and society'
- 'support more informed policy making'
- 'improve accountability'
- 'facilitate more holistic discussions about the type of economy and society Australians want to build together'
- 'allow society and governments to better evaluate the impact of decisions today on future outcomes'
- 'improve the wellbeing of Australians including their long-term opportunities and outcomes, intergenerational equity and equality of opportunity'
- 'provide common understanding of objectives across levels of government especially as between state and federal governments'
- 'enable more consistent evaluation of policy against progress which can help to inform who is best placed to take policy action and address issues with policy implementation'
- 'highlight the interactions between different policy levers and how they impact people, (so as) to improve the quality of life while avoiding unintended consequences'
- strengthen democracy

- make our economy more answerable to our values: ‘To measure what matters is also to recognise a growing consensus from economists and investors that our economies need to embed and express more than one notion of value’.

These wider ambitions and purposes are reinforced and extended by various statements of the Treasurer himself about the wellbeing measurement framework and a wellbeing budget, including lectures, press interviews and a recent essay in ‘The Monthly’ magazine. They include:

- ‘Our mission is to redefine and reform our economy and institutions in ways that make our people and communities more resilient, and our society and democracy stronger as well. This is the big challenge and the big chance before us.’ (Monthly Essay, 1 Feb 2023)
- New national progress and wellbeing measures are a means to ‘transform economic decision making’ and to achieve ‘more meaningful policies and better outcomes’ across the whole of the federal government. He stresses the importance for Australia to draw on the best data methods and methods in developing the national wellbeing framework. (‘Chalmers pledges modern economy’, The Weekend Australian 11 March 2022)
- The New Zealand wellbeing budget (which he proposes to introduce ‘some version of’) is ‘redefining what success means in terms of economic outcomes’ and is ‘significantly reshaping the conversation in NZ about the budget and the economy’ (Address to Australia Institute, Brisbane, 19 February 2020)
- The wellbeing framework is another ‘new kind of model to guide us in future progress What we measure directs our action. If our measurements are flawed or incomplete, it follows that what we do will be too. Last year’s October budget sketched our approach to measuring what matters and fleshed out Australia’s first national wellbeing agenda.’ (Monthly Essay, above)
- ‘The wellbeing framework is not just the beginnings of a new economic model, it is democratic reform.’ (Monthly Essay, above)
- ‘2023 will be the year we build a better capitalism, uniquely Australian – more confident and forward-thinking; more aligned with our values; based more on evidence and integrity; more capable of building resilience, not just building buffers’ (Monthly Essay, above)

Additionally, as a further indication of government and Treasury thinking about the Framework’s development, we are entitled to assume that it will be significantly influenced by the considerable international experience and best practice in this field, as well as in Australia, over the past two decades⁴ (much of it cited approvingly in Statement 4) and by the Treasurer and indeed the Prime Minister (for example, in recent praise for retired NZ Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, certainly the most globally recognised practitioner of wellbeing approaches in government).

On this basis, as we suggest below, we would hope that the government intends that the model to be developed in Australia will reflect international best practice and the most successful examples of work in this field.

It's also important, and perhaps unusual, that the Treasury (and the government) has indicated that it has an open mind and is seeking ideas and input, including submissions from the public, something Treasury normally doesn't do. This is a sensible position because the development of a national progress and wellbeing measurement framework, intended to be based on a community conversation about what matters for Australia's wellbeing and future development and applied broadly across government is, as suggested earlier, an enterprise that clearly goes well beyond the fields of finances, budgets and the economy in which Treasury's conventional expertise lies. Such a project would be difficult to sell to the community or other government departments if it were seen primarily as an exercise in better book-keeping. This is also an argument for the Treasury to join with the department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in the development of the project, as we suggest below.

The next step will be a more detailed stand-alone statement in May 2023 on the further development of the Framework and implicitly beyond that, into the community and across government.

