Australia's wellbeing framework: Is it really 'measuring what matters'?

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Abstract

Australia's newly established wellbeing framework, 'Measuring What Matters' (MWM), seeks to measure social progress and influence policy by reporting on 50 wellbeing indicators within five "themes". In this paper, we assess whether the MWM framework adequately measures what people in Australia value for their wellbeing by examining both the process of the framework's development and its content. Firstly, we consider whether the consultation process undertaken was adequate. Secondly, we examine whether the MWM indicators align with existing research on what people in Australia value for their wellbeing. We identified limitations across all aspects of the consultation examined: its comprehensiveness, reach, transparency, and extent to which it genuinely incorporated community feedback into the framework. While the MWM framework was found to broadly align with existing research on what Australians value for their wellbeing, there were some notable divergences. We urge the Australian Government to undertake a comprehensive, wide-reaching, transparent, and genuine consultation across Australia. Furthermore, we recommend that the Australian Government develop new indicators in consultation with the public. Enhancing the MWM framework will help establish it as a cornerstone of government decision-making, and importantly, ensure that it does what it purports to do: measure what Australians value for their wellbeing.

§1 Introduction

In July 2023, the Australian Government released its first Measuring What Matters Statement, establishing Measuring What Matters (MWM) as Australia's national wellbeing framework.[1] The Australian government's introduction of the MWM framework is part of a global movement that aims to redirect governmental policy-making to centre on improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities (Stiglitz et al., 2009). A key step in achieving this is shifting the focus of economic and social progress away from metrics such as GDP and towards measuring what shapes people's wellbeing (Stiglitz et al., 2019).

The term "wellbeing framework" has various definitions, but generally refers to a set of broad aspects of wellbeing, variously called "themes," "domains," or "dimensions," and a set of measures, called "indicators," for each of those broad aspects of wellbeing.[2] MWM is a framework of this type, and comprises five themes: Healthy, Sustainable, Cohesive, Prosperous, and Secure. Underneath each of these themes sit a number of dimensions which are measured through 50 indicators drawn from existing data sources. The purpose of the MWM framework is to systematically provide information useful in guiding national public policy to promote the wellbeing of people in Australia (Australian Government, 2023, p. 1).

The Australian Government has a stated aim that MWM should include themes and indicators that reflect what people in Australia value as important for their wellbeing (Australian Government, 2023, pp. 9, 15, 18). It claims this aim has been achieved, in part, because the framework was developed using a consultative process. This consultative process had two phases. The first consultation phase (hereafter "Phase 1") sought feedback on the idea of applying the OECD wellbeing framework in Australia (The Treasury, 2023a).

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[1] It should be noted that although the Australian Government refers to MWM as Australia's first wellbeing framework, it follows two previous attempts by Australian governments to embed wellbeing in decision-making: Measures of Australia's Progress, and the Treasury Wellbeing Framework (Gaukroger, 2023).

[2] Themes and indicators represent a range of different kinds of thing. Some themes and indicators represent resources, such as income and wealth; some likely represent constituents of wellbeing, such as health; some likely represent means to wellbeing, such as sustainability; and some likely represent capabilities, or opportunities to achieve wellbeing, such as indicators for access to services.

The second consultation phase (hereafter "Phase 2") sought feedback from community members on five broad themes that the Australian Government claims emerged from the Phase 1 submissions[3] and from a review of domestic and international approaches to measuring wellbeing (The Treasury, 2023b).

In this paper we address two related questions. The first is whether the MWM framework is based on adequate consultation with the Australian population. The second is whether the MWM framework accurately reflects what people in Australia value for their wellbeing. These questions are important for four reasons.

Firstly, the MWM framework is intended to be used to shape public policy. If that public policy is to be politically legitimate, what it treats as good for the population should accord with what the population views as good for themselves (Salvaris & Woolcock, 2010). The idea is that it isn't the government's role to decide what a good life is, and so the MWM framework should be neutral between the different plausible views of the good life that people in Australia want to pursue. So, it should reflect what they value for their wellbeing.

Secondly, ensuring that MWM reflects what individuals in Australia value for their wellbeing is not only a requirement of political legitimacy, it is also a stated aim of the MWM framework itself (Australian Government, 2023, pp. 9, 15, 18). Therefore, if it excludes aspects of wellbeing that people value, or includes aspects that people do not value, the MWM framework will fail on its own terms. Consultation helps to ensure that a wellbeing framework aligns with what the population values for wellbeing (Alkire, 2013; Camfield, 2006; White & Pettit, 2004). While there are key areas of wellbeing common to most population groups (such as relationships, financial security, and health), consultation often identifies wellbeing values that are unique to a particular group (Sollis et al., 2022). Thus, consultation is necessary to ensure that the MWM framework, and the policy it helps shape, is indeed promoting what people in Australia value for their wellbeing.

Thirdly, if the MWM framework is to be a long-term part of Australia's approach to policy, it will need public support. It is more likely to have that support if it reflects what people in Australia value for their wellbeing. This

[3] It isn't clear how the Australian Government came to decide on these five preliminary themes. What themes should comprise MWM was not a question raised in the Phase 1 consultation.

support can be facilitated through individuals and communities being more actively engaged in its development (Scott, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2011; Sommer & Lingayah, 2001). Strong public support can help to de-politicise a wellbeing framework and help ensure its survival in the case of changing governments (Sollis, Smith, et al., 2024).

Finally, if the MWM framework does not accurately reflect what people in Australia value for their wellbeing and is not based on adequate consultation, the population may feel disempowered and disengage from the framework. In the context of wellbeing frameworks, consultation on the contents of the framework has been shown to empower people to be more engaged in political processes, to support them in developing a deeper understanding of their views on wellbeing, and to better connect them with services and information in their community (Sollis, 2023).

Consultation is thus important in developing good wellbeing frameworks, and necessary if a wellbeing framework is to accurately reflect what a population values for its wellbeing. So, one key aim of this paper is to assess the MWM consultation process. We focus on Phase 2 of the consultation process, as its purpose was to consult with the general public. (The Phase 1 consultation was primarily with interest groups and other types of organisations).

Firstly, we assess whether the consultation was *comprehensive*, by comparing its duration and depth of engagement to consultation processes with similar aims. Secondly, we ascertain whether the consultation was sufficiently *wide-reaching*, by examining whether it engaged with a diverse range of voices. Finally, given that government consultation processes, including those used to develop wellbeing frameworks, have at times been tokenistic (Pennington et al., 2017), we assess whether the MWM consultation process was a *transparent* and *genuine* attempt to engage with the population, by analysing the extent to which feedback from the consultations was integrated into the framework.

We then proceed to assess the extent to which the MWM framework captures the key areas of wellbeing that individuals and communities in Australia identify as important to them, based on a systematic review by Sollis et al. (2022). We conclude by providing recommendations to the Australian Government to help ensure that the MWM framework has political legitimacy and more closely captures what people in Australia value for their wellbeing.

§2 Development of the Measuring What Matters framework

The Measuring What Matters framework was released in July 2023 following two rounds of public submissions. The first consultation phase, running from 25th October 2022 to 31st January 2023, sought feedback on Statement 4 in the 2022-23 Federal Budget, entitled 'Measuring What Matters' (The Treasury, 2022, pp. 119-142). Statement 4 included a description of the motivations for developing a wellbeing framework, a description of how wellbeing frameworks function, a summary of other countries' wellbeing frameworks, a discussion of how Australia compares to other countries in the OECD framework, a discussion of the limitations of the OECD framework, and a description of existing measures of economic and social progress in Australia (The Treasury, 2022, pp. 119-142). A consultation webpage gave links to documents with details of the OECD indicators and how Australia had recently performed against them (The Treasury, 2023a). Overall, 165 submissions were received for this consultation round, largely by organisations and businesses.

