



# Australian Community Futures Planning

## Frequently Asked Questions about National Integrated Planning & Reporting

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### What's in this fact sheet?

#### Contents

What is Integrated Planning & Reporting? .....	2
What is National Integrated Planning & Reporting – National IP&R? .....	2
What does the IP&R process involve? .....	3
What is the benefit of National IP&R? .....	3
What are the disadvantages of National IP&R? .....	5
How does IP&R work in practice? .....	5
How difficult is IP&R? .....	6
How does National IP&R work within Australia's democracy? .....	6
How are the elements of National IP&R organised? .....	7
What is ACFP's role in relation to National IP&R? .....	8
Can National IP&R help us build a plan for a whole nation? .....	9
Can National IP&R build a plan for our entire economy? .....	10
Can National IP&R help us mitigate climate change? .....	11
Want to know more about National IP&R? .....	12

# Frequently Asked Questions about National Integrated Planning & Reporting

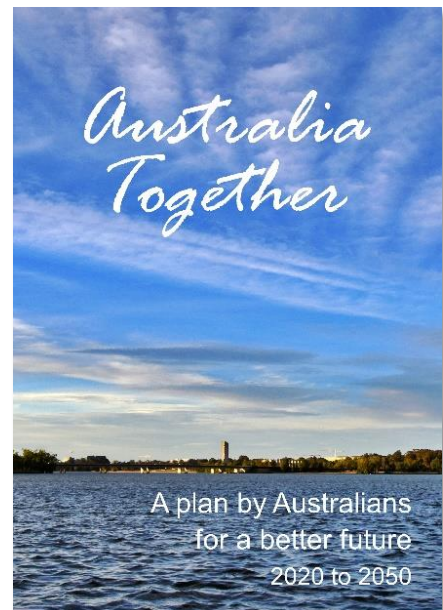
## What is Integrated Planning & Reporting?

- **Integrated Planning & Reporting** or **IP&R** is a form of community engagement for planning a better society, environment, economy and governance system within a democracy over a long term – at least ten years.
- It is a process of:
  - building a community-owned plan for a better future that is independent of politics, and
  - reporting back to the community on progress in making the plan a reality.

Integrated Planning & Reporting is a democratic long term planning process driven by the community – from the bottom up.  
It is planning *for* the people *by* the people.

## What is National Integrated Planning & Reporting – National IP&R?

- National Integrated Planning & Reporting or National IP&R is a new form of IP&R adapted to helping Australians organise themselves to plan for their nation's future.
- Integrated Planning and Reporting has been active as a democratic engagement process in Australia for more than a decade, ever since legislation was passed in some states to introduce the process for local councils, compelling them to involve their communities in planning for their preferred future.
- However, prior to 2020, IP&R had never been used to prepare a plan for an entire nation. That changed with the establishment of **Australian Community Futures Planning – ACFP** – and the introduction of **Australia Together**, Australia's first national community futures plan being built *by* the community *for* the community.



*Australia Together,*  
our first integrated national plan, is being built  
*by* Australians *for* Australians using  
**National Integrated Planning & Reporting.**

For more information on **Australia Together** see **Frequently Asked Questions about Australia Together** or read the latest draft of **Australia Together** at [austcfp.com.au](http://austcfp.com.au)

## National IP&R

creates an organised way for Australians to communicate with each other and with political leaders about what we really want for our future.  
It opens up a space where communities can converse and select their preferred pathways to that future and the paths they want to avoid.

## What does the IP&R process involve?

There are eight main elements to IP&R:

1. open, genuine **community engagement**;
2. an overarching **Vision** of what we want Australia to be by 2050;
3. an agreement on what success should look like in relation to each element of the Vision – what **Directions** we are prepared to take *en route* to the Vision, and what directions we are not prepared to take;
4. development of **Targets, Indicators** and **Strategies** which are most likely to lead to the identified “successes” in the Vision;
5. community opinion surveys to check support for the Plan and seek suggestions;
6. a process for developing a funding plan;
7. a tracking system, based on a **QBL Wellbeing Index**, to tell us if the Strategies (if implemented) are working according to the original elements of the Vision and whether changes to Strategies might be required; and
8. an open transparent reporting and review system – an **End of Term Report** which:
  - a. provides results on progress about whether we have moved closer to the Vision or further away from it during a federal government’s term of office,
  - b. isolates areas of failure and suggests areas where policy adjustment may help get the plan back on track, and
  - c. provides an opportunity to consider changes to the plan itself if the community thinks that is advisable.

