



# Australian Community Futures Planning

## Community Engagement Program for *Australia Together*

This is the first Community Engagement Program for *Australia Together*.  
It will be revised periodically.  
Last revised: May 2021

### Topics in this fact sheet

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# Community Engagement Program for *Australia Together*

What is Australia Together?

**Australia Together** is a plan for a better future for Australia by 2050, currently in draft form.

As Australia's first national community futures plan, it is being built **by** the community **for** the community using a **National Integrated Planning & Reporting** framework – **National IP&R**. Information on National IP&R is available at [austcfp.com.au](http://austcfp.com.au)

The draft of **Australia Together** will be under progressive development until at least 2022 and will be released in incomplete forms for community comment in several iterations to progressively refine the plan with the input of Australians.



## ACFP's role in National IP&R and *Australia Together*

**Australian Community Futures Planning – ACFP – has been established as an independent centre of excellence in National IP&R**, providing an organising framework that can enable any and all Australians to participate in development of plans for our future as a nation – plans that will increase the chances of improving our entire quality of life:

- **our Society,**
- **our Environment,**
- **our Economy, and**
- **our Governance.**



## ACFP's approach to Community Engagement for *Australia Together*

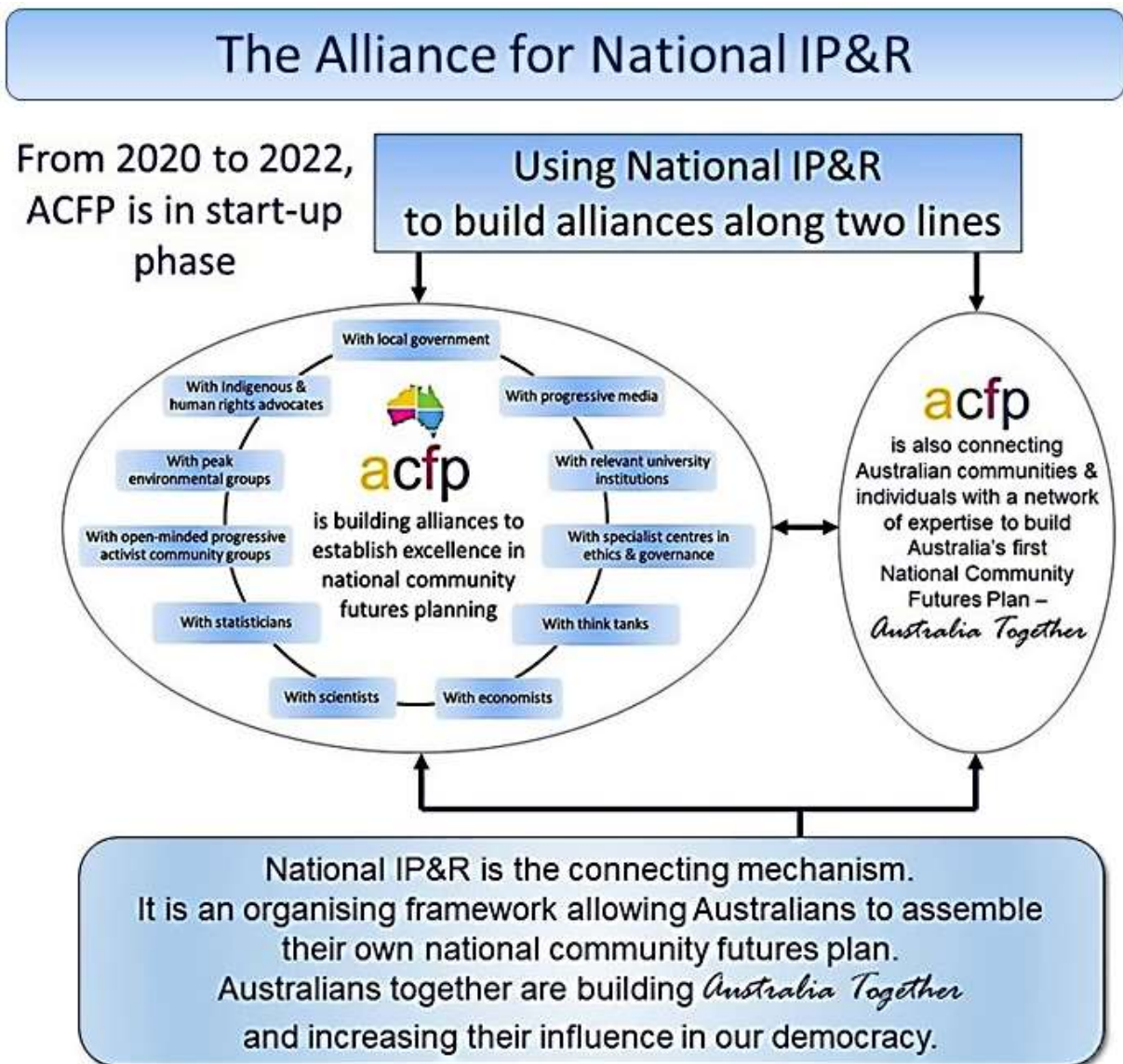
From 2020 to 2022, ACFP will be in a start-up phase. During this period ACFP's resources will be limited.