The Australian Government reported that five themes emerged from the Phase 1 consultation[4], and from a review of international and domestic approaches. These were Prosperous, Inclusive, Sustainable, Cohesive and Healthy (The Treasury, 2023b). The second consultation phase ran from 14th April to 26th May 2023, and sought feedback on these five themes. This consultation differed from most standard government submission processes, as community groups, members of parliament, and other organisations were encouraged to hold feedback sessions through which community members could discuss these themes. A consultation pack was made available on the Treasury website for those making submissions. This included a brief overview of the Government's plans for the MWM framework, a brief overview of feedback provided in the Phase 1 consultation, an overview of the five preliminary MWM themes and draft descriptions, and suggestions for the consultation. An optional consultation feedback form was also provided which asked for information on: the meeting details; whether the five preliminary themes resonated, were considered important, or were

[4] It is unclear how the Australian Government came to these five preliminary themes. What themes should comprise the MWM framework was not a question asked in the Phase 1 consultation.

frequently discussed in the meeting; what the submitters viewed as the most important issues for future wellbeing and whether these were captured by the preliminary MWM themes; suggestions on how to amend the descriptions; suggestions on indicators; and any additional information. 117 submissions in total were received through this process. A detailed analysis of this consultation process is presented in section 4.

The Measuring What Matters statement was subsequently released in July 2023, identifying the five themes of Healthy, Secure, Sustainable, Cohesive, and Prosperous (Australian Government, 2023). Note that these themes changed slightly from those on which feedback was sought in the Phase 2 consultation process: The Inclusive theme was removed, and a new theme, Secure, was included. Within these five themes sit 12 dimensions which describe aspects of the wellbeing themes, and 50 indicators (including one stand-alone indicator on life satisfaction). The framework also includes three 'cross-cutting dimensions' of inclusion, equity, and fairness.

The Australian Government has emphasised that it will continue to refine the framework through an iterative process (Australian Government, 2023, p. 1). At the time of writing, the framework has been in place for over one year. The MWM dashboard is updated annually by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), with the Australian Government to release a comprehensive statement examining the trends of indicators every three years. Additional funding has been provided to the ABS to expand the sample size and scope of the General Social Survey, from which many of the MWM indicators are drawn (Leigh & Chalmers, 2024).

§3 Methodology

3.1 Evaluating the consultation process

We undertook an evaluation of the consultation process used to develop the MWM framework. If a comprehensive, wide-reaching, transparent, and genuine consultation was conducted with individuals and communities in Australia, it is likely that the MWM framework does represent what people in Australia value for their wellbeing. We focussed on the Phase 2 consultation for this analysis, given that this phase sought to engage widely with community members. We evaluated the process in four different areas: its comprehensiveness, reach, transparency, and genuineness.

This analysis was supported by a detailed review of 101 submissions provided in the Phase 2 consultation process (note that while 117

submissions in total were received, 15 were confidential and one was a duplicate). We collected information on the key messages of each submission. For those submissions which conducted feedback sessions, we also recorded data on the number of individuals involved and whether the participants involved represented the general population or a specific demographic group. We also compared aspects of the consultation to similar government processes conducted previously in Australia by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), and in Wales[5] (Cynnal Cymru, 2015), Iceland (Cook et al., 2023), and Canada (Department of Finance Canada, 2021).

Firstly, to assess the *comprehensiveness* of the consultation process, we assessed its duration and depth of engagement with individuals. This was done by comparing the duration, modes of engagement to similar government processes conducted previously and elsewhere. We also assess the consultative approach taken within the MWM framework against the ladder of citizen participation developed by Arnstein (1969) and the scale of participation for participatory wellbeing frameworks developed by Sollis et al. (2022) (which was adapted from a framework developed by IAP2 (2018)). The former was selected due to it being a widely used scale to assess participation in research and political contexts, while the latter was selected due to its relevance specifically to participatory wellbeing frameworks.

Secondly, to assess the extent to which the consultation was *wide-reaching*, we examined who participated in the Phase 2 consultation. Thirdly, we assessed the *transparency* of the consultation process by examining the extent to which details of the consultation were publicly reported, and comparing this level of reporting to similar consultations conducted previously and elsewhere. Finally, we examined how *genuine* the consultation process was, reflected through the extent to which feedback from the Phase 2 consultation process was integrated into the MWM framework. This involved thematic analysis of the key messages of each of the Phase 2 submissions, collected through our detailed review. This collected data was analysed inductively,

[5] In the case of Wales, the consultation was on an Act that established multiple wellbeing policy mechanisms, including the office of The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and the seven wellbeing goals which are underpinned by the national well-being indicators framework. Thus, the consultation was not on the development of the seven goals and national wellbeing indicators framework alone. Nevertheless, the model of consultation used to develop the Act in Wales is, we believe, appropriate and applicable for a national wellbeing framework.

with the key messages in each submission distilled into topics and sub-topics. A desktop review of publicly available Measuring What Matters documentation was then reviewed to assess the extent to which each topic and sub-topic had been incorporated into the final Measuring What Matters framework. This analysis is presented in Section 4.

3.2 Examining the MWM indicators

To examine the extent to which the MWM indicators represent what people in Australia value for their wellbeing, we drew on a systematic review of participatory wellbeing studies throughout the world (Sollis et al., 2022). In this review, participatory wellbeing studies were defined as studies which ask participants an open-ended question about what wellbeing or quality of life means to them.

Overall, 11 of the 130 studies in the systematic review were conducted exclusively in Australia[6], and we drew on these studies to give an indication of what Australians value for their wellbeing.[7] The population groups who contributed to these 11 studies represent a broad cross-spectrum of individuals and communities in Australia. The 11 studies engaged with children (ARACY, 2012; Fattore et al., 2009; Foley et al., 2012; Redmond et al., 2016), young people (ARACY, 2012; Bourke & Geldens, 2007), older adults (Robleda & Pachana, 2019), those living in rural areas (Bourke & Geldens, 2007; Dew et al., 2019), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Dew et al., 2019; Greiner et al., 2005; Yap & Yu, 2016), people with disability (Dew et al., 2019; Foley et al., 2012), those with an illness (LeVasseur et al., 2005), and individuals living in disadvantage (Thomas et al., 2012). Details of each of the studies are shown in Appendix 1.

The systematic review by Sollis et al. (2022) identified 30 broad Participatory Wellbeing Areas shown to be important to people in different

[6] One study conducted in Australia was excluded from analysis as the wellbeing framework was also developed through consultation with individuals in the United Kingdom.

[7] We use various terminology in this paper to describe different 'units of analysis' for wellbeing. 'Participatory Wellbeing Area' refers to the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas identified by Sollis et al. (2022). 'MWM theme' refers to the broad themes in the MWM framework. 'MWM dimension' refers to the dimensions that sit within each MWM theme. 'Wellbeing Indicator' refers to the indicators used in the MWM framework to measure the dimensions.

participatory studies around the world, all of which were raised in at least one Australian study. For each of the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas, we counted the number of Australian studies in which participants identified that Participatory Wellbeing Area. This gives a broad measure indication of the areas of wellbeing people in Australia value.

Next, we mapped the MWM indicators to the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas. Two authors conducted this mapping independently, and where conflicts were present, the authors discussed them and came to an agreement. Each MWM indicator could map to multiple Participatory Wellbeing Areas, and where an indicator did not map to any of the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas it was classified as "N/A". The resulting mapping shows the extent to which the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas are captured in the MWM framework.

This analysis thus allows us to compare the indicators in the MWM framework to the Participatory Wellbeing Areas identified in the 11 Australian participatory studies. Doing so provides a detailed understanding of what Participatory Wellbeing Areas may be under- or over- represented, or missing entirely, in the MWM framework.[8] The analysis comparing MWM indicators to Participatory Wellbeing Areas raised in participatory studies is presented in section 5.

§4 Evaluating the consultation process

4.1 Comprehensiveness – duration and depth of engagement

The Phase 2 consultation, wherein community organisations, members of parliament, and other organisations were invited to hold feedback sessions, took place over six weeks. This process comprised only a single mode of engagement, a submission form. Furthermore, beyond the call for submissions the Australian Government did not seemingly engage widely with organisations to encourage them to conduct feedback meetings. To determine whether this duration and mode of engagement were

[8] It is important to note that participatory wellbeing studies identify aspects of wellbeing that are both important and *salient* to people: there may be some aspects of wellbeing that people value highly but that don't come to mind for them when they're asked how they define wellbeing (Sollis et al., 2024).

comprehensive, we compared this process to similar consultations conducted both within Australia and abroad.