### Eight elements of IP&R

#### Community Engagement

A long term **Vision**

**Directions** we are prepared to take and wish to avoid

#### Targets, Indicators & Strategies

Community opinion surveys & suggestions

A funding plan

An organised system for tracking specific progress on the plan – a **QBL Wellbeing Index**

A transparent independent **End of Term Report**

## What is the benefit of National IP&R?

- In Australia today, two out of our three levels of government do **not** steer their way to a better future for the nation by means of any agreed plan. We are trusting our future to good luck rather than good planning.
- Despite what politicians might claim, in 2020 Australia had:
  - no plans in place to build a stronger economy or to smooth the peaks and troughs of economic development;
  - few if any plans that properly protect the environment and climate on which we and our economy depend;
  - no plans to protect or strengthen our democracy and rights; and
  - no plans to involve Australians in discussing the nation that we want to become.
- National IP&R provides a space and technique for addressing this **together** in our democracy. It is a gift we can give ourselves and future generations – the gift of joining together to secure a far better future than we can hope for if we do not imagine it and plan for it.



## Just some of the benefits of National IP&R

National IP&R allows us to stretch our imaginations, to think of *what can be* and the better future we can give our children.

It allows us to meet in a space where we can have a coherent & productive dialogue about what we want – *in all our diversity*.

It allows us to put all our good ideas in one place, compare them & pick the best, without excluding minority groups.

It allows us to see great things others are doing, connect with them & synchronise our efforts.



National IP&R can make transcendence of politics and ideology a common feature of our democracy instead of a rarity.

National IP&R re-balances our shares of power & influence over our own future.

We can avoid spending money on things that don't help us & specify our spending priorities.

A well-organised planning process where any Australian can take part will give us all a far better chance of making our preferred future a reality.

A failure to plan strategically will simply give us a far greater chance of stumbling into places we do not want to go, such as a heated planet, an autocracy, poverty, hunger, violence in the home and abroad, and an economy that cannot sustain us.

In a modern, educated nation this simply needn't be.  
With National IP&R it doesn't need to be.

## What are the disadvantages of National IP&R?

- **There are none.** Coming together to plan costs us nothing and will prevent many of the problems caused by our failure to plan for our nation in the past.
- Many politicians will insist that the disadvantage of planning is that it is inflexible and does not allow us to respond well to crises. But the fact is plans help prevent or reduce crises and significantly improve our preparedness for them when they come. They don't reduce our flexibility, they increase it – especially in a crisis.

## How does IP&R work in practice?

IP&R is as simple as its name. It is **Planning** and it is **Reporting**.

But if National IP&R is to work well in practice, we must do the planning **together**. The more people who become involved, the better the plan we will produce.

### Planning

A coherent **integrated plan** shows governments what we want to achieve as a nation, now and into the future.

#### For quality Planning:

- National IP&R provides a space and a process to help communities:
  - organise their conversations about what they want for the future,
  - set out their aspirations in a Vision statement, and then
  - work out the best ways of making their preferred Vision a reality.
- The process helps Australians write a **coherent plan** that can describe:
  - **what** Australia should become as a nation over the longer term – 10 to 30 years, and
  - **how** we prefer to get there.
- This can be presented to governments and all politicians in a form that is easy to follow – ***Australia Together***. For the first time, our leaders will know our preferred destination as a nation and the way we prefer to achieve it.

### Reporting

Transparent reports, showing progress in wellbeing, tell us whether we are moving towards or away from our preferred future.

