



Australian Community Futures Planning

What is the *Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index? Updated February 2024

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For more information, view the latest issues of *Australia Together* at <https://www.austcfp.com.au/australia-together>

If you would like to become involved in building a plan for a better Australia, visit the Australian Community Futures Planning website at www.austcfp.com.au
Everyone is welcome to participate.

Further questions may be forwarded to ACFP at info@austcfp.com.au

The *Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index

What is the *Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index?

The ***Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index** is a comprehensive, integrated dataset about Australia's wellbeing and security. It includes data on a wide array of indicators of the health of our society, environment, economy and democracy.

The Index is unique in that indicators within it are chosen to help Australians chart a course to their particular preferred future and monitor their progress from their present position towards or away from that future.

The preferred future is described in the draft [Vision for *Australia Together*](#), which contains:

- 17 statements about the life Australians have said they wish to be able to lead in 2050; and
- 57 Direction statements of their preferred and safe routes toward the Vision.

The ***Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index** is designed to help Australians select targets for their performance as a nation and their preferred strategies for achievement of those targets. It is an essential tool that anyone can use to become involved in:

- planning a better future for the nation,
- monitoring progress, and
- correcting course if need be.

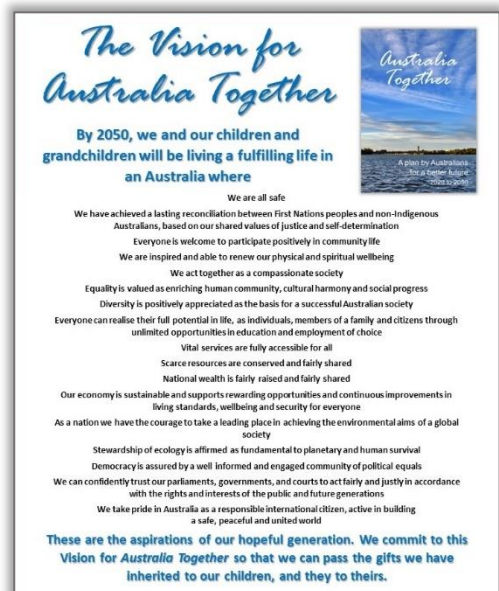
Find out [how the Vision for *Australia Together* has been assembled](#).

Find out [more about *Australia Together*](#).

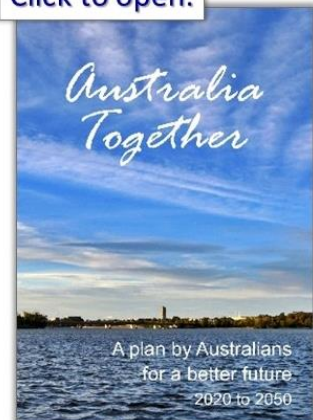
Find out [how to become involved in planning a better future for the nation](#).

As at February 2024, the ***Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index** contained over 300 indicators of the health, wellbeing and security of Australia at the outset of the 2020s. The Index held baseline and target data for all these indicators to enable comprehensive monitoring of wellbeing. All data in the Index are held in full form (including sources) at all times in ***Australia Together*** to ensure transparency.

Australia Together is a plan in "starting draft" form and is revised regularly in response to community comment. Reports on the Index are provided prior to the end of federal parliamentary terms of office. For the latest report see <https://www.austcfp.com.au/state-of-australia>



Click to open.



How is the *Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index assembled?

Australia Together is a national long term integrated plan for a better Australia by 2050 or sooner. It is a map through time of the safe paths to our preferred future. As such it is organised to enable us to:

1. select reasonable **Indicators** of progress towards the Vision for *Australia Together*;
2. establish **Baseline** information and data for each Indicator; and
3. establish **Targets** and **Strategies** for progress.

Taken together, the Indicators, Baseline data, Targets and Strategies form Australia's first comprehensive, integrated index of wellbeing. This is an Index that is not only about our current wellbeing but also about our progress towards or away from the type of wellbeing and security we, as citizens of a democracy, are likely to prefer for future generations – for our children.