Within Australia, the ABS administered a wellbeing framework, "Measures of Australia's Progress" (MAP), between 2002 and 2014. In 2010-12, the ABS undertook a major review of MAP, which included a public consultation process (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The MAP consultation was launched in September 2010 and concluded in June 2012, taking a total of 22 months. The key question that the ABS sought to address in this consultation was "What is important to you for national progress?" The consultation was wide-reaching and used a number of different platforms by which people could contribute, including state-based workshops, topic advisory panels, and social media posts (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Furthermore, the ABS engaged widely with community groups to facilitate discussions.

Wales undertook a "national conversation" on wellbeing, designed to inform the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). The consultation was held over one year, reaching 6474 people, and asked people about the Wales they want to leave behind for their children and grandchildren. The organisation running the consultation, Cynnal Cymru (2015), provided community organisations with support to employ whichever mode of engagement that was most appropriate for their community, and engaged widely to ensure adequate representation. Iceland also undertook a consultation process to identify the priorities of the general public regarding quality of life (Cook et al., 2023). The consultation was held over two years, comprising a national survey and stakeholder workshops in which the public, community organisations, and opposition political parties participated. The Canadian Quality of Life Strategy comprised four focus groups in July 2020 and a survey conducted over six days in August 2020 (Department of Finance Canada, 2021). National Indigenous organisations were also engaged with however it is not clear how many organisations or individuals were involved. The consultation also engaged heavily with technical experts and government officials.

These examples demonstrate that while the MWM consultation was more extensive and expansive than the Canadian example, all other wellbeing policy approaches examined were based on public consultation lasting substantially longer than the six-week process initiated by the Australian Government. Furthermore, they used multiple modes of engagement to ensure widespread and deep engagement with individuals and communities,

compared to the singular mode adopted for MWM. Furthermore, other governments went to greater lengths to ensure adequate representation of community groups. Consultations conducted previously also asked open-ended questions about what the frameworks should comprise, which allows for a greater depth of engagement with the framework. This is in contrast to the consultation process for MWM, which asked for feedback on a preliminary set of themes. Previous research has identified the importance of asking open-ended questions on wellbeing when developing wellbeing frameworks to help ensure a framework is expressed in language that resonates with the general public (Sollis, 2023).

These findings are further reinforced by assessing the consultative approach taken against two scales of participation: the ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969) and the scale of participation for participatory wellbeing studies (IAP2, 2018; Sollis et al., 2022). The ladder of citizen participation developed by Arnstein (1969) consists of seven levels. The levels of citizen participation from lowest to highest are Manipulation, Therapy, Informing, Consultation, Placation, Partnership, Delegation, and Citizen Control. The consultation process for MWM would sit on the fourth rung of the ladder, Consultation, which is characterised by inviting citizens' opinions through forums such as community meetings and public forums. Arnstein (1969) notes that while the Consultation rung can be a legitimate step towards full participation, it can also be tokenistic if not combined with other types of participation. The scale of participation for participatory wellbeing studies developed by Sollis et al. (2022) (which was adapted from the framework developed by IAP2 (2018)) has six levels: Inform, Enrich, Consult (defined as a two-way, multi-stage process), Involve, Collaborate, and Empower. The consultation process for MWM would sit on the bottom rung of this ladder, Inform. This is defined by Sollis et al. (2022) as participants informing wellbeing framework developers on their views regarding what dimensions should comprise a framework through a single-stage process. The level of participation in the MWM framework could be moved further up both ladders through actions such as: incorporating a two-stage process whereby community members have the opportunity to endorse the final framework; developing a steering committee made up of community members to provide guidance on the process; and establishing genuine partnerships with key organisations across the country.

Thus, the limited nature of the MWM in its duration and depth of engagement, as well as limited participation according to ladders and scales

of participation, indicate that it is likely to have been inadequate to sufficiently engage with individuals and communities in Australia. Several Phase 2 submissions noted this, reporting that more time was needed to undertake adequate consultation:

> The second round of consultations…is only open for a month and a half…This timeframe is tight for scheduling such meetings and we expect that some organisations will find it challenging to allocate and dedicate resources to complete this task (TierraMar & Flies, 2023, pp. 2-3).

> WEAll is concerned that a short and limited community consultation process will compromise the quality and accessibility of the engagement…The challenging timetable and process provided for this second consultation will mean that organisations and communities are not resourced to do a meaningful and effective outreach and most ordinary citizens will be unaware of the project and unable to participate in it (Wellbeing Economy Alliance Australia Hub, 2023, pp. 3-4).

> We are concerned that development of this important framework is not getting the development process it deserves, with the short consultation timeframes not allowing for robust and far reaching consultation (Family & Relationship Services Australia, 2023, p. 3).

4.2 Reach of consultation – individuals involved

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the different submission types. While this consultation phase asked for organisations to conduct group feedback sessions, not all submissions did so and some instead provided submissions as an individual or an organisation. These submissions are therefore classified as "Traditional submissions" (n=42). The remainder of the submissions comprised 54 group feedback sessions and five individuals who submitted a feedback form. For the submissions which comprised a feedback session, 48 were run as meetings (either virtual or in-person), five were run as town halls by MPs, and one was run through a survey.

Table 1: Breakdown of submission types

Type of submission	
Traditional submission	42
Group feedback session	54
Consultation form submitted as individual	5

Overall, the group feedback sessions engaged with 908 individuals (excluding 8 submissions which conducted feedback sessions but did not report the number of individuals who participated). The breakdown of who was represented in the feedback sessions is listed in Table 2. The majority of feedback sessions were conducted with individuals through their professional capacity (as academics, staff members of an organisation, or members of a professional peak body, feedback sessions=22, individuals engaged = 317). A total of 19 feedback sessions (with 191 individuals) were conducted by community organisations with their members or board members.

Feedback sessions with community members were initiated in a variety of ways. Four of these feedback sessions were led by local Members of Parliament through town hall sessions. Other feedback sessions were coordinated by organisations who reached out to community members with lived experience. For example, Beyond Blue (2023) coordinated a feedback session with individuals with lived experience of mental ill-health. Additionally, five feedback sessions (with 59 individuals) were undertaken with young people.[9] Some young people were engaged through their school (Chaney, 2023; Scamps, 2023), while others were engaged with through organisations or peak bodies that work with young people (ARACY, 2023; Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use, 2023; yourtown, 2023).

[9] We have not included the age range of the young people who participated in the feedback sessions as information on their age was often not provided.

Table 2: Participants of group feedback sessions

	Number of feedback sessions	Number of individuals engaged
Members/Board members of a community organisation	19	191
Professional members of a peak body	12	218
Community members/Individuals with lived experience	11	403
Academics	8	90
Young people	5	59
Staff members of an organisation	2	9
Not stated	5	23

Note: Total number of feedback sessions add to greater than 54 and total number of individuals engaged add to greater than 908 as some feedback sessions included participants who sat across multiple categories.

This analysis suggests that there was limited engagement with the general public in Australia. The majority of individuals who participated in feedback sessions were members of organisations, or individuals who participated in their professional capacity. Both these groups are more likely to be engaged with policy processes than the general public. This was predicted by some submissions. For example, the submission by Kate Chaney MP noted that:

> Most citizens have no idea about making government submissions. It seems likely that the submissions process will only elicit responses from experts and interest groups. (Chaney, 2023, p. 2)

Anglicare Australia (2023) stated that:

> [W]e remain concerned that the consultation on the Framework is limited to written submissions and only advertised on the Treasury website. This approach may not elicit a diverse range of opinions beyond traditional stakeholders such as think tanks, community service organisations, unions, and academics. (p. 4)

Furthermore, many submissions advised that there should be wider and more active engagement with individuals and communities in Australia. Of the 101 submissions analysed, 25 advocated for wider consultation:

> The Salvation Army recommends that the Australian Government fully fund trauma-informed culturally-appropriate community consultations to inform future stages of the development of the Measuring What Matters statement. (The Salvation Army, 2023, p. 6)

> CAHA recommends the next stage of consultation be a national conversation that enables all people living in Australia to be a part of the development of the Statement to ensure no one is left behind. (Climate and Health Alliance, 2023, p. 4)

> 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. (ANDI, 2023, p. 5)

> [G]oals and targets should be informed by a comprehensive national conversation involving the Australian public and a diverse range of stakeholders, ensuring the framework reflects the needs and aspirations of the Australian community, with particular attention to the views and aspirations of Indigenous peoples. (Monash Sustainable Development Institute, 2023, p. 5)

> A broad and inclusive conversation about our vision for a future is needed to set national wellbeing goals. Such widespread national engagement is the cornerstone of enduring and sophisticated wellbeing frameworks. (Centre for Policy Development, 2023, p. 3)

These submissions support our finding in Section 4.1 that the consultation is likely to have been too short and narrow in nature. More time should have been allowed for the consultation process, so that it could involve a wider range of people and allowed for greater depth of engagement with them. A diverse range of consultation platforms should also have been used to engage hard-to-reach or under-represented groups.