**Implementation of the cycle of community engagement for *Australia Together* set out in this program is therefore entirely dependent on resource availability.**

During the start-up period ACFP will attempt to build networks of community connection along two lines:

1. We will be seeking alliances with willing participants in centres of expertise in social, environmental, economic and governance policy.
- and*
2. We will be seeking the involvement of willing Australian communities and individuals.

The objective of this outreach program is to build the capacity of the Australian community to devise its own National Community Futures Plan – *Australia Together*. This will take time.



## The Cycle of National IP&R

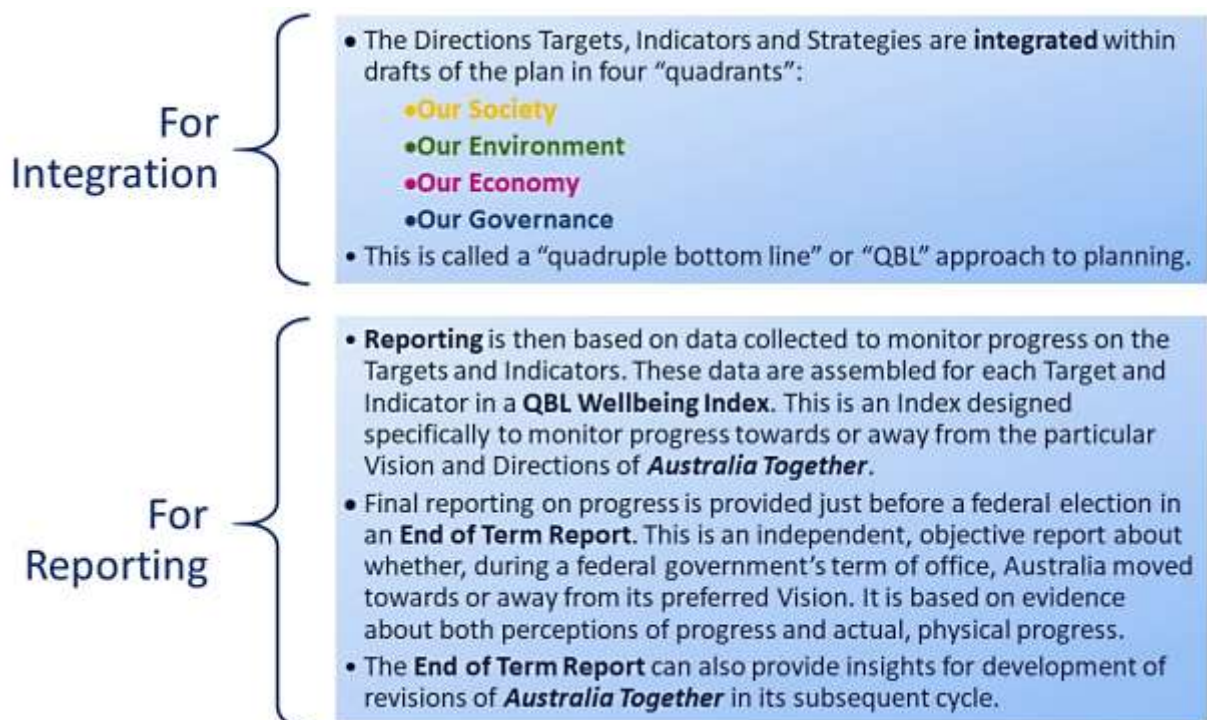
The **National IP&R framework** has been devised to operate as a cycle, aligned with the federal election cycle which provides for parliamentary terms of three years. National IP&R would work more effectively if the Australian parliament ran on four-year terms. But recognising that this is unlikely in the near future, the following **Community Engagement Program for Australia Together** has been designed to align with the three-year election cycle.