3: ANDI's response: the path to world best practice

In this section, we identify what we see as some of the critical gaps and ambiguities in Statement 4 that need to be filled or clarified, and we summarise what we believe are the most important elements for the development of a world-leading Australian progress measurement framework, based on an extensive review of international best practice. We believe that such a model is both desirable and feasible for Australia and that it certainly appears to fit with the broader goals and ambitions of the Treasurer's project.

We recommend that all of these elements should be considered more explicitly in the government's May stand-alone statement and in a more comprehensive plan for the framework's development, such as we have recommended.

1. A clearer statement of the project's broad rationale and aims

While Statement 4 does indicate a number of different purposes for the development of the progress measurement framework, we think that it would be improved by clarifying and consolidating the major and longer-term purposes of the project. We suggest that the most important of these should be:

- To produce a clear and authoritative map of the progress and wellbeing of Australia and Australians as measured against our key goals and aspirations and in all important dimensions of our lives, our communities and our environment and ensure that is used, understood and trusted in government and the community;
- To build a multi-purpose public policy tool that will inform and improve national planning, priority-setting, policy making and economic reform and that will put wellbeing at the heart of government decision-making;
- To improve political transparency and accountability and strengthen democracy, community engagement and civic trust;

- To help provide a shared vision for Australia's future development based on clear goals and values and concrete outcomes.

2. Recognition of the scale and importance of the project

There should be an explicit recognition that developing and applying a comprehensive, ongoing national progress and wellbeing measurement framework is a large-scale and long-term nation-building undertaking that can significantly contribute to a better, fairer and more sustainable Australia. It is of particular importance for Australia at the present time, given economic and employment pressures, geopolitical insecurity, growing inequality and diminishing democracy and civic trust, and especially in a post Covid era, when there is a clear national wish for 'building back better' and a longer-term vision for Australia.

3. Planning and resourcing

To be successful, the project will need to be comprehensively planned and fully resourced, with an initial development period of at least five years, a series of concrete stages and targets, and a process of iterative development coupled with a willingness to trial new approaches. Thereafter, provision will need to be made for its maintenance and regular updating in terms of both data and community input, given likely changes in community views, government priorities etc.⁵

4. Democratic issues and citizen engagement

The Measuring What Matters project will need to develop an effective and credible community engagement program if it wants to know 'what matters to Australians' – the core rationale given for the project.

International experience has consistently emphasised the direct links between strengthening democracy and developing national progress and wellbeing measures, through factors such as increased transparency, better informed citizens, higher levels of trust etc.⁶

Research also shows that Australians believe that promoting people's wellbeing should be the most important priority of government (ahead of increasing national wealth) and that national progress should be measured in terms of health, wellbeing and the environment rather than mainly through GDP growth.⁷

Further, given the current low levels of democracy and civic trust in Australia and many other countries⁸, there are good reasons why government should seek every opportunity to strengthen democracy and citizenship. Direct and authentic participation by citizens in shaping policy on issues that concern them has been shown both to increase both democratic trust and citizen wellbeing⁹ and engagement in the process of developing community progress measures is a strong example of meaningful citizen engagement.

Thus, for Australia's national wellbeing framework to be legitimate and trusted, to ensure it reflects what matters to Australians, and as a powerful and meaningful process to engage citizens in its own right, it is essential that the Australian community be extensively and inclusively involved in its development. This will require a diversity of

engagement programs, excellent communications and support material, and generous resourcing.

Statement 4 appears to acknowledge the importance of community engagement in developing a national progress measurement framework and the need to promote a national conversation about what matters to Australians. However, it has very little detail. We suggest that the government should include in its May statement a stronger account of the democratic value of the project and a proposal for a national community engagement program which includes at least its key elements.

ANDI has had considerable experience in the design and implementation of community engagement projects of this kind, including most recently a multi-level 2-year community program for the development of the West Australian Development Index. We would be pleased to provide advice to the federal government on this.