4.3 Transparency of the consultation process

The Australian Government published some information about the second-phase consultation process and made the 102 non-confidential submissions publicly available (The Treasury, 2023b). However, they did not publish a consultation report summarising the feedback and themes arising in this consultation, or details of the groups who participated in the consultation. Nor did they publish information on whether and how themes arising from the consultation were incorporated into the revised framework.

Comparable wellbeing frameworks have typically reported on the outcome of their consultation process. As part of the redevelopment of Measures of Australia's Progress, the Australian Bureau of Statistics released the report "Aspirations for our nation: A conversation with Australians about progress" (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The report detailed the nature of consultation (including social media engagement, expert panel advice, community contributions and government submissions) along with a summary of the consultation results. The Wales we Want, which helped to inform the development of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act included a report on the key themes emerging from the consultation process (Cynnal Cymru, 2015). To our best knowledge, there is no publicly available report detailing the process and outcomes of the consultation conducted in Iceland or Canada.

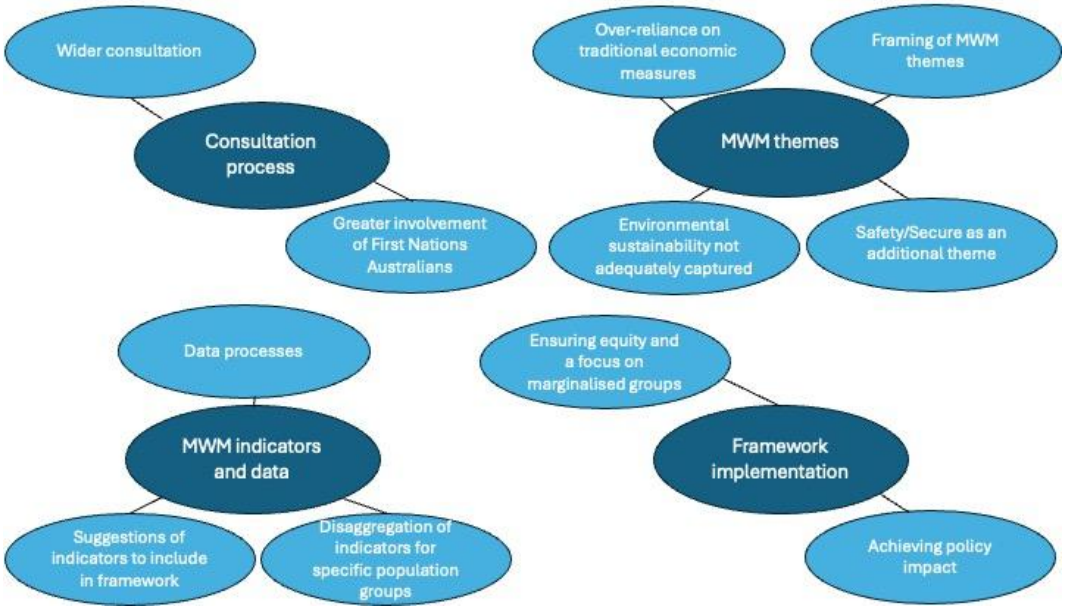
Our analysis illustrates examples of previous consultation processes – in Australia previously, and in Wales - that have been more transparent than MWM. A more transparent consultation process would have made clear at the start of the process, to both submitters and the general public, whether and how the framework would change in response to submissions, and how feedback would be considered. For future consultations, it would be beneficial if the Australian government were to inform the public how submissions will be considered prior to the consultation process, and to publish a report following the consultation to outline the feedback received. Doing so would ensure individuals and communities have a better understanding of the aims of the consultation process, how submissions might affect it, and what the views of submissions are, leading to a more transparent consultation.

4.4 A genuine consultation? Assessing the integration of feedback into the MWM framework

To get some indication of the extent to which this feedback was incorporated into the MWM framework, we conducted a thematic analysis of the feedback provided in the Phase 2 submissions, as outlined in the Methodology section. We then assessed the extent to which the final framework incorporated this feedback.[10]

Four key topics arose in Phase 2 submissions: feedback on the consultation process; feedback on the MWM themes; feedback on the indicators and data; and feedback on how the framework will be implemented (Figure 1). A number of sub-topics were identified within each broader topic. A description of these topics and sub-topics is provided in Table 3.

Figure 1: Topics and sub-topics arising in Phase 2 submission process



[10] Due to the limited nature of the information provided by Commonwealth Treasury in the Phase 2 consultation pack to those making submissions, we cannot be certain whether the final elements of the MWM framework were influenced by the consultation process or not. This analysis only assesses whether there the final MWM framework included elements of each sub-topic.

Table 3 Description of topics and sub-topics in Phase 2 submissions

Topic/sub-topic	Description	Evidence indicating some action on sub-topic?
Consultation process		
Wider consultation	Feedback indicating wider consultation necessary beyond the submission process, particularly with groups who tend to be excluded from policymaking processes.	No
Greater involvement of First Nations Australians	Feedback indicating that the framework would benefit from greater involvement with First Nations Australians.	No
MWM themes		
Over-reliance on traditional economic measures	Dissatisfaction with the inclusion of traditional economic measures, including too much emphasis on the Prosperous theme and on economic growth.	Yes
Framing of MWM themes	General feedback on the framing of themes. Some feedback suggested that the MWM framework should emphasise the inter-relatedness of themes.	Yes
Environmental sustainability not adequately captured	Dissatisfaction with the Sustainability theme. Feedback suggested that it does not adequately capture the severity of climate change, that it should include references of other ecological threats and biodiversity, and that the environment should be a central component of the framework.	Yes

Safety/Secure as an additional theme	Feedback indicating that an additional theme of Safety or Secure is needed.	Yes
MWM indicators and data		
Data processes	Suggestions were given on improvements to data processes. These included greater transparency of data processes and more frequent collection of wellbeing data.	Yes
Suggestions of indicators to include in framework	Wide-ranging suggestions were provided regarding the inclusion of certain indicators. These included indicators related to health, digital inclusion, cultural participation, and housing.	Yes
Disaggregation of indicators for specific population groups	Feedback indicating that indicators need to be disaggregated to allow for examination of certain population groups, such as people living in rural or regional areas, females, children, and First Nations Australians.	Yes
Framework implementation		
Ensuring equity, and a focus on marginalised groups	Feedback conveying that the MWM framework should have a strong focus on equity. This included feedback suggesting that the MWM framework should incorporate indicators of inequality, that MWM should be underpinned by an equity principle, and that MWM should help support equality on decision-making processes.	Yes
Achieving policy impact	Feedback indicating that the framework needs to be embedded	No

	in policy to achieve policy impact. This included suggestions such as incorporating it into budget processes and the development of action plans.	

There are sub-topics that we know were incorporated into the final MWM framework. The submissions calling for an additional theme of Safety or Secure were acted on by adding the MWM theme Secure. Additionally, the MWM framework included new "cross-cutting dimensions" of Inclusion, Equity, and Fairness to emphasise that wellbeing outcomes should be shared amongst equally amongst the population (Australian Government, 2023, pp. 4, 14). This addressed concerns that a focus on equity was missing in the framework.

