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Treasury
Langton Cres
Ngunnawal Country
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Email: MeasuringWhatMatters@Treasury.gov.au

RE: Submission to 'Measuring what matters'

To the Honourable Dr Jim Chalmers,

Thank you for inviting submissions to Measuring What Matters, which represents a critical opportunity to address the wellbeing of Australians. We commend Treasury on advancing the Wellbeing Budget and undertaking this consultative process to develop indicators to track progress.

We are writing on behalf of the Menzies Centre for Health Governance at the Australian National University (ANU). The Menzies Centre for Health Governance focuses on complex systems and governance in relationship to health and health equity. This submission describes a relevant research project we are undertaking, funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC 2022 – 2025) and presents recommendations regarding the future direction of the Treasury's Wellbeing Framework.

We encourage Treasury to position Australia as a leader in Wellbeing Frameworks by expanding the ambition and objectives of the work to include indicators of power and privilege in Australian society, a significant structural determinant of health, which we outline below.

Commission on the Social Determinants of Health

In 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) called for the need to address the inequitable distribution of money, resources, and power (structural determinants of health) alongside improving daily living conditions. Despite the 15 years since the release of the report and other international agendas to reduce inequality, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, adverse health and social inequities persist within Australia. Meaningfully addressing these inequities will require significant transformation of the way power and privilege are distributed in Australian society.

Our research project and its relevance to Measuring What Matters

We are members of a research team on an NHMRC-funded project, Evaluating Systems Change for Health Equity: A Case Study of Australia's COVID-19 Policy Response. Commencing in July 2022, the project advances the work of the commission by *seeking to tackle the inequitable*

distribution of power, money, and resources through public policy by developing tools to measure and understand the problem and assess the impact of policy action.

Our project is in the process of:

- Identifying a set of monitoring indicators of the distribution of money, resources and power and producing a 'monitoring toolkit' (i.e., indicators, existing datasets, ideal datasets);
- Producing an 'evaluation toolkit' (e.g., indicators, data collection and analysis techniques) to evaluate the exercise of power across the public policy process and pathways for the distribution of money, resources, and power; and
- Testing the evaluation toolkit using a series of policies from select Australian policy subsystems (e.g., finance, infrastructure, labour).

We would very much like to engage with Treasury's progress in their Wellbeing Framework, and welcome future opportunities for contributing and liaising with those working on the development of the wellbeing indicators.

Menzies Centre for Health Governance recommendations

1. Shift attention to the structural determinants of health (power, privilege) for systemic change, de-emphasising focus on the daily living conditions, and moving away from individualised and biomedical conceptions of wellbeing.
2. Focus on equity of wellbeing, not only wellbeing.
3. Align the Wellbeing Framework and indicators of wellbeing with Australia's existing commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sincerely,



Dr Ashley Schram, Deputy Director, Menzies Centre for Health Governance



Dr Amy Carrad, Coordinator, Menzies Centre for Health Governance



Prof Sharon Friel, Director, Menzies Centre for Health Governance



Dr Belinda Townsend, Deputy Director, Menzies Centre for Health Governance