Measuring What Matters

toucan

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Brought to you by the makers of the worlds largest mental health survey

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Submission of recommendation to the Australian Government Treasury, January 2023

Australia needs attractive wellbeing measurement solutions that are thoughtfully designed, safe and accessible, and that provide immediate and long-term use incentives for individuals, communities, and the nation. We need tools that enable the Australian government to develop holistic data-driven strategies that help to frame future policy and decision-making to genuinely meet the needs of communities.

Toucan is an Australian born wellbeing and support platform designed to understand how a community is feeling, while they're feeling it, and provide personalised feedback on what they can do to improve their overall wellbeing. Toucan is designed with an aim to track, predict, and support ebbs and flows in wellbeing, and aggregate key demographic data with users' inputs to provide reliable insights into key wellbeing indicators.

Toucan is brought to you through years of expertise in digital tools and behaviour change, by the non-profit spur:org and impact venture studio spur:, the makers of 'How is the World Feeling?', which broke world records as the largest, real-time, mental health data project. The framework and technology behind Toucan have won the Bolter Little Giant Start-up Award for Australia's top-up-and-coming start-ups, the Singularity University Pitch Award, and most recently the Queensland Government's grant for promising, scalable start-ups.

Our technology and framework could provide a live wellbeing check of real people in Australia cross-referenced with deep demographic data – all while maintaining user privacy. This data provides unparalleled insight into the wellbeing needs of Australians with the ability to dive into datasets that reach across demographics, locations, time, and activities. This data allows decision-makers to understand the actual trends and needs of Australians and respond with tailored solutions and policies, increasing service response, and tracking the health outcomes of the nation.

We need measurement tools that can provide _immediate feedback in acute crises, as well as track ongoing mental health matters._

Wellbeing and mental health are growing global concerns, and Australia's Wellbeing Budget must reflect the evolving needs of society. Communities are facing increased environmental and economic challenges that are placing unprecedented pressure on people and the places they live and work.

"The wellbeing and mental health challenges that will impact our community in coming months and years will be difficult to quantify and even harder to manage… Lismore is a community still in shock and will require significant mental health services…" – Lismore Flood Report 2022

Currently, to determine trends in public mental wellbeing, researchers rely on paper forms given to research participants that report on the previous week or month. While highly detailed, this process has the downside of relying on participants recalling their experiences from weeks prior, and has a high cost with low returns, as researchers sometimes pay to get only a few dozen participants.

Toucan not only gathers information in real-time with rich demographic detail, but also provides a method for citizen engagement. By participating in the program, everyday Australians themselves become citizen scientists - and active participants in the mental wellbeing improvement of their community. This, combined with a simple and easy-to-use app, means **Toucan could gather thousands of participants to build a clear, informative, and insightful picture of Australia's mental wellbeing trends - in crisis, in improvement, and otherwise.**

We need measurement tools that *give back and help* *build resilient communities.*

Building community resilience is essential if Australia is going to withstand the challenges ahead, and the government needs to provide infrastructure to make this happen. Community resilience is the sustained ability of communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity. A resilient community is socially connected and has the physical and digital infrastructure that can withstand disaster and foster community recovery. Strong communities promote individual and community wellbeing and cohesiveness to strengthen their communities for every day, as well as extreme, challenges. **Toucan facilitates the development of resilient communities by providing real-time insight that improves understanding and more accurate readings of the state of mind and needs of individuals and collectives, enabling communities and decision-makers to better prepare services & improve health outcomes rather than implementing blanket approaches.**
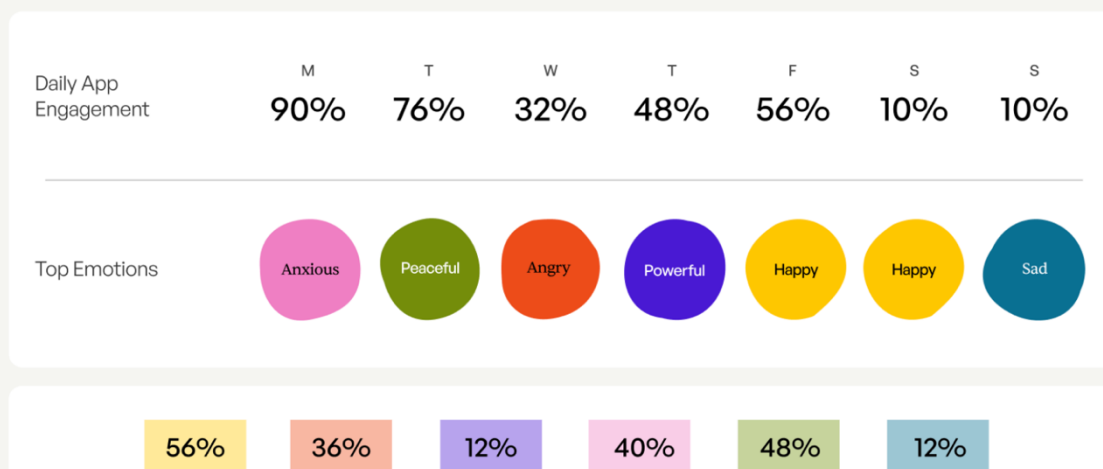
We need tools that _deploy measurement technology at scale._

Deploying wellbeing measurement at scale will require purpose-fit technology and the collaboration of communities, councils, and essential networks.

