



28 January 2023

Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP  
Treasurer of Australia  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: [MeasuringWhatMatters@Treasury.gov.au](mailto:MeasuringWhatMatters@Treasury.gov.au)

Dear Treasurer

## **Measuring What Matters- recommendations from the National School Chaplaincy Association**

The National School Chaplaincy Association (NSCA) applauds the Department of Treasury's commitment to developing an integrated approach to measure wellbeing and progress that includes deeper considerations of social and environmental factors in its conceptualisation of community wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> We support this endeavour and want to encourage the Department of Treasury in its efforts to realise this national approach.

The NSCA's own wellbeing promotion work with children, young people and families is based on a spiritual-ecological understanding of wellbeing that focuses on promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors in the personal, relational, local community and broader societal domains. We take a developmentally appropriate, person-centred, holistic approach to our wellbeing promotion work and operate predominantly in the promotion, prevention and early intervention (PPEI) space with children, young people and their families.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, we have been exploring the links between our approach and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth's (ARACY) Nest Framework. In 2017 the NSCA commissioned a research team from the University of Western Australia's School of Population and Global Health to identify the wellbeing outcomes of school chaplaincy and map them to a program logic process based on the 6 wellbeing principles of the Nest Framework.<sup>3</sup>

Our simple proposition is that the Department of Treasury utilises the Nest Framework as the basis of its wellbeing and progress measurement framework, particularly as it considers the wellbeing and progress of children, young people and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Treasury, Statement 4: Measuring What Matters. 2022, p123.

<sup>2</sup> <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/what-chaplains-do/>

<sup>3</sup> Harries, D, Cant, R & Butorac, D. An Outcome Evaluation of School Chaplaincy, University of Western Australia, Perth. 2022, p4. At <https://schoolchaplaincy.org.au/nsca-chaplaincy-outcomes-evaluation-report/>

The National School Chaplaincy Association comprises YouthCARE (WA), SMG (SA), Korus Connect (VIC), Generate Services (NSW) and SU Australia.



## **The Nest Framework**

The Nest Framework is ARACY's framework for the wellbeing of children and young people aged 0 to 24 years. Its development began in 2010, when experts from all over Australia were invited to a consultation at Parliament House. Over the next 2 years, over 4000 children, families and professionals were consulted and the framework was officially launched in 2012. Since that time, Nest has been continually reviewed, updated and strengthened.<sup>4</sup>

The Nest Framework conceptualises wellbeing as 6 interconnected domains. For a child or young person to experience optimal wellbeing, they need to be sufficiently resourced and supported in all 6 domains. The 6 domains of the Nest Framework are:

1. Valued, loved and safe – children and young people have trusting relationships with family and friends
2. Material basics – children and young people live in suitable housing with appropriate clothing, nutritious food, clean water and clean air
3. Healthy – children and young people have their physical, mental and emotional health needs met
4. Learning – children and young people learn through a variety of experiences within the classroom, the home, and the community in which they live
5. Participating – children and young people having a voice, are listened to and have a say in decisions that impact them
6. Positive sense of identity and culture – children feel safe and supported to express their identity and have a sense of belonging.

## **The Strengths of the Nest Framework**

Nest's broad strengths are that it is heavily evidence-based, has prioritised the voices of children and young people in its development, and is reflective of Australia's diverse populations.<sup>5</sup>

When considering its more specific advantages as a framework to inform a national approach to measuring wellbeing and progress, the strengths of the Nest Framework are:

1. Nest is already proven as a conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating child and youth wellbeing outcomes in Australia. For example, every 5 years ARACY produces a 'Report Card' on the wellbeing of Young Australians based on the latest data available from a variety of credible sources (2008, 2013, 2018), with the data in these report cards organised around the 6 wellbeing domains of Nest's framework.<sup>6</sup> Another example is UNICEF Australia and ARACY's 'The Wellbeing of Australia's Children' report (2021), where UNICEF's goals for child wellbeing were re-organised around the 6 domains of the Nest Framework.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ARACY, What is in the Nest? 2021, p1,9.