The repeating parts of the cycle are summarised in the diagram opposite.



## National IP&R for *Australia Together*

National IP&R operates so that we can be confident our plan for a better Australia will be the one we really want. It is designed to ensure we can develop the right **Vision, Directions, Targets, Indicators and Strategies**. To get this right, we follow a simple process of **National Integration & Reporting (National IP&R)**.



By following the National IP&R process we can devise a plan with a clear structure that is easy to follow – a road map to our preferred future as a nation.

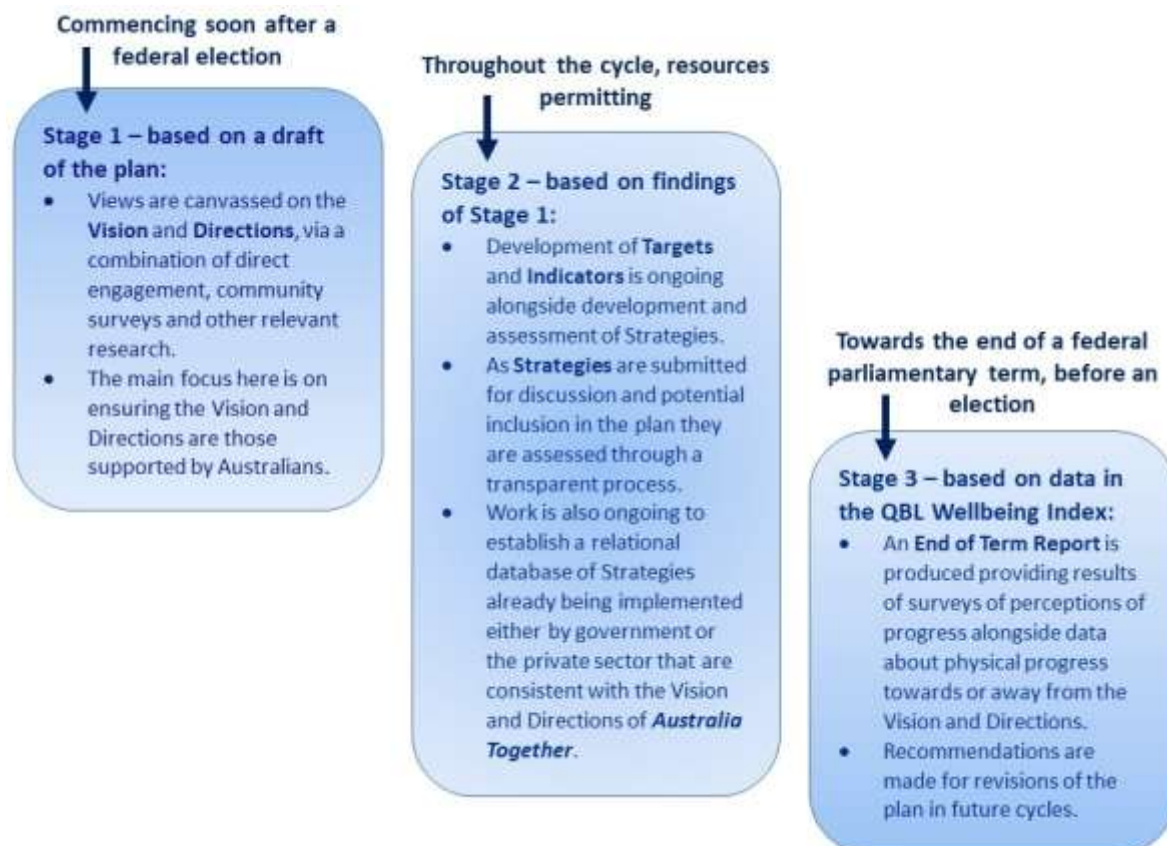
Community engagement is vital to quality assurance in every aspect of Integrated Planning. Unless the Vision, Directions, Targets, Indicators and Strategies are all developed in an open and transparent process, Australians will be unable to determine whether we are moving in our truly preferred Directions, monitoring the right things and trends, and whether we are headed towards or away from our preferred Vision.