The framework & technology behind Toucan has been trialled at scale - first with _How is Australia Feeling?_ in 2014 with over 3,000 participants, producing millions of data points. A wide-range of user demographics overlaid with changes in mental wellbeing resulted in a world-first look at how who you are, affects how you feel in real-time. This data allowed researchers and public health campaigners a new lens on how to reach those in need, when they need it, right where they are. The data has been utilised by Australian mental health bodies and universities.

In 2016, we conducted the world's largest wellbeing survey and received more than 56,000 submissions and 11,000 participants, from 104 countries, with individual real-time mood reports cross-referenced to (anonymised) detailed demographic profiles. **Toucan is designed to aggregate data and wellbeing indicators at scale, providing rich and meaningful insights across large regions and communities.**

Toucan is designed to support key partners achieve milestones and objectives, for example:

For Primary Health Networks key priorities:

- Staying Well
- Accessing Services
- Experiencing Quality Primary Care
- Engaging Communities
- Engaging Aboriginal Communities
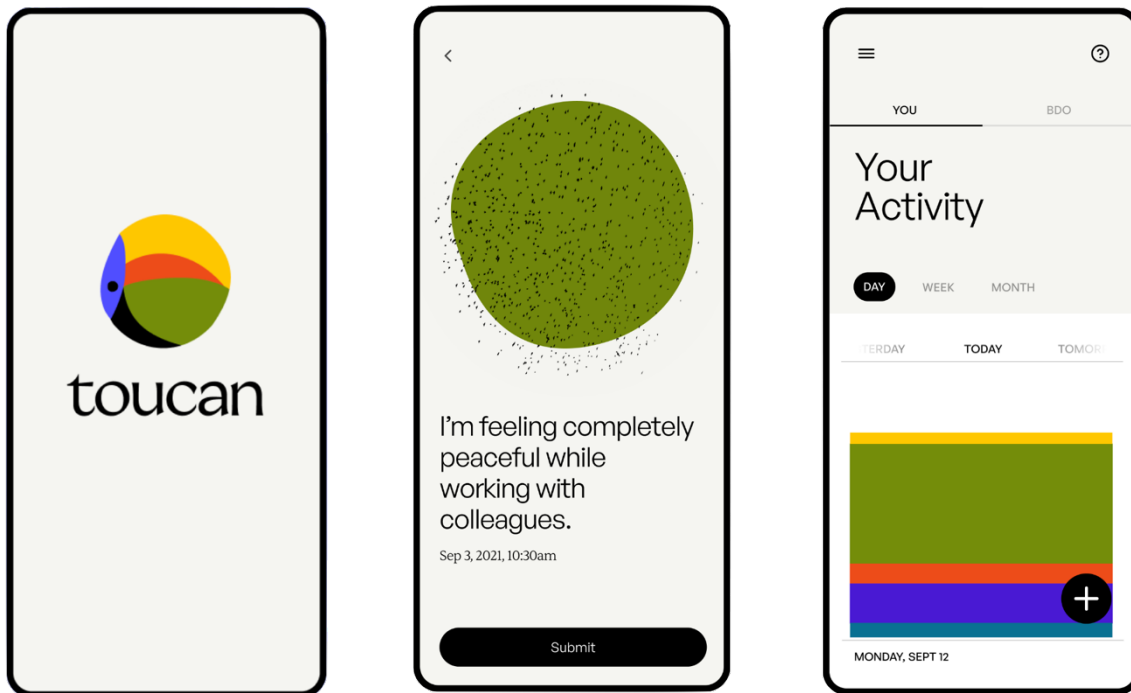
We need _measurement tools that put privacy and security first._

The information and insights captured via Toucan are highly detailed and valuable for civic planning, service access, and improved public health outcomes. However, it's also personal data and - as a trusted receiver of this information - protecting it is a top priority. Our team is experienced in developing secure solutions around sensitivity requirements for private corporations and governments. We have several tools available to ensure the solution is as secure as possible. This includes protected data server storage, authenticated user logins and recovery.

Privacy matters. Not only is privacy a key ethical practice in receiving users' data and insights, but is crucial to active participation: if the users don't feel their data is anonymised and secure, they're less willing to participate. From the beginning, we have prioritised robust privacy controls and policies for all users. This includes a strict process of anonymity – while this solution captures a rich tapestry of

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demographic and wellbeing data, all personal names are removed. Additionally, the user can dictate what level of personal information is captured – e.g. they may wish to not indicate their ethnicity, profession, or other personal information. We also do not, and will never, on-sell this data to marketers or data brokers. At Toucan, our approach ensures users are educated and have the agency to choose how their data is used and what is shared. Each user can tailor the information they feel comfortable sharing.

Through Toucan, Australia will have a voice for their wellbeing. There has never been a more important time for innovative, engaging measurement solutions that facilitate resilient communities, and produce holistic insights into the health and wellbeing of the nation.