5. Collaborative development

As far as possible, the project should be co-developed: that is, promoted, developed and managed as a collaborative national project between the government, community, research and business sectors. This should include appropriate funding and resource contributions from the philanthropic and non-government sectors.¹⁰

6. Leadership within government

Within government, the project will require strong leadership and advocacy at the highest levels of government. In the development of the project, the Treasury should work closely with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, with their respective Ministers leading the project in Cabinet. The ABS should also be a major participant, given its long experience in the development of national progress measurement frameworks. As well, the federal government should provide leadership and support for the various wellbeing framework and budget programs now being proposed or developed by state and territory governments (in the ACT, NSW, WA, Victoria and Tasmania): this seems to follow from Statement 4's claim that one key benefit of a national framework would be 'to provide common understanding of objectives across levels of government especially as between state and federal governments' (p 140).¹¹

7. Using international best practice

As Statement 4 indicates, there is now a well-established global movement and a great deal of international practice in this field, as well as much local knowledge and experience that Australia can draw on.¹² In the development of its progress measurement framework, Australia should aim for nothing less than international best practice. The government should work closely with organisations such as the OECD and the other leading governments in the Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo) group.¹³

8. Key technical issues in constructing a national framework

Statement 4 includes a quite extensive discussion of the potential progress domains and the kinds of indicators required for a national framework. However, based on multiple

reports by the OECD and international and Australia research organisations (see ‘References’ section below) and our own experience, we suggest that there is a wider range of issues that will need to be decided on in the technical task of constructing an effective national framework (in addition to the important task of getting community input). They are summarised below.

- (1) **Core concept of progress and wellbeing:** We suggest that the unifying concept for the framework should be broad and holistic, such as the OECD’s ‘equitable and sustainable wellbeing’ or ‘societal wellbeing’, include social, cultural, environmental, economic and democratic dimensions of progress and measure both individual wellbeing and the broader health of communities, institutions and systems.¹⁴
- (2) **Selection of domains:** Statement 4 correctly indicates that most national progress frameworks tend to include very similar domains; it suggests that a starting point for Australia might be the OECD’s 11 domains of current wellbeing, adapted to Australian priorities. We agree that this is a reasonable start but also suggest two additional domains, for children’s and indigenous wellbeing. ANDI believes that both areas in their different ways are crucial indicators of overall societal wellbeing in Australia.
- (3) **Objective and subjective wellbeing:** There is now general agreement that comprehensive wellbeing measures should include both objective and subjective elements of wellbeing, although the relative weighting of each is still contested. We believe that the measurement of subjective wellbeing should include basic psychological needs and capabilities such as meaning, purpose, resilience, satisfying relationships etc.
- (4) **Measurement of future wellbeing (capital stocks):** Statement 4 rightly points to the importance of measuring not just current wellbeing, but the wellbeing of future generations as represented by stocks of the ‘capital’ required for wellbeing - human, social, natural, financial etc. While the OECD, the World Bank and New Zealand have reasonably well-advanced models for measuring future wellbeing or wellbeing ‘stocks’, there is still considerable work to do in this area and difficult decisions to make about their inclusion in a wellbeing framework.
- (5) **Focus on outcomes:** In general, most measurement systems tend to focus on the measurement of outcomes (such as improved health) rather than inputs (such as increased hospital spending). However, inputs can be an important contextual indicator and need to be included in some cases, which can be a matter for particular judgement.
- (6) **Better measures of economic wellbeing:** Statement 4 appears to suggest that current economic progress indicators are adequate to measure economic wellbeing, although they need to be complemented by broader social and environmental measures to give a fuller picture of society’s progress. It also fails to acknowledge the broader distorting impact that the excessive influence of GDP is generally acknowledged to have in policymaking and the assessment of national progress.¹⁵ We suggest that there is a range of economic outcomes that matter a lot to the wellbeing of ordinary Australians and to national progress but are not adequately measured.