The MWM framework includes environmental indicators measuring biological diversity, protected areas, and air quality, which accords with submissions noting that environmental measures ought not to be restricted to climate change. Feedback suggesting that the MWM framework over-emphasised traditional economic measures in the description of the Prosperous theme provided in the consultation pack provided by Commonwealth Treasury was also addressed to some extent through the exclusion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator. Similarly, many submissions suggested specific indicators for inclusion in the MWM framework, some of which have been incorporated including digital inclusion, wealth inequality, and homelessness. Finally, suggestions for improved data processes and the ability to disaggregate indicators have been addressed through the recently announced expansion of the General Social Survey, which has been funded specifically to support the MWM framework (Leigh & Chalmers, 2024). The expansion will result in a greater number of indicators, a larger sample size, and a more frequent, annual collection of data.

However, some of the suggestions in the sub-topics above have not been acted on. Most notable is the call for wider consultation, as discussed above. Additionally, there is no evidence indicating that the MWM framework was developed through deep engagement with First Nations Australians, as called for in submissions. Importantly, while the MWM statement indicates it will be "looking for opportunities to embed the [f]ramework into government decision-making" (Australian Government, 2023, p. 94), we see no evidence of this having occurred. Aside from updates to the MWM dashboard, there

has been no further documentation released by the Australian Government to suggest further embedding such as through the federal budget or the development of action plans. Given that the stated aim of the MWM framework is to "better inform policy making across all levels of government" (Australian Government, 2023, p. 4), the lack of evidence that the government is working towards this indicates a significant shortcoming in the MWM framework.

Another possible indication that the Australian Government hasn't placed a strong focus on community feedback when developing the MWM framework is the fact that out of 85 endnotes in the first MWM statement (Australian Government, 2023), none refer to submissions from the Phase 2 submission process.[11]

In sum, an examination of the feedback provided in Phase 2 submissions and the resulting MWM framework provides evidence that submissions were reviewed by the Australian Government and that some suggestions were acted on. However, key topics raised in submissions such as wider consultation including greater involvement of First Nations Australians and embedding the framework into policy processes were not acted on.

§5 Mapping Measuring What Matters to participatory wellbeing studies

This section presents the analysis described in section 3.2, whereby the 50 MWM indicators were mapped to the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas identified in participatory studies by Sollis et al. (2022) (and described in Appendix 2).

Figure 2 shows the number of MWM indicators that map to each of these Participatory Wellbeing Areas (see Appendix 3 for how each MWM indicator mapped to the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas). The chart shows a many-to-many mapping. As discussed in section 3.2, each MWM indicator could map to multiple Participatory Wellbeing Areas, and each Participatory Wellbeing Area could relate to multiple MWM indicators. The chart shows Participatory Wellbeing Areas ordered by the number of Australian studies in which they were raised.

[11] Our gratitude goes to Mike Salvaris for raising this point. It should be noted that there were five references to submissions from Phase 1.

It should be noted that eight of the 50 MWM indicators did not map to any of the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas. These are represented as N/A in Figure 2 (and Appendix 3). Four of these eight MWM indicators – Fiscal Sustainability, Economic Resilience, Productivity, and Innovation – relate to measures of Australia's economy. A fifth – Digital Preparedness – appears to relate mostly to skills required for economic prosperity. While National Safety may be associated with the Participatory Wellbeing Area of Personal Safety, it is a much broader construct, relating to individual feelings about world events. Two indicators in the Cohesive theme – Acceptance of Diversity, and Representation in Parliament – may indirectly relate to Participatory Wellbeing Areas such as Community and Belongingness. While all eight indicators are relevant to wellbeing and important to measure, our analysis showed they do not arise when people are asked an open-ended question about what wellbeing means to them.

Nine of the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas are not captured at all in the MWM framework. These nine areas are (listed in order of how frequently they appear in the 11 Australian participatory wellbeing studies): Personal Values and Pro-Social Behaviours, Happiness, Identity and Self-Concept, Independence and Autonomy, Achievement and Personal Growth, Religion and Spirituality, Sense of Purpose and Meaning, Aspirations for the Future, and Mobility.

These Participatory Wellbeing Areas are described as follows. Personal Values and Pro-Social Behaviours is a broad construct, capturing one's belief system, worldview, values, and altruistic behaviours, including empathy, manners, sharing and generosity, and being respectful. Happiness, distinct from Satisfaction and Contentment, refers to feelings of pleasure, joy, and positive feeling. Identity and Self-Concept refers to feelings about oneself, including self-esteem, self-acceptance, confidence, and positive self-image. Independence and Autonomy captures freedom, self-reliance, being able to look after oneself and live a life of one's own choosing. Achievement and Personal growth refers to growth and flourishing in life, acquiring new skills, and accomplishing goals. Religion and Spirituality refers to belief in God, and the value from spiritual or religious practices. Sense of Purpose and Meaning refers to roles and responsibilities, feeling useful, being needed, feeling part of something larger, and experiencing fulfillment in life. Aspirations for the Future encapsulates goals, a sense of optimism about the future, feeling positive about later life and children's future wellbeing. Finally, Mobility

refers to transportation, and the ease at which one can physically navigate their world (Sollis et al., 2022; Appendix 2).

Of the Participatory Wellbeing Areas missing from the MWM framework, Mobility could be measured most easily by assessing the cost and availability of public transport, roads, and traffic congestion. However, it should be noted that Mobility was not prominent in Australian participatory studies, appearing in just one of the 11 Australian wellbeing studies. Of the remaining Participatory Wellbeing Areas missing in MWM, there may be some justification for their absence: they are difficult to measure, and they are areas that are difficult, or possibly not appropriate (or perhaps impossible) for government policy to target and improve (e.g. Religion and Spirituality). It should also be noted that relevant themes and indicators within a societal-level wellbeing framework such as MWM may differ from studies which ask participants about individual-level wellbeing. The 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas are based on the latter. Additional analysis highlights that while some of these Participatory Wellbeing Areas were seldomly raised in consultations (Aspirations for the Future and Achievement and Personal Growth), others were more frequently mentioned (Appendix 4). In particular, notions related to Independence and Autonomy were referenced 44 times across 23 submissions, notions related to Happiness were mentioned 50 times across 14 submissions, and terms related to Identity and Self-Concept were noted 35 times across 14 submissions. In the absence of a consultation report, it is unclear why these areas of wellbeing were not included in the MWM framework.

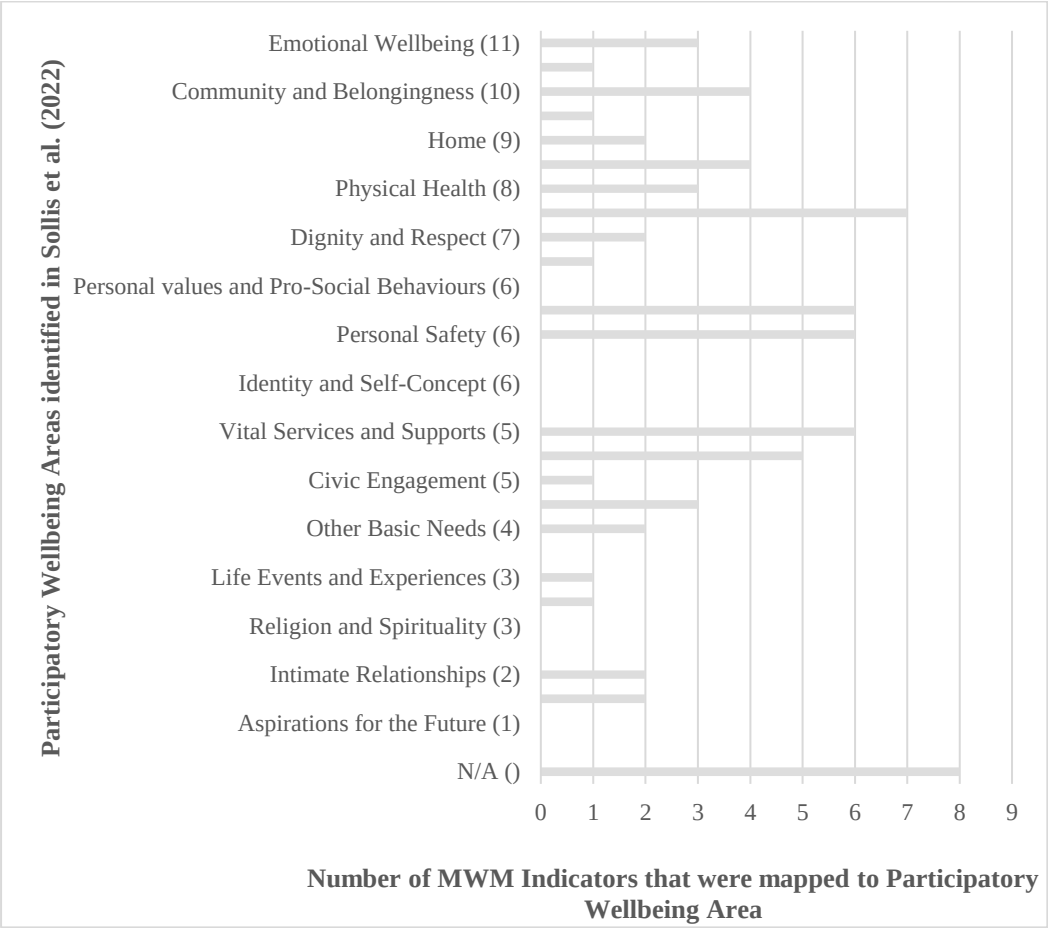
The remaining Participatory Wellbeing Areas are captured in MWM, though some are under- or over-represented in the framework when compared to their prominence in the 11 Australian participatory studies (Figure 2). Excluding Participatory Wellbeing Areas not represented at all, the most underrepresented areas in the MWM framework are Family Relationships (relationships with children, parents, siblings, and other family members), and Other Relationships (relationships with friends, neighbours, and peers, and social interaction and social networks). Family Relationships appears in all 11 Australian participatory studies of wellbeing, and Other Relationships in 10 of the 11 studies, but both are represented by a single MWM indicator: Social Connections (measured in MWM through the proportion of people who often feel lonely). Emotional Wellbeing also appears in all 11 Australian participatory studies and is captured by only four indicators in MWM. Similarly, Home appears in 9 of the 11 participatory