All community engagement activities are therefore about confirming that the plan is the one we want, that it caters for both our diverse and common aspirations and seeks out the least harmful routes towards that future.



## Stages of community engagement in the National IP&R cycle

Based on the above structure for *Australia Together*, community engagement for the National IP&R cycle can be split into three main parts:



## Key activities in Stage 1

Commencing soon after a federal election

### Stage 1 – based on a draft of the plan:

- Views are canvassed on the **Vision** and **Directions**, via a combination of direct engagement, community surveys and other relevant research.
- The main focus here is on ensuring the Vision and Directions are those supported by Australians.



## Working on a draft

To start the first cycle of community engagement on **Australia Together** a first draft of the plan has been prepared. This working draft is the product of significant research which commenced immediately after the Australian federal election of 2019. The findings of this research have been set out in full by ACFP's founder Bronwyn Kelly in **By 2050: Planning a better future for our children in 21<sup>st</sup> century democratic Australia**.

**By 2050** functions as an issues paper for the nation as at early 2020. It examines:

- our current capacity, strengths and weaknesses as a modern economy and democracy,
- our preparedness for the future, and
- provides a practical guide on how Australians can use National IP&R to organise themselves to plan to secure their preferred future.

For further background on the issues and assumptions underpinning this version of **Australia Together** read **By 2050** available on Amazon Kindle or in paperback.

In Stage 1, drafts of **Australia Together** will be available online so that Australians can become familiar with the structure of the plan and the possibilities it can open up. The draft Vision and Directions will be stable at this point. However, additions and refinements of Targets, Indicators and Strategies will be ongoing. The draft plan will gradually expand and Strategies will become stronger in their capacity to help Australians realise the Vision. This gathering strength will be the product of the **Integration** technique inherent in National IP&R.

## Surveys of opinion on the Visions and Directions

During Stage 1, subject to resources, community opinion surveys will be conducted to verify the level of support among Australians for the Vision and Directions as drafted. This may reveal a need for amendments of the Vision and Directions. If so, this amendment process will necessarily involve analysis of the findings of the surveys which is likely to be best facilitated by willing members of the alliance described above for National IP&R. Updates on changes to the Vision and Directions will be provided on the ACFP website.



### **By 2050** Chapter 11

*The draft ... Vision and Directions of the plan have arisen from analysis of the issues all Australians are grappling with in their concern for the future. They are not meant to be a dictation and if they were they would not succeed. ... Suffice to say that if the Vision and Directions I have used in draft are wide of the mark, this will be sorted out by the community and I am certain the nation will find its own wisdom and truth if given a space for an organised engagement process using quality IP&R.*

## Key activities in Stage 2

Throughout the cycle, resources permitting

### Stage 2 – based on findings of Stage 1:

- Development of **Targets** and **Indicators** is ongoing alongside development and assessment of Strategies.
- As **Strategies** are submitted for discussion and potential inclusion in the plan they are assessed through a transparent process.
- Work is also ongoing to establish a relational database of Strategies already being implemented either by government or the private sector that are consistent with the Vision and Directions of **Australia Together**.

### Building Targets and Indicators – the National QBL Wellbeing Index

The starting draft of **Australia Together** already contains over 180 Targets and Indicators and the list is growing. It also contains baseline data for each Target and Indicator. This means we know exactly where we are starting from in 2020 in terms of all the Indicators of our social, environmental, economic and democratic wellbeing – our **QBL Wellbeing**.

Like the Vision and Directions, the Targets for and Indicators of our QBL Wellbeing have been selected on the basis of research in **By 2050**. Other relevant Indicators are being added in as they come to light. The baseline data are simply collected facts about our situation in the early 2020s in terms of the things that matter to us, such as our health, our sense of belonging, our human rights, our opportunities for education or employment, the condition of our environment, and the strength of our democracy. The QBL Wellbeing Index assembles these baseline facts for the 57 different Direction statements about what we want Australia to become by 2050. It shows our starting point.