#### For transparent and objective Reporting:

- National IP&R also keeps the community in the loop on progress.
- Reports are based on **facts** about our real wellbeing and our perceived wellbeing – how it is improving or deteriorating.
- **End of Term Reports** tell us whether a government delivered well in terms of our preferred quality of life or not. They also help us identify where business can partner better with Australians.
- End of Term Reports also help us work out where our plan is failing us and what we might do to fix it.

Community engagement is the key to successful National IP&R.

To find out more about how National IP&R works in practice and how you can choose to become involved, see

<https://www.austcfp.com.au/become-involved>



## How difficult is IP&R?

IP&R is not difficult at all. Australia is an educated nation and we are quite capable of describing what we want for the future, particularly for our children. We all want the next generation to be better off, and certainly better off than they might be if we always put short term considerations ahead of their longer term future. Any Australian can participate in National IP&R as long as they do so generously, respectfully and in good faith. **The key to successful participation in IP&R is respect for diversity.**

## How does National IP&R work within Australia’s democracy?

- National IP&R facilitates an orderly transition from mere representative democracy to proactive participatory democracy.
- In facilitating this transition National IP&R re-balances the shares of power that everyday Australians have in their system of democracy.
  - It increases their influence by providing a coherent, intelligent and intelligible messaging system to governments, politicians, business owners and all manner of leaders about what we really want for the future.
  - That coherent messaging system is **Australia Together**, the plan produced by the Australian community through National IP&R.

**Current order of our democracy**  
**Without National IP&R**

- We elect a government and hope that they will plan in our best interests.
- Generally, national governments do *not* plan and certainly do not ask us about our preferences for the future.
- They run a legislative and policy program that governs well for some, not well for all.

**New order of our democracy**  
**With National IP&R**

- We “elect a plan” first.
- We pre-agree the “what” and the “how”.
- Then we elect a government based on their credentials and ethics and commitment to our plan.
- They then run a legislative and policy program that governs better for all, not just for some.

Production of *Australia Together*  
by the joint effort of an engaged community does not dismantle our democracy.

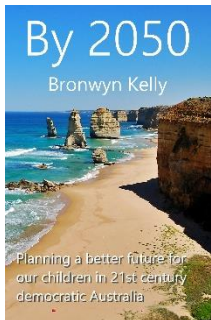
**It simply injects an extra step into the sequence of how we use the instruments of democracy.**

And by injecting this extra step, it significantly increases the efficiency of our democracy and its capacity to deliver the quality of life and standard of living that we all want.

**National IP&R**  
is effectively democracy’s modern agora. It is a space in which we can work together to develop the plans most likely to deliver the future we want.

**This shift in the order our democratic processes has been made possible for the first time in history by the rise of access to both education and the internet for all, a change which has transformed our access to intelligence and our ability to engage with each other.**

For more information on how this shift in democracy is possible through National IP&R, read ***By 2050: Planning a better future for our children in 21st century democratic Australia*** by ACFP’s founder, Bronwyn Kelly. Available on [Amazon Kindle](#) and in paperback.



## How are the elements of National IP&R organised?

- National IP&R works on a cycle aligned to the federal election cycle.
  - All Australians can become involved at any time in the cycle.
  - The cycle is organised to:
    - promote progressive development and refinement of a long term integrated plan for the whole nation; and
    - facilitate reporting on progress towards the Targets of the plan prior to an election.
  - The cycle begins immediately after a federal election with ongoing revisions of the plan from the previous cycle.
  - Throughout the cycles, and subject to resources and funding:
    - consultation on aspects of the draft plan occurs freely as Australians are encouraged to comment on aspects of the draft plans; and
    - surveys of support for aspects of the draft are undertaken.
  - Throughout the cycles the following activities are also ongoing, subject to resources:
    - Development of **Targets** and **Indicators** for measuring progress in the plan – the nation’s movement towards or away from the Vision and Directions.
    - Assembly of baseline data for each of the Targets and Indicators – this is what is known as a “quadruple bottom line” or QBL wellbeing index. A **QBL Wellbeing Index** is simply an assembly of all the data about where we are starting from in terms of our:
      - **Society,**
      - **Environment,**
      - **Economy,** and
      - **Governance.**
  - Development, assessment and assembly of **Strategies** that are consistent with the Vision and Directions.
- **Towards the end of each cycle,** before a federal election – an **End of Term Report** is produced.
  - Based on performance against the Targets and Indicators of the plan, the End of Term Report provides a factual assessment of whether during the federal parliament’s term of office Australia moved closer to its preferred future or further away.
  - The End of Term Report can also provide insights for development of revisions of **Australia Together** in its subsequent cycle. See Australia’s first End of Term Report here: [The State of Australia 2022 – End of Term Report 46<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Australia](#).
- The cycle allows Australians to drive their democracy in an organised, efficient and intelligent way, to maximise the chances of equitable progress towards the Vision and build national cohesion and resilience.