The structure of linkages in the Index – between the Indicators, Baseline data, Targets and Strategies – allows us to paint accurate pictures of:

- a) our preferred destination by 2050, and
- b) where we are starting from in 2020.

With the aid of the Index we should be able to see:

1. **what life will be like** – for individuals, society, our natural environment, ecology, economy and democracy – if or when we reach the destination described in the Vision for *Australia Together*;
2. **what Australia will have become as a nation** – in its own terms, values, character, and as a global citizen – if we as a community move from the Baseline towards the Targets via the preferred safe Directions of the plan; and
3. **how far away we are from that destination and national character** at the start of the plan in the early 2020s.

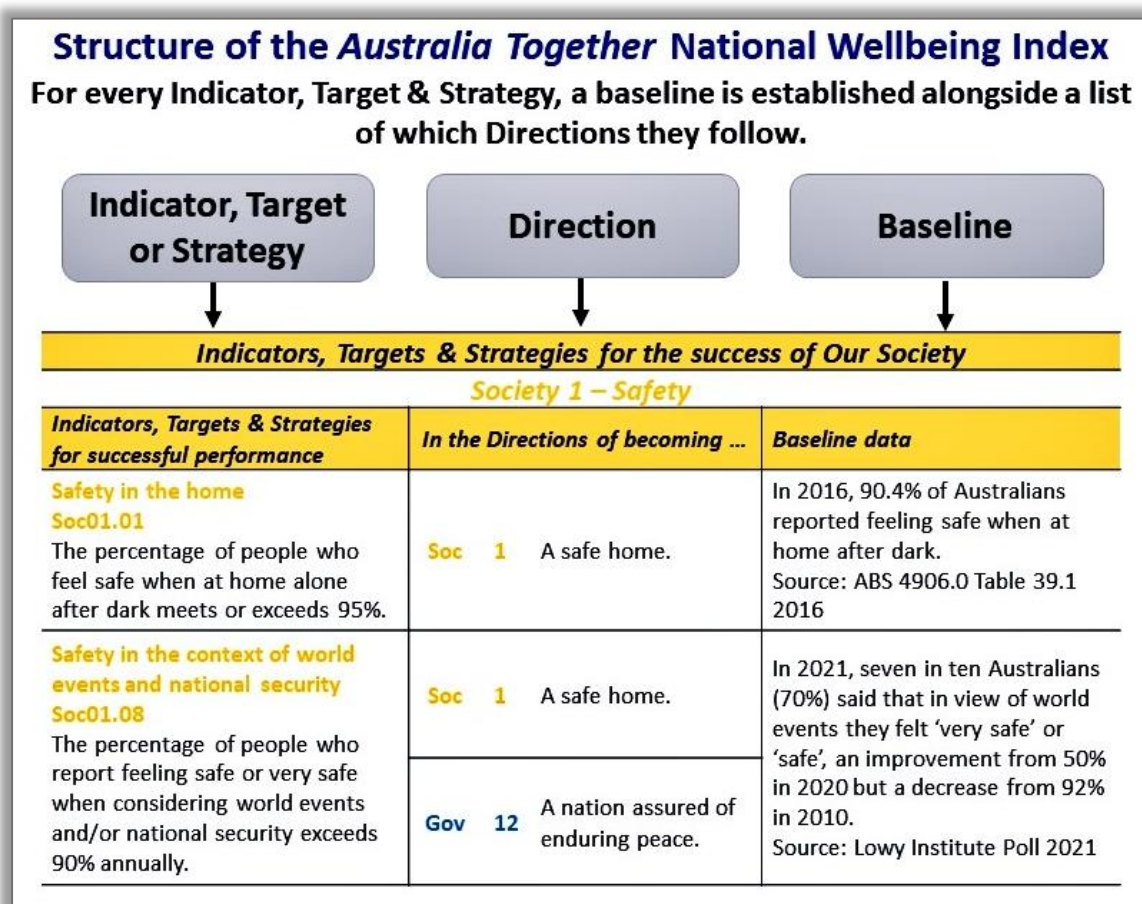
ACFP has been able to assemble this structure for a long term national plan by using a specially designed **National Integrated Planning & Reporting** process – **National IP&R**. For detailed information about National IP&R and how to become involved, visit the [ACFP website](#).

