



Measuring What Matters Second Consultation

Climate and Health Alliance Submission

May 2023

Introduction

The Commonwealth Government is undertaking a second round of consultation on the 2023 Measuring What Matters Statement (the Statement). The Statement will be Australia's first national framework on wellbeing and be used to help assess Australia's progress. Treasurer Jim Chalmers has indicated the Statement will evolve over time, and "[be used to help assess Australia's progress and guide efforts to create more opportunities for more Australians in more parts of our country](#)". This involves moving beyond traditional indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product, to more holistic indicators that reflect the quality of life of all people in Australia.

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) supports the development of the Statement as a mechanism whereby holistic wellbeing can be core to assessing the success of government policy and practice, particularly concerning climate and health.

During the first round of consultation in January 2023, CAHA called for a genuine, collaborative approach to the development of the Statement and its associated indicators. Our recommendations included:

- The adoption of the World Health Organization definition for health and wellbeing
- Ensuring the inclusion of the social and environmental determinants of health

- Building partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop a Statement that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' wellbeing that is culturally relevant and responsive to the Australian context
- Establishing a national taskforce that brings together Commonwealth, state and territory governments for collaboration and localisation
- Conducting an extensive and inclusive consultation process for the development of progress indicators

We are encouraged to see that many of these themes have been put forward in the documents for the second round of consultation. We acknowledge the Commonwealth's efforts to respond to feedback from community members and stakeholders.

For the Statement to be successful, international examples clearly demonstrate that extensive consultation and buy-in from the community is needed. We believe the consultation pack is an important step towards this. Therefore, in addition to providing feedback requested by the Commonwealth, our submission also outlines additional recommendations to progress the Statement in a way that is evidence-based, captures themes of equity, and will assist in community acceptability.

CAHA is pleased to contribute to the second round of consultation on the Measuring What Matters Statement. We look forward to working with the Commonwealth Government and our membership on the ongoing development of the Statement.

About the Climate and Health Alliance

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) is a national charity and the peak body on climate change and health in Australia. CAHA is an alliance of organisations within the health sector working together to raise awareness about the health risks of climate change and the health benefits of emissions reductions. The membership of CAHA includes a broad cross-section of health sector stakeholders with over 100 member organisations (Appendix 1), representing healthcare professionals from a range of disciplines, as well as healthcare service providers, institutions, academics, researchers, and consumers.

Acknowledgement

The Climate and Health Alliance recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and acknowledge that sovereignty of the land we call Australia has never been ceded. We commit to listening to and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about how we can better reflect Indigenous ways of being and knowing in our work.

Recommendations

The following are a series of consolidated recommendations based on discussion and evidence below.

1. **Conduct a national conversation:** It is crucial that the Statement is developed in a way that recognises that wellbeing encompasses the lived experience of individuals and the community, and cannot be reflected only in abstract statistics. As such, **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.**
2. **Embrace First Nations Wisdom:** Australia's First Nations people are the longest continuing culture in the world, dating back over 60,000 years. Sovereignty over the land we call Australia has never been ceded. The rich and diverse Traditional Knowledge held by First Nations peoples can contribute to the development of the Statement so that it supports the strength and resilience of First Nations peoples, as well as Australian society at large. **CAHA recommends the Commonwealth undertake genuine engagement with Australia's First Nations peoples, and work to co-create the Statement with Elders and communities in a way that recognises the rich and enduring Traditional Knowledge of First Nations peoples.**
3. **Develop a holistic approach to wellbeing:** The statement, and the process by which it is developed, needs to reflect a holistic and equitable approach to wellbeing. Wellbeing encompasses physical factors such as the absence of disease and a wide range of spiritual, cultural and social influences on wellbeing. This includes environmental and social fundamentals such as clean air and water, healthy food, access to education, community participation, inclusion and personal agency. **CAHA recommends the Commonwealth adopt the WHO definition of health and wellbeing and undertake engagement cross-sectorally with consumers and experts, to understand how holistic wellbeing can be measured and incorporated into the Statement, before embarking on establishing indicators.**
4. **Embed the wellbeing of current and future generations:** The purpose of the Statement is to reimagine Australia's approach to evaluating the 'success' of government that can achieve greater wellbeing for all. This requires moving beyond traditional modes of evaluation, and progresses Australia towards a long-term, holistic approach to government. **CAHA recommends the Commonwealth review and reevaluate domains and principles proposed within the consultation pack in the context of betterment for current and future generations, and ensure that a long-term perspective is embedded across all domains.**
5. **Reflect the need for a systems approach and systems change:** Key elements of society, including sustainability, the environment and health, are cross-cutting principles that intersect with all sectors and the day to day lives of all people living in Australia. Furthermore, Australian society is based on a foundation of democracy and