studies and is represented by only two MWM indicators. Civic Engagement (encompassing both personal engagement in society and aspects of government and functioning democracy) appeared in 5 of the 11 participatory studies, yet is represented by one indicator in MWM.

A considerable portion of the MWM indicators (7 out of 50, or 14%) relate to Financial Security and Money. Financial Security and Money was identified in 7 of the 11 Australian participatory frameworks, suggesting it is moderately prominent in Australians' conception of wellbeing. As such, Financial Security and Money may be considered overrepresented in MWM. This is common amongst wellbeing frameworks, which have a tendency to prominently feature indicators related to financial security (Cook et al., 2023). Similarly, measures of Vital Services and Supports, along with Decent Work, are relatively common in the MWM framework (6 and 5 indicators respectively), though they were raised in fewer than half of Australian participatory wellbeing studies (each raised in 5 of 11 studies).

The prominence of some Participatory Wellbeing Areas in the MWM framework may reflect the relative availability of certain data, along with a view that government can intervene effectively on these aspects of wellbeing. It should be noted that while most participatory wellbeing areas were represented in the MWM framework, this may not be because the government identified those areas as important to people in Australia through the MWM consultative process. Rather, this may reflect that certain aspects of life (such as health, living standards, and security) are valued highly for wellbeing across countries and cultures (Barrington-Leigh & Escande, 2018, p. 918). Thus, the government may have either assumed that these areas would be important to Australians or incorporated them from other wellbeing frameworks such as that of the OECD.

Figure 2: Chart mapping the 50 indicators in the MWM framework to the 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas identified in Sollis et al. (2022)



Note: The 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas from Sollis et al. (2022) are ordered from top to bottom based on the number of Australian participatory wellbeing studies in which each Participatory Wellbeing Area appears (with number in brackets). For instance, all 11 Australian studies identified Emotional Wellbeing and Family Relationships in their wellbeing studies, whereas only one Australian study identified Mobility. The bars indicate the number of MWM indicators that were mapped to each Participatory Wellbeing Area.

§6 Limitations and future directions

This paper has systematically evaluated both the MWM framework content and the process to develop it, to determine whether it does in fact measure what people in Australia value for their wellbeing. However, there are some limitations and gaps of the study which should be noted, as well as gaps in our analysis which can lead to further research.

Firstly, this study relied on publicly available data. Further research could engage more deeply with policymakers who developed the MWM framework to better understand the processes they engaged in to develop the framework. Secondly, some of our analysis entailed comparing the process of MWM to similar consultations conducted elsewhere. There are limited examples of national governments undertaking consultation to develop wellbeing frameworks, meaning that there were few points of reference to compare with. Thirdly, in analysing the reach of the consultation, we relied only on information about participants that they provided themselves in their submissions. There were no detailed questions on the demographics of those participating in feedback meetings, meaning we could not analyse this comprehensively. Fourthly, our analysis of the MWM indicators was restricted to assessing whether the indicators align with what individuals in Australia value for their wellbeing, based on existing research. Future research could further examine the adequacy and strength of the MWM indicators.

Finally, it is important to note that while this study did evaluate some aspects of the consultation process, our primary purpose was to determine whether or not MWM reflects what people in Australia value for their wellbeing. Further research could analyse the entire MWM development process more deeply. It should be noted that an audit by the Australian National Audit Office (2024) is currently underway to review the design and implementation of the MWM framework.

§7 Concluding remarks: Recommendations for an enhanced MWM framework

If the Australian Government truly wants to measure what matters to people in Australia for their wellbeing, it's vital that the MWM framework be based on a consultation that's comprehensive, wide-ranging, transparent, and genuine. It is commendable that the Australian Government did undertake some community consultation to develop the MWM framework, as this is often missed in the development of government wellbeing frameworks. However, our analysis identified some shortcomings.

Firstly, the consultation was not comprehensive, as its duration was too limited and it lacked deep engagement with individuals and groups. The six-week timeframe for Phase 2 was substantially shorter than similar consultations conducted elsewhere. Additionally, while other similar consultations have used a diverse range of consultation platforms, the MWM

consultation process relied on just one type of consultation format, which may have failed to engage certain groups. This concern was expressed in a large number of submissions. Finally, while other similar consultations have asked open-ended questions on what a wellbeing framework should comprise, the MWM consultation process involved individuals providing feedback on pre-defined themes.

Secondly, the consultation was not wide-reaching. Our analysis showed that the vast majority of feedback sessions coordinated by those who provided Phase 2 submissions were attended by individuals in their professional capacity or as members or board members of community organisations. This indicates that there was limited input from individuals who are less engaged with policy processes.

Thirdly, the consultation was not transparent. There was no public reporting of the outcomes of the consultation process, with similar consultations having been conducted elsewhere having more comprehensive reporting. Finally, while our analysis indicates that the consultation was genuine in some respects – that is, the Australian government did take some action to address many of the topics raised in the Phase 2 consultation – three key topics raised in the consultations were not addressed. These were calls for wider consultation, greater involvement of First Nations Australians, and the framework being more deeply embedded in policy processes to enable impact. Addressing these points is vital in ensuring the MWM framework has buy-in from the community, reflects what truly matters to people in Australia for their wellbeing, and effectively influences and shapes policy decisions.

Despite these shortcomings, our analysis mapping the MWM indicators to existing research on what people in Australia value for their wellbeing identified reasonable overlap. However, there were some important divergences. Compared with 11 participatory wellbeing studies conducted in Australia, MWM slightly overemphasises Financial Security and Money, and underemphasises some of the more personal aspects of wellbeing. These include Family Relationships, Sense of Purpose and Meaning, Achievement and Personal Growth, and Independence and Autonomy. These may be missing because they are more difficult to measure or because they are more difficult areas for policy to intervene in. There may be a perception either that they are areas in which the government shouldn't intervene, or that they cannot be addressed directly. However, even if this is the case, there is value in measuring them. Including the areas of wellbeing that matter most to people in Australia will allow governments and academics to evaluate the

effectiveness of policy, even if policy only impacts some Participatory Wellbeing Areas indirectly.

Our recommendations to enhance the MWM framework are two-fold. We urge the Australian Government to undertake a comprehensive, wide-reaching, transparent, and genuine consultation on MWM. While the ABS Measures of Australia's Progress (MAP) consultation had many of these qualities, a similar consultation needs to be conducted again for two reasons. Firstly, many aspects of our society have changed since 2010-12 when the MAP consultation took place. This means that what Australians value for their wellbeing may have changed since this time. Secondly, the benefits of a consultation process go beyond simply identifying the key themes and indicators that should make up the MWM framework and include ensuring buy-in of the framework amongst community members, and greater empowerment of individuals.

