

Meeting details

Meeting host name/ organisation: Urban Transformations Research Centre at Western Sydney University

Meeting host contact details [phone or email]: t.longden@westernsydney.edu.au

Meeting host

- ☐ Member of Parliament
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ Non-government organisation
- ☐ Business
- ☒ Academic
- ☐ Community group
- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Other Click or tap here to enter text.

Meeting date: 25/05/2023

Meeting location: Online meeting

Participants attending:

- ☐ Member of a community organisation
- ☐ Businesses
- ☒ Academics
- ☐ Union members
- ☐ Individuals
- ☐ Other Click or tap here to enter text.

Number of participants: 4

What matters to Australians?

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

☒ Yes ☐ No if not, why not Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Which of the following themes are most important to you? (Select three)

☐ **Prosperous:**

A growing, productive and resilient economy

☒ **Inclusive:**

A society that shares opportunities and enables people to fully participate

☒ **Sustainable:**

A natural environment that is valued and sustainably managed in the face of a changing climate for current and future generations

☒ **Cohesive:**

A safe and cohesive society that celebrates culture and encourages participation

☒ **Healthy:**

A society in which people feel well and are in good physical and mental health now and into the future

3. Which themes or descriptions were most frequently discussed? (Select three)

☐ **Prosperous:**

A growing, productive and resilient economy

☒ **Inclusive:**

A society that shares opportunities and enables people to fully participate

☒ **Sustainable:**

A natural environment that is valued and sustainably managed in the face of a changing climate for current and future generations

☐ **Cohesive:**

A safe and cohesive society that celebrates culture and encourages participation

☒ **Healthy:**

A society in which people feel well and are in good physical and mental health now and into the future

4. What do you see as the most important issues for future wellbeing? Are these captured by the emerging policy themes?

At the Urban Transformations Research Centre, part of Western Sydney University, we are focusing on sustainable, equitable and resilient communities and infrastructure. This includes a focus on global issues, national issue and those issue relevant to Western Sydney.

Being based in Western Sydney informed our discussions. So, the discussion we had was not about these themes and whether they capture all of the factors that influence well-being. Rather, we were concerned about whether differences across regions, communities and time-periods could be accurately captured without an understanding of how different people view these underlying factors. And also, how these communities differ in relation to what people value and the resources they have access to. This will differ greatly even within a city, State, or region. Socio-economic factors, employment, education, cultural beliefs, and reliance on industries for work will be associated with different values.

Different baseline levels of these indicators may also matter, especially as tracking improvements (people who are doing better than before) and deteriorations (communities under greater stress) may better reflect relative well-being. This will be information to capture before and after policy or regional change.

Another key discussion that we had was the measurement of factors related to sustainability, and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. We also discussed how this will be measured and compared between regions. Will those regions with extractive industries always be marked down compared to regions with an abundance of natural assets (such as a national park)? Will those communities with greater flood or fire risk be adversely rated, compared to other communities?

Will this indicator capture improvements in sustainability and emissions abatement? Or will regions with greater coal power generation be rated less highly than a region that has greater solar PV?

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

All of the descriptions seem static, which implies that the measurement of these factors will be compared based on level (rather than being based on changes). So, it is unclear how improvements or deteriorations will be captured in these measures. It seems that comparisons across regions or locations are the main focus – similar to other indicators, such as SEIFA. But tracking improvements (people who are doing better than before) and deteriorations (communities under greater stress) will be extremely important for understanding ‘what matters’ and obtaining an indication of well-being. The factors that impact well-being may have different weight over time, especially if there is a threshold effect for greater stress and vulnerability. Different communities may also have different weights for economic, physical, and mental well-being. An improvement or deterioration in only a few factors may impact well-being, and the impact of each factor could be very different based on the baseline level of these values/indicators. Thresholds could be important in understanding poorer/better well-being.

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

This will need to be a re-iterative process that changes with data availability and the dynamics of change in our communities. We recommend that a stakeholder engagement process be implemented to capture these changes. One example is the AEMO process where each Integrated System Plan (ISP) undergoes a review of inputs, assumptions and scenarios, which could be adapted for this process for measuring wellbeing and understanding the critical indicators that will capture change over time and across regions (including within greater western Sydney).

<https://aemo.com.au/en/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2022-integrated-system-plan-isp/current-inputs-assumptions-and-scenarios>

Why is this relevant? Well, the Australian Energy Market Operator develops a bi-annual Integrated System Plan (ISP) to provide advice on the development of the electricity grid. The process involves updating assumptions and has led to notable changes in the base cases used in the ISP, as discussed in this paper: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24724718.2022.2102815>. These iterations and revisions have changed the ISP notably.

It would also need to account for threshold effects, as the impact of each factor could be very different based on the baseline level of these values/indicators. Often studies and assessments focus on continuous relationships between variables, however, it is often the case that when a threshold is passed this becomes more dangerous.

Health is one area where co-morbidities, multi-morbidities, and threshold effects are very important. So while this study is on heat-related mortality, and not directly relevant to your chosen indicators, it does show a type of analysis that may be useful to your assessments of well-being:

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-018-2269-0>.

When using a threshold regression approach with an indicator that is the difference between two running-averages, it wasn't the hottest or most northern cities that stood out as having dangerous heatwaves, but Melbourne and Adelaide. This is because they have heatwave events that are notably different to the prevailing summer temperatures. Just one example of where differences over time (or abrupt change) matters.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.