The **Australia Together National Wellbeing Index** is being built progressively and is currently housed inside the starting draft of *Australia Together* itself in:

- Chapter 5 – Targets and Strategies for Success in Our Society,
- Chapter 6 – Targets and Strategies for Success in Our Environment,
- Chapter 7 – Targets and Strategies for Success in Our Economy, and
- Chapter 8 – Targets and Strategies for Success in Our Governance.

As at February 2024, ACFP estimated that the Index was about 75% complete – meaning that it contained over 300 Targets and Strategies with reliable baseline data. It may be expected that another 50 to 100 Targets or Strategies will be added in later Issues of the plan as more Australians become involved during successive parliamentary terms.

The **Australia Together National Wellbeing Index** is a tool of National Integrated Planning & Reporting. This means it is structured so that it links and integrates a wide array of Targets and Strategies for a better future with baseline data about our starting position and within a system for checking that we are following the safe Directions towards the Vision. Accordingly the Index is set out in *Australia Together* in simple three-column tables as shown in the following graphic:



How are Targets and Strategies selected for inclusion in the Index?

Targets and Strategies can be selected for inclusion in the *Australia Together* National Wellbeing Index if:

- they are of national strategic significance, and if
- it can be demonstrated that they will contribute to achievement of the Vision (whatever it may be) via the safe routes described in the Directions (whatever they may be).

Any Australian can suggest a Target or Strategy. There is really only one central rule in this selection system and this rule is designed to:

- protect the people’s integrated planning system from a loss of its independence through political interference; and
- prevent exclusion of diverse communities from participating in development of Strategies that are necessary to ensure they can find a place of equality and safety in Australia in the future.

The rule is that everyone must be able to find a place for their future and to that end no target or strategy can be included in the plan unless it can be demonstrated that it follows at least one of the 57 Directions of the plan and does not disable other Strategies which do follow the Directions.

In this arrangement, the Vision and Directions act as an independent, apolitical, non-partisan selection system for strategic initiatives that will reliably and efficiently drive the nation towards the Vision of we the people.

If, because of an expressed change of preference by the Australian people, the Vision or Directions change over time, this may admit different Targets and Strategies into the plan. But the Integrated Planning system itself will then work just as well to help Australians isolate the most reliable and efficient Targets and Strategies for the new Vision and Directions.

If Australians get the Vision and Directions right – so that they accurately reflect the aspirations of a diverse but cohesive community of Australians working together – then the Integrated Planning system will automatically ensure that selected Targets and Strategies will fit with that community’s Vision and Directions.

How is reporting on progress made transparent?

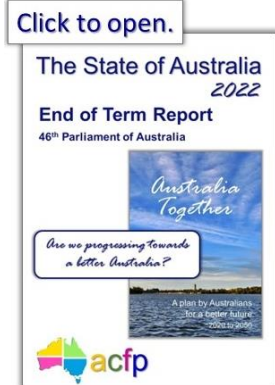
Reports on progress towards Targets and implementation of Strategies are produced at the end of each federal parliamentary term of office. These are called “End of Term Reports”. They are laid out so that readers can see:

- full information on movement from the Baselines of Indicators in the Index, and
- the *direction* of movement toward or away from the Targets.

End of Term Reports reprint the entire Index as it appears in latest version of *Australia Together* and then simply add another column which reports on the direction of movement from the Baselines for each Indicator, Target and Strategy, as shown in the graphic below.