The Australian Government could look to consultation models such as MAP and the Wales we Want, which have these qualities to a greater extent. For example, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, which has been shown to impact a range of policy areas (Gaukroger et al., 2022), established Wales's seven wellbeing goals amongst a number of other components, and was underpinned by a 'national conversation' which engaged widely with the community (Cynnal Cymru, 2015). The 'national conversation' was held over a long period, used various modes of engagement, and asked individuals and communities an open-ended question on the Wales they want for the future. Furthermore, concert efforts were taken to ensure a wide range of community organisations were engaged in the process. This makes it more likely that the Act reflects the views of the Welsh population. The Australian Government could also look to consultation processes undertaken for research studies, such as the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (Michalski, 2001).

Such a consultation needs to engage deeply with diverse voices whose views are often missed in traditional policy submission processes. This includes, but is not limited to, children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, people living in rural and regional Australia, and people with disabilities. Crucially, a successful consultation needs to be (and needs to be perceived as) genuine. A detailed consultation report, outlining feedback received through the consultation process and how that feedback will be incorporated in MWM framework, should be published following any future consultation exercises.

We also recommend that the Australian Government review the MWM indicators based on the analysis presented in this paper. We identified that indicators reflecting the Participatory Wellbeing Areas of Relationships and Emotional Wellbeing were lacking relative to their reported prominence in participatory wellbeing studies in Australia. Furthermore, there were Participatory Wellbeing Areas identified as important across participatory studies in Australia which are absent in the MWM framework. These include Mobility, Identity and Self-Concept, Independence and Autonomy, Achievement and Personal Growth, Religion and Spirituality, Sense of Purpose and Meaning, and Aspirations for the Future. The Australian Government should consider whether additional indicators should be integrated into the framework to ensure it comprehensively measures what matters to wellbeing for people in Australia.

The MWM framework will soon be strengthened through the expansion of the ABS General Social Survey (Leigh & Chalmers, 2024). Enhancing this survey provides an opportunity for the Australian Government to develop measures of wellbeing that are not present in existing data sources. We strongly recommend that this be done through consultation with the public, as well as measurement experts. The Australian Government could look to the consultation process undertaken in New Zealand to obtain feedback for the 2016 New Zealand General Social Survey (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

A comprehensive, wide-reaching, transparent, and genuine consultation to support the MWM framework is vital to ensure the framework has political legitimacy, is promoting the things that people in Australia value for their wellbeing, has public support, and empowers individuals and communities in Australia. Doing so can help establish the MWM framework as a cornerstone of government decision-making, and importantly, ensure that does what it purports to do: measure what Australians value for their wellbeing.

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Appendix 1

Table 4: Overview of exclusively Australian participatory wellbeing studies (Sollis et al., 2022)

Study reference	Geographic level	Life stage	Special population group	Data collection method	Question asked in consultation	Sample size
ARACY (2012). The Nest Consultation. Retrieved from: https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/command/download_file/id/313/filename/The-Nest-consultation-report-Findings-from-consultation.pdf	National	Children and young people; Young adults	-	Focus groups	What are the things that you consider to be important in contributing to a good life for children and young people?	Survey (3122 total, 1445 0-24 yrs), consultation activities (585 total, 563 0-24 yrs)
Bourke, L., & Geldens, P. M. (2007). Subjective wellbeing and its meaning for young people in a rural Australian center *Social Indicators Research*, *82*(1), 165-187. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-006-9031-0	Place-based	Young adults	-	Interviews	What does wellbeing mean for you?	91
Dew, A., Barton, R., Gilroy, J., Ryall, L., Lincoln, M., Jensen, H., Flood, V., Taylor, K., & McCrae, K. (2019). Importance of Land, family and culture for a good life: Remote Aboriginal people with disability and carers. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.96	Place-based	Adults	Indigenous/ disability	Interviews; Focus groups	What constitutes a good life for Anangu with disability and how can they be supported to achieve a good life?	109 (34 Anangu with disability, 28 carers, 47 workers representing 16 organisations)
Fattore, T., Mason, J., & Watson, E. (2009). When children are asked about their well-being: Towards a framework for guiding policy. *Child Indicators Research*, *2*(1), 57-77. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-008-9025-3	Subnational	Children and young people	-	Creative piece; Interviews; Focus groups	What makes up the elements of wellbeing for children and young people?	123
Foley, K. R., Blackmore, A. M., Girdler, S., O'Donnell, M., Glauert, R., Llewellyn, G., & Leonard, H. (2012). To feel belonged: The voices of children and youth with disabilities on the meaning of wellbeing. *Child Indicators Research*, *5*(2), 375-391. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-011-9134-2	Non-geographic	Children and young people	Disability	Creative piece; Interviews	What is important for a good life? What are the barriers (or what gets in the way) of having a good life?	20
Greiner, R., Larson, S., Herr, A., & Bligh, V. (2005). *Wellbeing of Nywaigi traditional owners: The contribution of country to wellbeing and the role of natural resource management*. https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/download?pid=	Place-based	General community	Indigenous	Focus groups; Survey	What are the three most important domains of wellbeing?	58

Study reference	Geographic level	Life stage	Special population group	Data collection method	Question asked in consultation	Sample size
procite:a3fd9102-b143-4058-a1c0-2972b017c60a&dsid=DS1						
LeVasseur, S. A., Green, S., & Talman, P. (2005). The SEIQoL-DW is a valid method for measuring individual quality of life in stroke survivors attending a secondary prevention clinic. *Quality of Life Research*, *14*(3), 779-788. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-004-0795-x	Non-geographic	Adults	Illness	Survey	What are the five things more important in your life?	46
Redmond, G., Skattebol, J., Saunders, P., Lietz, P., Zizzo, G., O'grady, E., Tobin, M., Thompson, S., Maurici, V., Huynh, J., Moffat, A., Wong, M., Bradubury, B., & Roberts, K. (2016). *Are the kids alright? Young Australians in their middle years: Final report of the Australian Child Wellbeing Project*. www.australianchildwellbeing.com.au	National	Children and young people	-	Interviews; Focus groups	What are the domains that you consider to be a good life? What do young people think are important to having a good life?	97
Robleda, S., & Pachana, N. A. (2019). Quality of life in Australian adults aged 50 years and over: Data using the schedule for the evaluation of individual quality of life (SEIQOL-DW). *Clinical Gerontologist*, *42*(1), 101-113. https://doi.org/10.1080/07317115.2017.1397829	National	Adults; Older adults	-	Survey	What are the five most important domains relevant to your quality-of-life?	153
Thomas, Y., Gray, M. A., & McGinty, S. (2012). An exploration of subjective wellbeing among people experiencing homelessness: A strengths-based approach. *Social Work in Health Care*, *51*(9), 780-797. https://doi.org/10.1080/00981389.2012.686475	Subnational	Adults	Homeless	Interviews	What does wellbeing mean to you? What do you do to survive day to day when you are homeless? What makes life good when you are homeless?	20
Yap, M., & Yu, E. (2016). Operationalising the capability approach: developing culturally relevant indicators of Indigenous wellbeing – an Australian example. *Oxford Development Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2016.1178223	Place-based	General community	Indigenous	Interviews; Focus groups	What might living well or feeling good look like? What contributes to *mabu liyan*? Are *liyan* and wellbeing synonymous?	Total 41 Interviews (15) Focus groups (26)

Appendix 2

Table 5: Description of 30 Participatory Wellbeing Areas as defined in Sollis et al. (2022)