These would include, for example, the impact of our economy on the environment and the climate, the economy's performance in creating secure and satisfying jobs, and the fair distribution of the wealth and benefits created by our current economic structures.

- (7) ***Alignment with UN SDGs:*** An important but not straightforward issue to be resolved in the construction of an Australian wellbeing framework is how it should align with, and if possible, adopt the key measures of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. The problem in part is that while maximum alignment is desirable, the two systems have different purposes and emphases, and in a number of cases, targeting measures that are appropriate for poor or developing countries would not be appropriate or priorities for Australia. But this isn't true in all cases: in the environmental area, for example, where Australia has been a comparatively poor performer on the SDG measures and most recently, on UNICEF's measures of environmental conditions that affect children's wellbeing, where we rank 30th out of 39 countries.¹⁶
- (8) ***Calibrating progress against appropriate targets and goals:*** It has been argued that true progress means movement towards one's specific goal or destination, and on this basis, the most meaningful progress measures are those which specify the standard or goal which constitutes success (as, for example, the SDGs do), rather than merely providing snapshots of historical change without specific context or comparison. Statement 4 appears to support this target-oriented approach, as ANDI has for some years. However, in practical terms it adds another step to the development process, which will require both community and expert input - that is, the identification of the most important outcomes or standards in specific domains that constitutes the progress 'destination'.
- (9) ***Indices or headline indicators:*** The decision to present indicators as a dashboard of separate indicators (sometimes called 'headline' indicators) or as composite indices is a long-running controversy in this field. The problem is often presented as an 'either/or' choice but in our view, this is a false dichotomy as both headline indicators and indices have important value in the reporting process. Indices are a useful shorthand and attract more media attention, but they do not detract from the more detailed picture that the individual or headline indicators convey. ANDI strongly recommends both overall progress indicators and indices, both of overall progress and within each domain.¹⁷
- (10) ***Reporting and disseminating results:*** This is not dealt with at length in Statement 4, but ANDI recommends the provision of an annual progress report overall and in each progress domain (perhaps released in a different month) including an analysis of the trends and suggestions for policy responses. These reports should be written in an attractive and accessible format, with maximum publicity and released through an event such as an annual conference attended by key stakeholder organisations in the specific policy field. The notion of an annual State of the Nation report, perhaps to Parliament, is also attractive.
- (11) ***Disaggregation and replicability of framework at state and local levels:*** An important issue to be resolved in the design of a new framework is how to ensure

that as far as possible, the data used in the framework is able to be disaggregated to state and local levels and the framework itself is broadly replicable at state and local levels. Doing this will ensure the optimum policy value of the framework not just for other levels of government, but to enable comparability between localities.

- (12) **Data quality and availability:** Statement 4 provides sensible criteria to assess the quality and usefulness of data needed for progress and wellbeing measurement, such as regularity, reliability, alignment with the issue etc. However, another significant data issue will relate to the production and availability of new data which will inevitably be needed to fill gaps revealed in the full development of the framework (for example, in fields such as democracy, governance and human rights). One initiative that should be considered is the institution of an ongoing Progress and Well Being Research and Data Council, including key researchers and universities and the provision of adequate funds for new data and research.
- (13) **Independence and oversight:** From the outset, careful consideration will be needed to ensure that Australia's progress and wellbeing framework operates at the highest levels of expertise, integrity and independence. European evidence suggests low levels of public trust in government data generally, and the perception, very likely shared in Australia, that governments tend to use statistics tendentiously and in their own political interests.¹⁸ One possible model is that established in the Tasmania Together project in the 1980s, with an independent Tasmania Progress Board, which included representatives of the community, research and government sectors, reporting to parliament. Another model might be to establish a purpose-built institute at an appropriate university. The tasks of such bodies would include ensuring regular independent audits and evaluation.

9. Application of wellbeing frameworks in government

In the past decade, in countries advanced in the field of developing new progress measures, the focus has shifted noticeably from the design of wellbeing frameworks to their practical application and use.