ACFP has developed this QBL Index.  
Read about the **Australia Together National Wellbeing Index** [here](#).

## What is ACFP's role in relation to National IP&R?

- Australian Community Futures Planning – ACFP – has been founded for the purpose of encouraging greater participation by Australians in planning their own future as a nation within a 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy.
- ACFP operates as a centre of excellence by fostering the effective use of **National Integrated Planning & Reporting – IP&R**. Its main role in National IP&R is:
  - **Coordination of drafting of *Australia Together***, incorporating the comments of Australians.
  - **Integration of Strategies and Targets with Directions** to maximise capacity and efficiency of *Australia Together* as a plan to make the Vision a reality.
  - **Establishment of the QBL Wellbeing Index** for factual reporting and measurement of progress towards and away from the Vision.
  - **Preparation of the End of Term Reports.**



The **Integration** role is perhaps the most important part of ACFP's contribution. Integration of Directions, Targets and Strategies – via use of a simple, clear structure and a system of Targets and Indicators for monitoring ongoing wellbeing – is key to success in delivering the Vision of *Australia Together*. The more we integrate our diverse efforts, the less we will suffer by working at cross-purposes to each other and the faster we will move towards our Vision.

To facilitate Integration of Strategies and Targets with Directions, ACFP has developed a multi-pronged research program, the results of which are always open to public scrutiny. This program includes research to:

- develop the National IP&R process;
- establish a structure for the long term national integrated plan itself;
- assemble a draft Vision and Directions based on the stated values of Australians and their preferences for a better future;
- develop a comprehensive national wellbeing index.

In 2022 a fifth research component was added to reform Australia's Constitution. Find out more about ACFP's research programs at [www.austcfp.com.au](http://www.austcfp.com.au)

**ACFP's four-part research program to help Australians build their own plan for a better nation**

- An integrated planning process for use by Australians**  
*National Integrated Planning & Reporting*
- A structure for a long term national plan**  
*Australia Together*
- Research to assemble a draft Vision and Directions**  
*The Plan for Australia Together*
- A comprehensive national wellbeing index**  
*Australia Together National Wellbeing Index*

**A 5<sup>th</sup> component of research has been added**

**Reform of Australia's Constitution**  
*THE PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTION*



## Can National IP&R help us build a plan for a whole nation?

- Yes.
- ACFP has undertaken considerable research and development to adapt and optimise IP&R so that it can be used to build a plan for a whole nation, rather than just a local community. The research and findings are set out in **By 2050**.
- **By 2050** shows that if we plan for the future in such a way as **to cater to both our common and our diverse needs** we can work very effectively together in a structured and well organised process to do some things we have never done before but which are vital to our strength as a 21<sup>st</sup> century democratic nation:
  - We **can**:
    - define our values as a nation – what we stand for and what we want to preserve in terms of human rights, shared prosperity, fairness and integrity;
    - define what it means to be Australian and specify what we want to become as a society, an environmental custodian, an economy and as a democracy;
    - design a new Constitution for Australia – one which fits our 21<sup>st</sup> century needs, rather than those of the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
    - resolve our oldest problem of the inequality for our country’s Indigenous that arose from their dispossession;
    - specify and strengthen our relationship with our governments – re-balancing power in our relationships and setting out the terms of trust;
    - establish a new social contract for sharing our national wealth and providing for our welfare and wellbeing;
    - specify roles for businesses, workers, institutions, governments and a free press as partners in future growth and equity;
    - protect and share all our resources – human, environmental, intellectual and technological;
    - turn away from:
      - growing inequality,
      - climate change,
      - growth in racial and religious conflict,
      - unethical government and corporations,
      - loss of openness and transparency in government, and
      - our own disengagement in our democracy.