Australia Together National Wellbeing Index - Original			End of Term Report
Indicator, Target or Strategy	Direction	Baseline	Report on progress
<i>Indicators, Targets & Strategies for the success of Our Society</i>			
<i>Society 1 – Safety</i>			
Indicators, Targets & Strategies for successful performance	In the Directions of becoming ...	Baseline data	Direction of movement from baseline
<p>Perceptions of safety and trust in the community Soc01.07.01</p> <p>The proportion of Australians reporting trust in “most people” increases continuously.</p>	Soc 1 A safe home.	In 2019, 55.2% of Australians on survey felt “most people could be trusted”, up slightly from 54.4% in 2014. Source: ABS General Social Survey 2020, Table 17.1	In 2020, 61.9% of Australians on survey felt “most people could be trusted”, up from 55.2% in 2019. Source: ABS General Social Survey 2020, Table 17.1 → The longer term trend is steady. ← / →
<p>Safety in the context of world events and national security Soc01.08</p> <p>The percentage of people who report feeling safe or very safe when considering world events and/or national security exceeds 90% annually.</p>	Soc 1 A safe home.	In 2021, seven in ten Australians (70%) said that in view of world events they felt ‘very safe’ or ‘safe’, an improvement from 50% in 2020 but a decrease from 92% in 2010. Source: Lowy Institute Poll 2021	Updated data not yet available. The shorter term trend was positive. → The longer term trend is distinctly negative with 6% of Australians reporting that they feel very safe in 2021, down from 44% in 2009, and 70% feeling safe or very safe in 2021, down from 90% in 2009. Source: Lowy Institute Poll 2021 ←
	Gov 12 A nation assured of enduring peace.		

For an example of a full End of Term Report and summary reports visit the [ACFP State of Australia webpage](#) or click on the picture below.



What does the Index monitor?

The **Australia Together National Wellbeing Index** is not just a set of numerical statistics. It is about people – their values, desires, social predispositions, policy preferences, cultural attitudes, willingness to work together and preparedness for the future. The Index is built to reflect this complexity and this makes it the most useful measurement tool for purposes of ensuring we are travelling safely to the particular future we prefer.



The complex structure of the Index as an integrated set of Indicators helps Australians make both fine-grained and summary conclusions about progress (and the direction of progress) based on:

- the available statistical data on the *physical* attributes of Australia and Australians and on the *perceptions* of Australians about those attributes; and
- qualitative information available at the time in relation to the attitudes of Australians and the policies of political, business and community institutions.

Deeper insights and conclusions about progress and risks can be drawn because the Index is a complex integrated dataset about the complex integrated life we lead and world we live in. It allows Australians to consider a fuller array of inter-related indicators about each aspect of Australia's health, wellbeing and security. In preparing End of Term Reports for the consideration of Australians, ACFP uses colour to paint summary pictures: **red for negative progress**, **green for positive progress**.

The **Australia Together National Wellbeing Index** is a forward-looking measurement tool, not just a backward looking report on recent progress. It is designed to show:

- how well or poorly we may be performing as a nation in relation to **short term** changes in indicators – of health, wellbeing, environmental sustainability, economic strength, ethical governance and security; and
- our progress as a nation towards or away from **longer term** aspirations about all these things.

The Index therefore tracks progress towards the long term Vision of *Australia Together*, not just the shorter term movements backwards or forwards on each of the hundreds of Indicators in the Index. The benefit of this unique longer term, forward looking approach is that it gives Australians advance notice of any accumulating forces, policies, strategies and prevailing cultural or economic attitudes which may be dragging us away from our preferred future as we have expressed it.

The Australia Together National Wellbeing Index provides the data Australians need to know in the early 2020s so that they can understand the extent of effort needed to arrive safely home in 2050 and can adjust their plan in response to any foreseen need.

Australians are invited to use the Index to inspire them to develop of strategies for inclusion in *Australia Together* for things that matter to them and that cannot be set on the right course without an integrated national effort.

Further questions may be forwarded to ACFP at info@austcfp.com.au