social cohesion. For it to be successful, all people living in Australia must be able to contribute to, and benefit from sustainable prosperity - socially, culturally, and economically. To facilitate such ambition, reform and policy solutions must reflect the interconnected nature of our systems, embody cross-cutting principles and ensure these principles influence inevitable trade-offs. **CAHA recommends the Commonwealth review and reevaluate domains and principles proposed within the consultation pack in the context of a long-term sustainable systems approach.**

6. **Redefine prosperity for wellbeing:** Economic development is a core principle of sustainable development. Alongside this, we need to recognise that the consumptagenic approach to development has had serious implications for climate and health outcomes, and human wellbeing generally. **CAHA recommends that wherever 'prosperity' is highlighted with policy domains, principles and resulting indicators, it is within the context of broader, holistic prosperity and adhering to limitations that preserve planetary boundaries and sustainable development.**

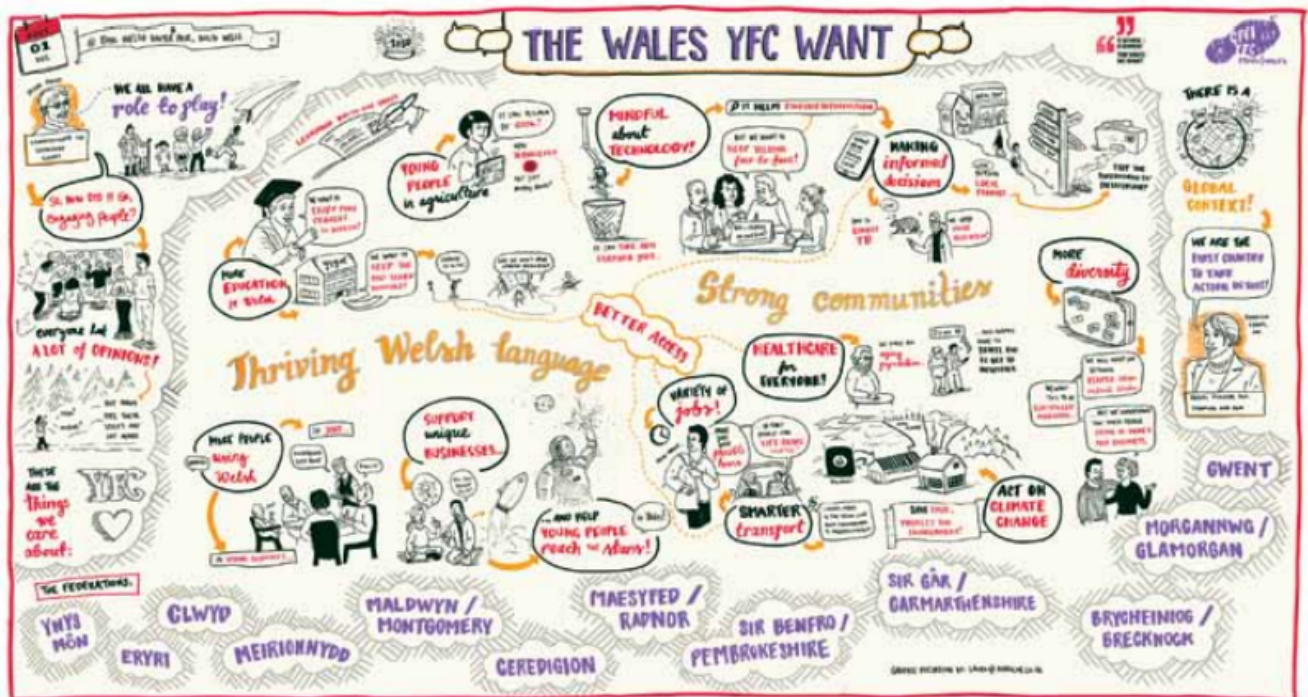


Figure One: Y Gymru a Garam - The Wales we want, 2013

Capturing progress on climate, health and equity

The ongoing impacts of the climate and health crisis in Australia, such as catastrophic bushfires, floods, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic, in the context of the cost of living crisis, remind us the world is rapidly changing. This presents challenges and consequences for human and planetary health, and the wellbeing of current and future generations.