Dutch social scientist Rutger Hoekstra argues that, in the global 'Beyond GDP' movement, we have spent decades developing dozens of different and competing frameworks to define and measure societal progress in place of GDP, each vigorously promoted, but mostly covering very similar ground. This is because in most countries the key elements of progress and wellbeing are broadly agreed, even if the titles of their frameworks or indexes are different, such as 'Wellbeing', 'Quality of life', 'Social Progress' etc.

Hoekstra comes to two conclusions about where we need to go now. First, he believes that what we need now is not more models, but a strong process towards harmonisation and universal standards of wellbeing and social progress that can be applied and compared across the world. Ironically, he points out, it was the international harmonisation of GDP that instantaneously catapulted it to global influence and application. And the second thing is that we must start to build wellbeing goals and measurement into government and institutions at all levels.¹⁹

As the OECD has shown²⁰ there are now many important applications for such frameworks which go well beyond the mere statistical measurement of progress and which aim to build wellbeing into government at different levels: in budgeting, policy making and planning across all departments, in legislation and as the basis for major economic reform towards a wellbeing economy.

These leading countries have deployed a wide range of entrenchment mechanisms: from making wellbeing a constitutional priority in Ecuador, or legislating it as a whole of government priority in Wales, or setting up a national wellbeing policy coordination body even more powerful than our own Productivity Commission, in Bhutan, to a series of rules and regulations in many countries for applying wellbeing criteria and measurements in developing budgets, and evaluating cabinet submissions.²¹ A majority of OECD countries now have some form of holistic wellbeing measurement framework; and many have national community engagement programmes and surveys supported in varying degrees by the government and non-government sectors.

Probably no other country has built wellbeing so comprehensively and thoughtfully into its legislation, policy making, planning, budgeting and education processes as Wales. The Welsh legislation, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act²², is far sighted and visionary; it defines clear sustainable wellbeing goals and values; it requires all government agencies to abide by these values, and to set their own goals and evaluate progress against them; it is powerfully focused on young people and developing youth leadership; it establishes a Commissioner for Future Generations with extraordinary powers to interrogate and intervene in government policies and decisions; and it nurtures an imaginative and inclusive community engagement and schools education program. It is not for nothing that the Secretary General of the United Nations a few years ago proclaimed Wales as an example to the world and a model for the UN itself. And there is no reason why Australia could not work towards such a model.

In terms of practical day-to-day governance there is a wide range of specific benefits and applications which Australian governments could reap from a fully developed wellbeing approach built into and across governments. They include the following:²³

- More credible and effective public reporting of national progress
- The capacity for deeper qualitative analysis of data
- Better ways to promote government and stakeholder dialogue on key challenges as a basis for collaborative action
- A tool to report annual wellbeing 'stocks and flows' (as discussed above)
- Using wellbeing reporting frameworks as a basis for more powerful evidence platforms to build shared understanding
- Using wellbeing reporting as a tool to improve policy coherence, priority determination and whole-of-government coordination across portfolios
- Integrated policies for tackling 'wicked' problems which cross many traditional policy silos, like child wellbeing , long-term poverty and climate change
- New approaches to federalism based on agreed data, evidence and priorities as between federal, state and local governments which have shared wellbeing measurement frameworks and approaches
- New and more attractive community engagement approaches and platforms.

5: Conclusion

Our economy is not doing enough to create the fair and sustainable society that most Australians want, and our economic measures do not capture the wellbeing of our society as a whole. After Covid-19, we have an unrivalled opportunity to ‘build back better’ and create a better vision for Australia, in which new wellbeing measures could play a key role.

Peta Murphy, MP for Dunkley ²⁴

A wellbeing approach to the budget is an opportunity to open up public discourse about what kind of country Australia wants to be and move debates about deficits and bottom lines to mean something to more than policy boffins and economic wonks in Canberra. ... Some spending shouldn’t be seen as spending, it should be seen as investment — spending on education, particularly on education in a way that is equitable, spending on good quality healthcare that produces good health outcomes. Both of those things are investments, and yet often, we talk about them in a very (limited) sense ... This is an opportunity to open up that political and public conversation about what it is that we want.