<sup>5</sup> ARACY, What is in the Nest? 2021, p9.

<sup>6</sup> ARACY, Report Card 2018: The Wellbeing of Young Australians, 2018, p3.

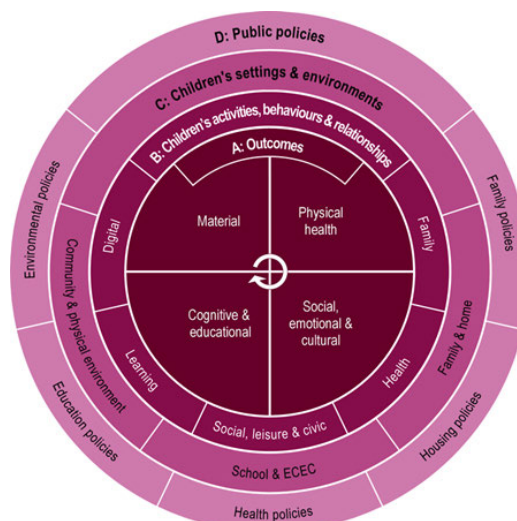
<sup>7</sup> Noble, K, Rehill, P, Sollis, K, Dakin, P & Harris, D. The Wellbeing of Australia's Children, 2021, p6.

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2. Nest draws upon the expertise of credible child and youth wellbeing organisations in Australia (eg – UNICEF, The Australian Child Wellbeing Project, the Centre for Social and Early Emotional Development etc) and upon credible Australian child and youth wellbeing data sources (eg – Mission Australia, the Australian Council for Education Research, the Australian Council of Social Services, the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare etc) to develop the framework and produce its regular progress reports. It has also been taken up by various government and community organisations for use as the foundation for their child and youth wellbeing strategies (eg – Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, ei Pulse for Schools, Logan Together, Moreland City Council etc).<sup>8</sup>
3. Nest’s ‘Common Approach’ links directly to the OECD’s ‘Aspirational Conceptual Framework for Child Wellbeing Development’ (see diagram below). ARACY’s report cards directly reference the OECD wellbeing indicators when presenting their data, organising them according to the 6 domains of the Nest Framework. These strong links between the Nest framework and the OECD framework ensure that Australian wellbeing assessments are able to be easily compared to those of other OECD nations.



ARACY's Common Approach (Nest)<sup>9</sup>



OECD Aspirational Conceptual Framework Wellbeing Development<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ARACY, 'The Nest in Action: Around Australia', <https://www.aracy.org.au/the-nest-in-action/around-australia>, Accessed 27/01/23.

<sup>9</sup> ARACY, The Common Approach Brochure, 2022. p1.

<sup>10</sup> OECD, 'An Aspirational Framework for Child Well-being Development', <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/4dffa600-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/4dffa600-en>, Accessed 27/01/23.

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4. Nest's conceptual approach to wellbeing inevitably leads to clearly articulated outcomes and priorities for action. Clear outcomes and indicators enable monitoring and measurement towards progress, while acknowledgement of the inter-related nature of these outcomes leads to the identification of cross-domain priorities for child and youth wellbeing promotion action.<sup>11</sup>

These demonstrated strengths of the Nest Framework recommend it as a vital influence on the developing model the Department of Treasury is working towards. Apart from being a robust, proven framework for understanding and improving wellbeing outcomes, it clearly relies on indicators that are relevant, complete, measurable, comparable, reliable and understandable.

I hope the information in this letter helps as you develop an integrated approach to measure wellbeing and progress that includes deeper considerations of social and environmental factors to secure ongoing and outstanding wellbeing outcomes for students across Australia.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if we can assist in any way.

Yours sincerely

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<sup>11</sup> ARACY, The Nest Action Agenda, 2014. pp6-7.

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