The Statement must be established with consideration of the lived reality of all people living in Australia as well as how changes will impact the next generations. As per the consultation document, CAHA is pleased “[...there is broad support for measuring progress against a wider set of metrics including across health, social and environmental outcomes, in addition to economic measures](#)”. The Statement must also be developed in such a way that reflects our international commitments, including to [the Paris Agreement](#) and [the Sustainable Development Agenda](#).

CAHA looks forward to the potential cultural change the Statement will bring to the business of government in Australia, particularly in consideration of fostering better climate and health outcomes, and the consideration of long term wellbeing across all decisions. CAHA has adapted proposed questions from the Commonwealth Treasury that are of most relevance to our broad climate and health agenda. We look forward to future opportunities for contribution, and working in partnership with the Commonwealth.

Question One: Is your organisation supportive of the implementation of the Measuring What Matters Framework in Australia?

Yes, the Climate and Health Alliance supports the implementation of the Measuring What Matters Framework in Australia.

Several countries have already developed ways to measure progress and wellbeing, including [Wales](#), [New Zealand](#) and [Canada](#). While Australia does not currently have a national framework or central set of indicators to complement the existing reporting and track overall progress, federal, state, and territory governments do already publish a wide range of wellbeing indicators that could be used as a strong basis through which the Statement could be developed. The Australian Capital Territory has developed the [ACT Wellbeing Framework](#), consisting of twelve key areas that impact on the quality of life of Canberrans. The government of Victoria has established the [Victorian public health and wellbeing outcomes framework](#), while the [City of Adelaide](#) is monitoring a set of wellbeing indicators.

Beyond governments, there is also a rich pool of Australian expertise to draw from in this area, including the [Australian National Development Index](#), [New Economy Network of Australia](#), [The George Institute for Global Health](#), [VicHealth](#), and the [Centre for Policy Development](#).

These examples show that, rather than having to develop a framework for measuring wellbeing and progress from scratch, Australia can build on the many examples that already exist, avoid mistakes and emulate successes for the betterment of current, and future, generations. Existing practices also indicate that measurement alone does not bring about change, but needs to be paired with high-level goal-setting and explicit plans for how government agencies can contribute to achieving those goals. This includes a shift in the mindset of how the business of government works, and how it benefits all people living in Australia, and generations to come.