Prof Sharon Bessell, ANU ²⁵

We are facing both an opportunity and a duty to rethink what progress really means and to build stronger and more inclusive visions for the future of our societies. Citizens are looking for new ways to improve their lives. We need committed citizens, scientists and well-informed leaders ready to engage the whole of society in an assessment of the challenges ahead. Adequate measurements are essential in helping our societies to define their goals; ensure that we design the right policies to achieve them; and tell us whether those policies are working.

Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD ²⁶

As we have argued, developing and applying a comprehensive, ongoing national progress and wellbeing measurement framework with citizen engagement is a large-scale and long-term undertaking – a nation-building project - that can significantly contribute to a better, fairer and more sustainable Australia. And it is especially important and timely for Australia at the present time, given mounting economic and employment pressures, geopolitical insecurity, growing inequality and declining democracy and civic trust, all combining in a post Covid era, when there is a clear national wish for ‘building back better’ and a shared longer-term vision for Australia.

But if this project is to succeed, there will need be an explicit recognition of its scale, a strong commitment to community engagement, transparency and good process, and above all determined and consistent political leadership at senior levels, in the face of inevitable opposition and distortion.

Finally, this is a project that ANDI strongly supports and has worked towards for decades. We believe we are uniquely qualified to help make this vision a reality and we want to participate in it in any way we can.

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7: Notes

¹ **Mike Salvaris** is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne and a founding Director of ANDI Limited. With a background in democracy, human rights and community development, he has worked for over 20 years to develop new community, national and international wellbeing and progress measures. Mike served on the ABS Expert Reference Committee on Measuring Australia's Progress for 12 years. He has held honorary professorial appointments at Victoria University, RMIT, Deakin University and Toulouse University (France) and been an advisor or consultant to the OECD (setting set up the OECD Global Progress Research Network), the UN Research Institute on Social Development, the Australian Senate, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and the Canadian government, the New Zealand government, several Australian State governments and numerous local governments. In 2017 he received the international Community Indicators Consortium award for 'significant long-term impact on the indicators field and the improvement of community conditions and well-being'.

² **Professor Fiona Stanley AC FAA** is an Australian epidemiologist noted for her public health work and research into child and maternal health. She has been an advisor to the OECD and the ABS on measuring progress and wellbeing. Fiona is the patron of the Telethon Kids Institute (and was Founding Director for 11 years), founder of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and a distinguished professorial fellow in the School of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Western Australia. Fiona has been awarded honorary doctorates from five universities. She was named Australian of the Year in 2003, is a UNICEF Child Ambassador, has been a member of the ABC Board and was declared a 'Living National Treasure'. She has been a Director of ANDI Limited and is now principal 'ANDI Ambassador'.

³ **Dr Geoff Woolcock** is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Southern Queensland's Institute for Resilient Regions and Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of the Sunshine Coast's School of Social Sciences. He is Chair of ANDI Limited. Geoff's long-standing work with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors concentrates on developing qualitative and quantitative measures of progress and community wellbeing, closely collaborating with local communities in place-based, early intervention/prevention initiatives. He has 34 years community-based research experience nationally and internationally and has co-published more than 160 peer-reviewed papers, book chapters and community reports. As a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD), he is a board director of the Brisbane Housing Company (since 2009). Geoff co-established the Logan Child-Friendly Community Ltd in 2012 overseeing the high-profile collective impact initiative, [Logan Together](#). Geoff is also a Research Fellow of the [Wellbeing Economy Alliance](#)

⁴ A good summary of this work, both international and Australian, is provided in four recent reports referenced above: OECD 2023, Centre for Policy Development 2022, The George Institute 2021, Salvaris 2022b

⁵ See Stanley 2022 for a summary of the proposed Western Australian Development Index (WADI) project for which ANDI is currently a consultant. This project has a detailed 5-year development plan prepared by consultants Ernst and Young. It sets out stages, goals and milestones and includes an extensive state-wide community engagement program conducted over 2 years.

