

2019

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**Government Response to the Select Committee on
Estimates 2019-20 Report Recommendations 21 and 23 -
Development of Wellbeing Indicators for the ACT**

**Presented by
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Chief Minister
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INTRODUCTION

The following is the ACT Government's response to recommendations given by the Select Committee on Estimates 2019-20 regarding the development of a Framework of Wellbeing Indicators for ACT. The response provides details on: the methodology used in designing the Framework; options that are being considered as to how the ACT's Wellbeing Indicators will be embedded in the 2020-21 Budget; the cost to taxpayers in developing the Framework; and how the Indicators will interact with the government's existing accountability indicators.

At this time, the ACT's Wellbeing Framework remains under development in a body of work led by the Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate. The release of the Framework is scheduled to occur around Canberra Day 2020.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 21

The Committee recommends that, by the last sitting day of 2019, the ACT Government, through the Chief Minister, report to the Legislative Assembly on the methodology being used to develop the Wellbeing Index, progress on applying the methodology to determine a Wellbeing Index for the 2020-21 ACT Budget, and the cost to ACT taxpayers to develop the methodology and determine the Index.

Government response

Methodology used to develop the Framework

Developing the Wellbeing Indicators Framework has been a process of collaboration between the Wellbeing Indicators Project Team in the Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate and an intra-government working group comprising senior members from all other Directorates: ACT Health; Education; Community Services; Justice and Community Safety; Economic Development; Transport and City Services; Treasury; Access Canberra; and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development.

Most importantly, the Framework is also being developed through an extensive process of community consultation. This began formally in June 2019 with a series of community roundtables that featured participation from over one hundred community organisations, representing the issues and interests of the Canberra community.

A number of peak advisory and community bodies in the ACT are also involved in informing the design of the framework. These include the Joint Ministerial Advisory Council, the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Council, the Youth Advisory Council, the Multicultural Advisory Council, the Mental Health Advisory Council, the ACT Disability Reference Group, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

Wider public consultation is taking place through the ACT Government's YourSay website and YourSay Community Panel from June to December 2019. This has been supported by online surveys, as well as surveys taken at Floriade, and surveys facilitated by local community organisations to ensure that hard-to-reach Canberrans have been heard.

The ACT Government has been working closely with academics from the University of Canberra and Australian National University who have helped to guide the development of the ACT Wellbeing Indicators using their expertise and knowledge of current international examples and best practice in this space.

These conversations, along with research conducted by the Wellbeing Indicators project team have informed the design of the Framework to date.

This has been an open and transparent process consistent with the Government's intention for this framework to be developed by and for the Canberra community.

Wellbeing in the 2020-21 Budget

The Wellbeing Indicators will become part of the annual reporting framework associated with the Budget to inform the assessment of new policy proposals or budgetary initiatives relating to one or more of the wellbeing outcomes.

Work on how to embed the Wellbeing Framework in the 2020-21 Budget is underway. There is a firm commitment that the Framework will help shape Budget priorities and investments by Government.

It is anticipated the Government will use the Framework to monitor and understand how the wellbeing of the community is tracking. To better understand wellbeing across the Canberra community, the indicators will be broken down by various sub-population groups to examine the consistency of wellbeing outcomes across the community. This will then drive focus on areas where the wellbeing outcomes for some Canberrans may not be as strong as the broader population, and invite consideration of potential whole-of-government approaches to improve opportunities for those that need it most.

Funding allocated to the Wellbeing Indicators Project

The funding allocated for the Wellbeing Indicators Project is as follows:

- 2018-19 - \$56,000
- 2019-20 - \$360,000
- 2020-2021 - \$525,000

Total funding allocation: \$941,000 over three years.

Given the whole-of-Government focus and work underway on wellbeing indicators, a proportion of funding from the former Healthy and Active Living (HAL) project (under the portfolio responsibility of the former Health and Wellbeing Minister) was transferred to the Chief Minister's portfolio in March 2019. The remaining funding from the HAL project, \$1.818 Million, was provided back to the Health Directorate for various preventative health initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advise the Legislative Assembly of how the wellbeing indicators will interact with the current accountability indicators.

Government response

Budget accountability indicators provide performance measures for directorates against targets determined by Government. Whilst the broader matter is still being considered as part of the work around embedding the framework in the Budget process, the Wellbeing Indicators will measure qualitative and quantitative data and wellbeing trends to examine how the Government's investments are affecting the wellbeing of Canberrans, and used to show where Government investment can be better targeted to improve wellbeing.