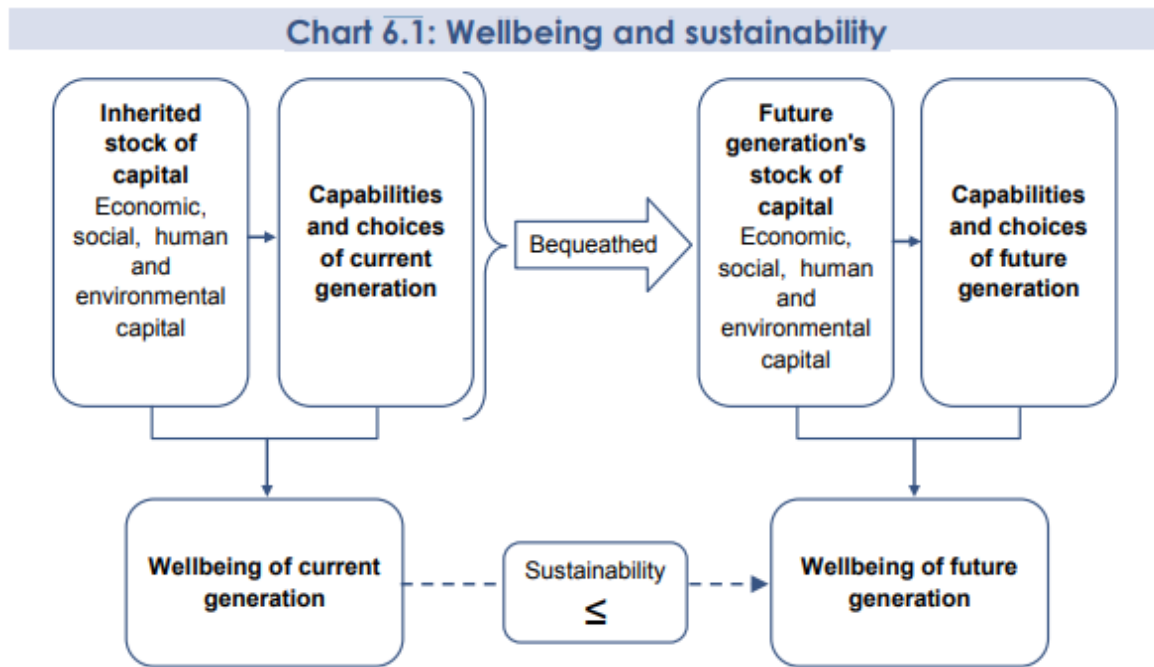


Figure Two: Chart 6.1: Wellbeing and Sustainability, Commonwealth Treasury, Intergenerational Report 2010

In addition to drawing from existing work, the Climate and Health Alliance recommends the Commonwealth Government consider establishing a clearer definition of wellbeing that aligns with national and international priorities and obligations. The World Health Organization definition of wellbeing, [“health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”](#), captures the holistic sense of wellbeing the Statement aspires to.

At its most basic level, wellbeing requires safety, food, health care, housing, connection to community and opportunity to contribute. Any wellbeing framework needs to ensure that these basic “determinants of good health” are captured and prioritised, and that the drivers of the problems that undermine these essentials are tackled.

Importantly, concepts and indicators of wellbeing must be culturally relevant and responsive to the Australian context. For example, cultural indicators specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are central to their wellbeing, such as:

- Caring for and connection to Country
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing

- Language, family, kinship, community, lore, relationality and self-determination

For Australian wellbeing indicators to be successful, they must be co-created with the communities and stakeholders who hold the insights needed to design an economy that aligns with their values and objectives. This must include a leadership role for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and communities, and other First Nations leaders.

Question Two: How do you think the implementation of a Measuring What Matters Framework in Australia will help support action on climate and health in Australia?

The Climate and Health Alliance believe the Statement in Australia is an important opportunity to improve climate and health outcomes.

Climate change is affecting the health of people living in Australia directly, with increased exposure to extreme weather, and indirectly, by impacting the physical, natural, and social systems on which wellbeing depends. The Australian population has seen a rise in injuries, illness, displacement, and deaths caused by extreme weather events, and a national wellbeing framework would need to monitor this large and growing threat to the health and wellbeing of Australians. Furthermore, incremental climatic changes such as increases in temperature have a significant impact on excess ambulance demand, hospital admissions and mortality in [several sites across Australia](#). Bushfires [affect population health](#) through direct exposure to fire, exposure to bushfire smoke, and the mental trauma associated with proximity to a fire front and loss of home or business and associated forced relocation. As a result, it is crucial that local, state, territory and commonwealth governments act urgently and decisively to mitigate and adapt to the realities of climate change and its impacts on human health and wellbeing.

Capturing the health impact of extreme climate-related events in Australia is a crucial step in developing a Statement that can have real world impact. This includes relevant governments and their agencies, and academic institutions, collaborating to establish a central repository of climate and health data. This should include collection and use of disaggregated data where possible, and should be broken down into detailed sub-categories, according to gender, whether people identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, disability status, region (urban, regional, remote), income status, level of education, and others. Existing sources of data should also be leveraged, including the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's work on [health losses attributable to the environment](#) and the [MJA-Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change](#).

At the federal level, many environmental and social measures of progress are already being monitored by various institutions and agencies, and could easily be compiled into a central set of indicators to complement the existing reporting and track overall progress. The [OECD Framework for Measuring Wellbeing and Progress](#) already includes the environment as one of 11 'dimensions', while the [current Australian OECD wellbeing indicators](#) include five environmental indicators, including: exposure to outdoor air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, material footprint, Red List index of threatened species, and access to green space. Nonetheless, there is an urgent need to significantly expand environmental and social

indicators, including climate change indicators and how they pertain to people's health and wellbeing within the proposed Statement.