⁶ See Salvaris 2022a.

⁷ See, for example, Centre for Policy Development 2022, Salvaris 2021

⁸ Two recent examples among many point to a decline in public trust and political participation in Australia (in an ANZSOG report), and a significant fall in Australia's overall democracy ranking (the Economist Democracy Index). See <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-02/thailand-soars-up-democracy-rankings-asia-falls/101922378>)and Noveck, B. and Glover, R. 2019. 'Today's Problems, Yesterday's Toolkit', ANZSOG, p 6.

⁹ See, for example: OECD 2020; ANDI 2023.

¹⁰ The WA Development Index (WADI) project is planned as a co-developed and co-funded project with government, community, research and philanthropic partners; see Stanley 2022

¹¹ For an overview of state government projects, see: Salvaris 2022b; Centre for Policy Development 2022; New South Wales 2022.

¹² 'For a good part of the 20th century there was an implicit assumption that economic growth was synonymous with progress. The world now recognises that it isn't quite as simple as that ... Over the past 10 years or so there has been an explosion of interest in producing measures of societal progress ... that go beyond GDP to represent a broader view of the ways in which societies are progressing and regressing ... Initiatives to do just this are being run in many countries rich and poor ... by governments, by civil society, by academics and the private sector ... A world movement is emerging and the linkage between statistical indicators, policy design and democratic assessment of the performance of a country (a region, a city etc) is at its core.

(OECD Statistics Directorate, 2008. 'Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies: Strategic Action Plan', Paris: OECD: selected quotations)

See also note 4 above, and details of 'best practice' elements in 'Key technical issues' below.

¹³ <https://weall.org/wego>

¹⁴ In 2012, the ABS produced an important report based on community and expert consultation which included a detailed analysis and discussion of how a national wellbeing framework should be structured and what should be the core concepts and the overriding definition of progress and wellbeing. It is still very relevant. See: ABS 2012

¹⁵ This has been extensively documented over the last 30 years: for a sample of key findings over this period, see Salvaris 2022a

¹⁶ See UNICEF 2022, p 13.

¹⁷ Alex Michalos, one of the founders of the Canadian index of Wellbeing Index, and an internationally distinguished scholar in this field, has written extensively on the relative merits of indexes versus headline indicators, and comes to this same conclusion. See for example Michalos 2011.

¹⁸ For example, a 2007 Harris poll of five European countries (UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain) and the USA showed that between 60% and 74% (of people believed that official figures are manipulated or adjusted for political purpose: <http://straightstatistics.org/print/257>

¹⁹ See Hoekstra 2019.

²⁰ OECD 2023, OECD 2020

²¹ A detailed table showing the many different ways wellbeing frameworks are applied and built into government is provided in the Appendix to Salvaris 2022c.

²² See Wales 2023.

²³ We are indebted to our colleague Prof Rod Glover of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute for providing this list.

²⁴ Peta Murphy, MP for Dunkley, 2020, 'Economic growth and wellbeing', Opinion piece for Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 4 December 2020, <https://www.petamurphy.net/media1/media-releases/opinion-piece-economic-growth-and-wellbeing-4-december-2020/>)

²⁵ Prof Sharon Bessell, ANU Crawford School of Public Policy, quoted in Melissa Coade, 'Government's wellbeing framework could create a more sustainable Australian economy', The Mandarin, 25-10-22, <https://www.themandarin.com.au/203592-governments-wellbeing-framework-could-create-a-more-sustainable-australian-economy/>)

²⁶ Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD, Opening Message, 3rd OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy 'Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life', Busan, South Korea, 27-30 October 2009.