These are just some of the things we can do if we plan them together. National IP&R makes it possible. It is able to do this because it acknowledges not just a need to cater for both our diverse and common interests but because **success depends on diversity**. It depends on us being able to draw in ideas from diverse intelligence and integrate them efficiently to protect the things we commonly and diversely value. A plan which is narrower than this – one that is ideologically driven – has far less capacity to help us realise a better future for all.

National IP&R brings democracy alive, efficiently. It allows Australians in all their diversity to connect and build a coherent plan for safe arrival in a truly preferred future – a future which has not yet been articulated but which is out there waiting to be seized.

## Can National IP&R build a plan for our entire economy?

- Yes.
- While most politicians and even many economists will claim that economic plans are bound to fail because they are not flexible, this is merely a failure of insight and a resistance to any rise in discussion among Australians about what our economy is for.

As **By 2050** has shown,  
once we ask and answer the  
fundamental question of:  
***For whom and to what ends should our  
economy be working?***  
there is no longer any point in resisting  
development of a plan to create the  
economy we want.

- Australians **do** have the capacity to imagine the sort of economic future we might want. We might not all have the answers on the mechanics of achieving that economy, but:
  - we *can* set objectives for it,
  - we *can* determine which strategies we prefer, which ones we want to avoid, and which ones will defeat our diverse aspirations,
  - we *can* develop performance measures for it,
  - we *can* check if it is delivering us a better lifestyle or not,
  - we *can* develop our understanding of why and where it might not be working according to our objectives and what we might adjust to fix it as the need arises, and
  - we *can* hold our leaders to account for any problems of inequality or environmental degradation aggravated by their failure to implement our preferred economic approach.
- By using National IP&R we can develop a holistic plan for our economy and in that we can choose to do all manner of things if we decide that they fit with our ultimate aims. We can also choose to start earlier – for instance, we can choose to switch earlier to a decarbonised economy – and prevent problems rather than take the usual government approach of fixing things when it is already too late.
- We can also choose, if we wish, to:
  - reverse neoliberalism;
  - build our health, welfare and education sectors;
  - generate more employment in the public sector and in value-adding manufacturing; and
  - create interconnected cities and regional hubs.
- These and many more options are open to us. None of these options (except perhaps the fourth one) are being offered by our governments at the moment and yet there is no reason why we should not have the opportunity to choose these and any others to secure our future.
- By working together, using National IP&R, we can build the economy we want.



### **By 2050** Chapter 7

*Australia is entering the 2020s within a decision making vacuum. There is no reference resource providing community guidance to our parliaments on how they might achieve a consensus across an ideological divide and we are now entirely hostage to just one of those ideologies – neoliberalism – which clearly isn't working. Little wonder that increasing numbers of Australians believe neither side of politics is up to the job. But we can re-set these policies. To do so we need to begin to describe what a truly decent economy should look like – according to our ideas of the purpose of that economy.*

*We don't have a strong economy in Australia in 2020. But even if we did, having a "strong" economy just for the sake of it isn't, or at least in a decent society oughtn't to be, enough. The objectives of the economy need to be articulated:*

#### ***For whom and to what ends should our economy be working?***

*We need to figure that out and tell our leaders. Only then will we have a strengthened capacity as a nation to manage the economy we want and know that we are on the right track.*

## Can National IP&R help us mitigate climate change?

- Yes.
- It is likely that National IP&R is the *only* mechanism that can help us mitigate climate change in a way that will be affordable.
- This is because National IP&R organises us efficiently to focus on:
  - prevention, not just cure,
  - mitigation not just adaptation, and
  - most importantly, **integration** (not fragmentation) of our efforts in social, environmental, economic and democratic policies and activism.
- **National IP&R helps us address not just symptoms of climate change but the full array of its causes** including:
  - Inequality,
  - the pervasiveness of neoliberalism:
    - its environmental exploitations,
    - its deregulation of markets and encouragement of unsustainable investments through inappropriate subsidies from taxpayers,
    - its attacks on public services and sales of assets that are vital for our health and wellbeing,
  - fractious international relations, and
  - our own disengagement from our democracy.
- Unless we address both the causes and symptoms of climate change we cannot hope to mitigate global heating or its impacts. But **with** National IP&R we can make sure that more of us can make the transition safely and equitably to a decarbonised economy.