Furthermore, an expanded range of wellbeing indicators for climate change could help guide the implementation of the [National Health and Climate Strategy](#). The National Strategy aims to provide a guiding framework for an all-of-government response to climate-health issues (including both risks and opportunities). The goals of the National Strategy would ideally be closely aligned with a set of wellbeing indicators for climate change. The strategy is being developed in 2023 and is being stewarded by the newly established Health Sustainability and Climate Unit in the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Question Three: Do the five emerging policy themes - Prosperous, Inclusive, Sustainable, Cohesive and Healthy - resonate with you / your organisation?

CAHA broadly supports the five emergency policy themes as important thematic areas in the establishment of the Statement. In saying this, we do so with the understanding that feedback from the community in a national conversation would be incorporated over time.

We would like to highlight the importance of ensuring domains are mutually reinforcing and are not seen as existing in siloes aligned with existing institutional boundaries. As highlighted by Sophie Howe, former Welsh Future Generations Commissioner, the success of a wellbeing approach relies upon an integrated approach. Such an approach reduces the risk that policy measures could result in a less transformative impact than is potentially achievable.

Key elements of society, including sustainability, the environment and health, are cross-cutting principles that intersect with all sectors and the day to day lives of all people living in Australia. Furthermore, Australian society is based on a foundation of democracy and social cohesion. For it to be successful, all people living in Australia must be able to contribute to and benefit from sustainable prosperity - socially, culturally, and economically. To facilitate such ambition, reform and policy solutions must reflect the interconnected nature of our systems, embody cross-cutting principles and ensure these principles influence the inevitable trade-offs. [Doughnut economics](#) by Kate Raworth sets out a useful way to think about ecological and social fundamentals that form the frame for policy discussions.

Tradeoffs will occur between policy domains. These decisions should be managed carefully to ensure they are considered within an overall framing of sustainable wellbeing. This will support community expectations around the effect of the Statement.

We have a number of specific recommendations for each of the domains:

- **Prosperous**
 - This policy domain reflects the clear connection between economic growth and sustainable development. However the Climate and Health Alliance is cautious that explicit promotion of 'growth' may tie this domain into traditional conceptions of development. These have fostered material overconsumption, with associated adverse impacts on human health and wellbeing, and ecological integrity.

- Wellbeing may be better supported by an idea - for example - of shared prosperity that can be sustained for present and future generations within local, regional and global ecological boundaries. The imperative of the Statement is to lead Australia towards a more sustainable future for the benefit of current and future generations. An explicit focus on growth may result in traditional indicators such as GDP taking precedence over other wellbeing indicators. We recommend establishing the context of this domain in a [similar manner to Wales](#), within a planetary boundaries framework, which is in accordance with sustainability and climate change.
 - As a minimum, the definition of this policy domain should seek to include the target of net zero by 2050 as a guidepost for its resulting actions, for example, “an economy that builds prosperity while achieving net zero no later than 2050”.
 - This policy domain could also more explicitly include the broader wellbeing construct within how ‘wealth’ is defined. For example, this could include prosperity within the context of prevention of disease burden, increases in literacy and the implementation of the Voice to Parliament. Our common wealth also includes basic determinants of health such as clean water and air. Health at an individual and community level is a fundamental foundation for a fuller conception of wealth.
 - This policy domain should also be underpinned by equity.
- **Inclusive**
 - This policy domain should
 - be grounded the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the indigenous people of these lands, and embody as a minimum the Government’s commitment to implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full
 - affirm that inclusion is of all people in Australia, regardless of economic or social status, country of origin, religion etc
 - include access to liveable communities, incorporating sustainability, liveability, access to green spaces, healthy transport choices and essential services including health care and education.
 - **Sustainable**
 - This policy domain should affirm that sustainable transition includes a just transition, where individual and community rights and dignity are maintained.
 - This policy domain should affirm the need to adhere to planetary, local and regional ecological boundaries.
 - This policy domain should be reflected amongst all policy domains.

- **Healthy**

- This policy domain should
 - incorporate the WHO definition of health explicitly
 - seek to include the social and environmental determinants in its description, as it has in the mechanisms through which the indicators could be developed. As it stands, the description focuses on biological health, rather than overall wellbeing.
 - seek to include and cross reference the aims of the sustainable domain, whereby preservation of the natural world and resilience to climate change underpin health outcomes.