Participatory Wellbeing Area	Description	Example keywords
Family Relationships	Relationships with children, parents, siblings, and other family members. Does not include relationship with spouse	Parental love; Happiness in the family; Family harmony; Family relations; Family and kinship
Other Relationships	Relationships with anyone other than the family or spouse, including friends and neighbours	Friendship; Supportive friends; Neighbours; Peers; Human contacts
Emotional Wellbeing	The presence of a positive mood, or absence of a negative mood. This also includes the broad domain of 'Health'	Health; Emotions; Stress; Nervousness; Anxiety; Psychological
Physical Health	Being physically healthy, free of illness or engaging in physical activity	Health; Exercise; Good nutrition; Physical strength; Walking; Illness
Financial Security and Money	Being financially secure and having money for socially-perceived necessities	Finances; Money; Financial welfare; Income; Not poor
Recreation and Leisure	Activities, recreation, and leisure time	Entertainment; Leisure; Activities; Hobbies; Gardening; Relaxation; Recreation
Community and Belongingness	Integration with a community, social cohesion, supports, and a sense of belonging	Unity; Community; Support networks; Social life; Belongingness; Reciprocity
Education and Knowledge	The value of learning, acquiring knowledge and formal education	Education; Learning; School; Academic
Home	The importance of housing and home	Home; Accommodation; A good house

Independence and Autonomy	Freedom, independence, and autonomy	Decision-making; Independent; Freedom; Choice; Agency; Autonomy
Decent Work	Access to and satisfaction with employment	Job; Guaranteed work; Job satisfaction; Availability of jobs
Intimate Relationships	Relationship with spouse or intimate partner	Love; Supportive partner; Spouse; Being in love
Basic Material needs	The basic needs (excluding housing) that are essential for life	Essential needs; Material basics; Clothes; Food
Happiness	Notions related to happiness or joy	Happiness; Pleasure; Joy; Enjoying life
Treated with Dignity and Respect	Feeling respected and having a sense of dignity	Respect; Dignity; Voice; Social status; Good appearance; Reputation
Nature, Environment, and Non-Human Species	The importance of nature, environment, and non-human species	Nature; Pets; Environment; Clean neighbourhood; Looking after Country
Religion and Spirituality	The importance of religion or spirituality	Spirituality; God; Praying; Faith; Religion; Church
Achievement and Personal Growth	Achievement in life and personal growth	Achievement; Progress; Life skills; Growth; Personal development; Competition; Success
Personal Values and Pro-Social Behaviours	Living up to personal values and exhibiting pro-social behaviours	Social justice; Developing values and morals; Good behaviour; Honest; Respectful; Other-regarding
Satisfaction and Contentment	Feelings of satisfaction and contentment expressed through life evaluations or assessments	Feeling settled; Satisfaction; Acceptance; Serenity; Peace of mind; Life satisfaction; Tranquillity
Personal Safety	Being safe and free from violence in all its forms	Safety; Bodily integrity; Safe and secure; Danger avoidance; Safe neighbourhood

Vital Services and Supports	Access to services and supports deemed as essential (except education)	Medical care; Government and social policy; Council services; Care assistance
Life Events and Experiences	Important life events and experiences	Birthday celebrations; Get married and have a family; Travel; Mark events with rituals
Wealth and Assets	Economic prosperity through having access to wealth and assets	Wealth; Land; Assets; Debt; Economic status
Sense of Purpose and Meaning	Sense of purpose or meaning in life, including having self-perceived important roles	Purpose; Giving meaning to the day; Feeling useful; A fulfilling life; Household responsibility
Identity and Self-Concept	Feelings about oneself	Self-esteem; Self-worth; Identity; Positive self-image; Self-concept
Aspirations for Future	Optimism and aspirations for the future	Having goals; Looking forward; Hope; Life aspirations
Civic Engagement	Political and civic engagement	Volunteering; Participating; Politics; Civic life
Mobility	Transportation and the ability to get around	Transport; Getting about; Motor car
Connection to Culture	Being connected to one's culture	Culture; Traditional knowledge stories; Looking after Country; Engage in cultural traditions

Appendix 3

Table 6: Mapping of MWM indicators to Participatory Wellbeing Areas

MWM themes and indicators		**Associated Participatory Wellbeing Area**
Theme	***Indicator***	
Life satisfaction	Overall life satisfaction	Satisfaction and Contentment
Healthy	Access to care and support services	Vital Services and Supports
	Access to health services	Vital Services and Supports
	Life expectancy	Physical Health
	Mental health	Emotional Wellbeing
	Prevalence of chronic conditions	Emotional Wellbeing
		Physical Health
Sustainable	Air quality	Nature, Environment and Non-Human Species
	Biological diversity	Nature, Environment and Non-Human Species
	Climate resilience	Nature, Environment and Non-Human Species
		Personal Safety
	Economic resilience	N/A
	Emissions reduction	Nature, Environment and Non-Human Species
	Fiscal sustainability	N/A
	Protected areas	Nature, Environment and Non-Human Species
	Resource use and waste generation	Nature, Environment and Non-Human Species
Cohesive	Acceptance of diversity	N/A
	Creative and cultural engagement	Community and Belongingness
		Connection to Culture
		Life Events and Experiences
	Experience of discrimination	Dignity and Respect
		Personal Safety
	First Nations languages spoken	Connection to Culture
	Representations in parliament	N/A
	Sense of belonging	Community and Belongingness

MWM themes and indicators		Associated Participatory Wellbeing Area
		Connection to Culture
	Social connections	Emotional Wellbeing
		Family Relationships
		Intimate Relationships
		Other Relationships
	Time for recreation and social interaction	Community and Belongingness
		Physical Health
		Recreation and Leisure
	Trust in key institutions	Vital Services and Supports
	Trust in national government	Civic engagement
		Vital Services and Supports
	Trust in others	Community and Belongingness
	Trust in the Australian public services	Vital Services and Supports
Prosperous	Broadening access to work	Decent work
		Financial Security and Money
	Childhood development	Education and Knowledge
	Digital preparedness	N/A
	Education attainment	Education and Knowledge
	Household income and wealth	Financial Security and Money
		Other Basic Needs
		Wealth and Assets
	Income and wealth inequality	Financial Security and Money
		Wealth and Assets
	Innovation	N/A
	Job opportunities	Decent Work
	Job satisfaction	Decent Work
	Literacy and numeracy skills at school	Education and Knowledge
	National income per capita	Financial Security and Money
	Productivity	N/A
	Secure jobs	Decent Work
	Skills development	Education and Knowledge
	Wages	Decent Work
		Financial Security and Money
		Other Basic Needs

MWM themes and indicators		**Associated Participatory Wellbeing Area**
Secure	Access to justice	Vital Services and Supports
	Childhood experience of abuse	Personal Safety
	Experience of violence	Intimate Relationships
		Personal Safety
	Feelings of safety	Personal Safety
	Homelessness	Home
	Housing serviceability	Financial Security and Money
		Home
	Making ends meet	Financial Security and Money
	National safety	N/A
	Online safety	Dignity and Respect
		Personal Safety

Appendix 4

Table 7: Number of submissions and references to Participatory Wellbeing Areas which were not mapped to MWM indicators

Participatory Wellbeing Area	Search terms	Number of submissions	Number of references
Personal values and Pro-social Behaviours	"pro-social" OR "social justice" OR "belief system" OR "moral" OR "manners" OR "empathy" OR "honest" OR "compassion" OR "respectful"	12	22
Happiness	"happiness" OR "pleasure" OR "enjoyment" OR "joy" OR "happy" OR "laughing"	14	50
Identity and Self-concept	"Identity" OR "self-concept" OR "self-worth" OR "self-esteem" OR "self-image" OR "body image" OR "self-perception" OR "sense of self" OR "self-actualisation" OR "self-acceptance" OR "self-confidence"	14	35
Independence and Autonomy	"Freedom" OR "independence'" OR "autonomy" OR "choice" OR "autonomous" OR "empowerment" OR "agency"	23	44
Achievement and Personal Growth	"achievement" OR "personal growth"	1	1
Religion and Spirituality	"religion" OR "spirituality" OR "blessing" OR "God" OR "spiritual" OR "religious" OR "faith" OR "church" OR "praying"	12	20
Sense of Purpose and Meaning	"sense of purpose" OR "meaning" OR "fulfilling"	11	16
Aspirations for the Future	"future aspirations" OR "aspirations for the future" OR	0	0

	"dreams" OR "future plans" OR "hopes for the future"		
Mobility	"mobility" OR "transport" OR "transportation" OR "car" OR "driving" NOT "intergenerational mobility" NOT "social mobility"	13	29

Note: Results were manually screened to ensure keywords aligned with intended meaning.