National IP&R puts all our efforts and intelligence together to head off climate change faster.



### By 2050 Chapter 10

*National IP&R can turbo charge our remaining potential for preventing the worst effects of climate change. ... It takes account of the multiple causes of our various breakdowns, and we can synchronise preventative efforts with curative efforts, the former making the latter cheaper and cheaper as time passes.*

*Humans have caused climate change not just by emitting too much carbon through industrialisation, but by failing to address a whole range of other problems in our society which are exacerbating the seriousness of climate change and speeding it up.*

...

*Our approach to organising and running ourselves is the real cause of climate change because as our democracy is currently organised it is a barrier to early detection of the need for change and a barrier to finding the best way to change before it is too late. If we can reorganise that, by integrated planning, we can head off some of the worst effects of climate change. In fact, this is the only way we can ameliorate climate change, so late in the day. Thinking and acting only on climate change will not fix it and certainly not before climate change gets worse. We need to integrate action on inequality, democracy, industry development, international relations and multiple other QBL policy areas, **alongside** action on climate change. National IP&R is necessary for that integration.*

National IP&R can help us mitigate climate change and its impacts more effectively and affordably than fragmented approaches to a decarbonised future.



## Want to know more about National IP&R?

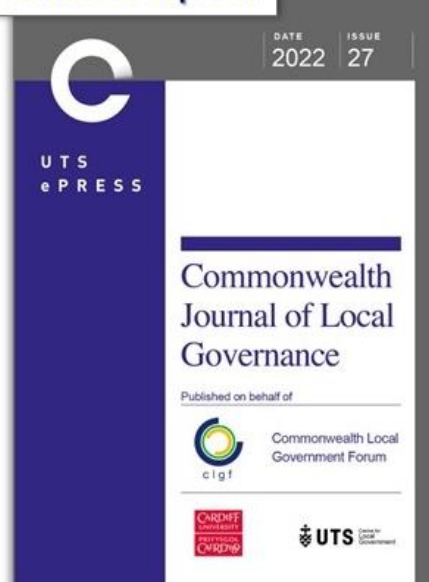
For more detailed information on National IP&R, view ACFP's three-part lecture series on YouTube [here](#).

[What is National Integrated Planning & Reporting](#)  
[Or](#)  
[How Australians can rise above politics and set the agenda for the nation's future.](#)

Find out more about the genesis and development of National IP&R in this scholarly article in a peer reviewed international journal,

[Local governments can show national governments how to plan better: Integrated planning and reporting reforms in Australia.](#)

Click to open.



# What is *National Integrated Planning & Reporting?*

Or ...

How Australians can rise above politics and set the agenda for the nation's future

**Episode Guide**

**Episode 1 - Introducing National Integrated Planning & Reporting**

- Part 1** What's the purpose of National IP&R? And why now?
- Part 2** How National IP&R can give Australians a more powerful voice in their democracy.

**Episode 2 – How does National IP&R work?**

- Part 1** Where does National IP&R come from? The eight elements of National IP&R.
  - Element 1** – Community engagement in an orderly public open space
  - Element 2** – the Vision for *Australia Together*
  - Element 3** – Safe Directions
  - Element 4** – Targets and Strategies
- Part 2** **Element 5** – Long term national financial planning
- Part 3** **Element 6** – Open and transparent comment channels
  - Element 7** – *Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index
  - Element 8** – The End of Term Report

**Episode 3 – Opportunities & efficiencies from National IP&R and *Australia Together***