Figure Three: Wellbeing Policy Design Guide, Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2021

Question Five: Are there additional policy themes or indicators not already proposed by the government that can support better climate and health outcomes?

In the first consultation on the Measuring What Matters Framework, the Climate and Health Alliance made a number of recommendations for indicators that could support better climate and health outcomes, in addition to the proposed OECD indicators. We summarise those here again for ease of reference:

- **Equity:** Wellbeing indicators can play an important role in measuring progress towards “what matters” for a society. Care needs to be taken to ensure that processes help empower communities and foster a strengths based approach to reducing inequity. Consultations for the development of the wellbeing indicators need to happen across a diverse range of groups, including youth, the elderly,

members of the LGBTQI+ community, First Nations people, those from low socio-economic backgrounds and members of diverse communities.

- First Nations Wellbeing:** Australia's First Nations people are the longest continuing culture in the world, dating back more than 60,000 years. Any Australian wellbeing framework needs to include goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' wellbeing based on the rich legacy and maintenance of Traditional Knowledge. The Statement needs to be co-created with the communities and stakeholders who hold the insights needed to design an economy that aligns with their values and objectives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and communities, and other First Nations leaders. Importantly, the ongoing and intergenerational impact and trauma of colonisation continues to adversely affect First Nations people's connection to Country and manifests in unacceptable rates of imprisonment, suicide and unemployment. These and other aspects relevant to Australia's unique context need to be adequately reflected in the Statement.



Mayi Kuwayu artwork.

The Mayi Kuwayu artwork shows the importance of culture as central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing. It was created by Krystal Hurst, a Worimi Artist and Creative Director of Gillawarra Arts, originating from Taree on NSW's mid north coast.

The colours red, yellow, black, green, blue and white are drawn from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, and their communities. The blue represents water and its healing powers to nourish the mind, body, spirit and our lands, symbolic of the interrelationship our people have with Country.

Red, white and yellow ochre are used to illustrate the importance of ceremony, dance, stories and spirituality within our diverse cultures, and the strong connection with the land.

The centre represents the sun radiating warmth, positivity and connectedness. The pathways and meeting places speak of the long journey that the Mayi Kuwayu Study and our mob will embark on together to yarn, make decisions and create a meaningful and positive future.

Figure Four: Mayi Kuwayu Artwork, *The National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing*, 2023

- Uptake of healthy, affordable and sustainable diets:** A healthy diet is vital for optimal growth, development and wellbeing throughout life, and contributes to physical vitality, mental health and social wellbeing, as well as sustainability outcomes. An indicator that captures the healthiness, affordability, and sustainability of diets in Australia is therefore needed.
- Access to public transport and safe opportunities for active mobility:** Active travel, and physical activity, offers a large range of benefits. Both walking and cycling have major health benefits, such as reducing the risk of many chronic health conditions and improving mental health and wellbeing. Active travel also helps to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and energy consumption. Economic benefits of physical activity and active travel include reduced costs associated with transport, road infrastructure and traffic congestion. Community benefits include increased social connection, neighbourhood trust and safety, and reduced crime. Accessible, affordable, and clean public transportation can make mobility more inclusive, while being more environmentally friendly. Public transport is also an important complement to active travel. Effective public transport can improve access to critical services like education, healthcare, decent jobs, and nutritious food, and other goods and services that contribute to wellbeing. An indicator that captures the 'percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport' would be an important measure of progress that can help inform transport policies.

- **Resilience of health services:** In Australia, large-scale catastrophic climate-driven events - such as bushfires and floods - increasingly exceed the capacity of health services and emergency response, leaving many people and communities to cope as best they can, and at exacerbated risk of adverse health impacts. It is clear that health services in Australia need additional investment in climate change adaptation, planning and resilience, to ensure that lives and livelihoods are protected. Without such measures in place, the majority of wellbeing indicators will be negatively affected. An indicator that captures health service resilience could make use of MJA-Lancet Countdown indicators on the subject.

For more information, please contact:

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Appendix 1: Climate and Health Alliance Members

CAHA membership as of May 2023.