The Targets and Indicators, taken together, set out how far we want to go in each of the 57 Directions. Sometimes the Targets are set simply to make sure that things don't get worse. In other cases the Targets are ambitious, such as in relation to climate change mitigation. Because of the factual nature of the baseline data, community engagement about Indicators will largely be confined to discussion of their relevance and whether better Indicators could be supplied. Community engagement about Targets and Strategies, however, will be more open-ended.

### The process for assessment of Targets and Strategies

Building Targets and Strategies in **Australia Together** is a never-ending process. Community Engagement is therefore designed to allow any Australian at scheduled times to suggest a Target or Strategy for inclusion in the plan. However, because the plan cannot include Targets or Strategies which will disable each other or undermine the Vision or Directions, there is a process for determining whether a suggested Target or Strategy can be included.



## The assessment committee for Targets and Strategies

The process for assessing the suggestions of Australians about Targets and Strategies will depend on the skills and good will of individuals and centres of excellence who may volunteer to become partners in the **Alliance for National IP&R**. Interested participants can nominate to become involved in an assessment committee at any time. A moderator or chairperson can be selected by the committee but the assessment process itself is effectively prescribed by the Vision and Directions of **Australia Together**, as they are shown to be preferred by Australians through community surveys. In that regard, assessment committees are constrained by the Vision and Directions which effectively act as the real moderator of fairness in decision making.

Participation in any part of the National IP&R process for **Australia Together**, be it on the assessment committees or in other activities, must be done in the spirit of fairness, using an evidence-based approach wherever possible, listening to Australians about all their aspirations and concerns, and exercising judgement about Targets and Strategies at all times in good faith.

The independence of the assessment committee process is assured by the transparent reference to the Vision and Directions of **Australia Together** rather than the preferences of the committee members themselves.

Australians can work together to imagine their future anew. Ultimately, their preferred Vision and Directions determine which Targets and Strategies should be included in *Australia Together*.

Once the Vision and Directions are established, any Australian is able to make a suggestion about the inclusion, amendment or deletion of Targets and Strategies in **Australia Together**. Forms for suggestions will be available during open consultation periods at <https://www.austcfp.com.au/>.

## Key activities in Stage 3

Towards the end of a federal parliamentary term, before an election

### Stage 3 – based on data in the QBL Wellbeing Index:

- An **End of Term Report** is produced providing results of surveys of perceptions of progress alongside data about physical progress towards or away from the Vision and Directions.
- Recommendations are made for revisions of the plan in future cycles.

### Reporting back to the community

In Stage 3 the main activity is reporting to the community. The **End of Term Report** is a matter of fact report about whether we have moved closer to the Vision, and towards or away from the Targets that have been set in accordance with the Directions. Production of this report is dependent on data availability from agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and numerous other data sources. If these agencies have stopped collecting the data, this may result in gaps in reporting. But overall, the **End of Term Report** will show how far we have moved from our baselines and in what direction – good or bad.

Australians can browse the **End of Term Report** as a source of detached independent information of a wide array of aspects of our performance as a nation in realising the aspirations of Australians as expressed in the Vision and Directions of **Australia Together**.

Summary pictures are provided as well as details. Armed with this information, Australians can send messages to politicians, businesses, non-profits, institutions and community groups about satisfaction with performance and preferences for change. They can also join in the next round of National IP&R after the election to help prepare stronger and stronger plans.



## Reporting already available on *Australia Together*

A starting draft of *Australia Together* was released in May 2021. No community consultation was conducted for the starting draft as the community had no information available to them on which to provide comment. In other words, the community had no **End of Term Report** from the previous election cycle that they could rely on as a basis for assessing progress against the plan and whether it should be changed.

However, Australian Community Futures Planning has provided what amounts to an End of Term Report on the previous decade of Australia's performance toward or away from the draft *Vision of Australia Together*. That reporting is provided in a seven-part videocast series on YouTube called **The State of Australia in 2020**. This series provides data for the starting points for *Australia Together* in the early 2020s on the twenty key issues that must be resolved before 2030 if we are to arrive safely in 2050 with an acceptable degree of wellbeing and security.

View [The State of Australia in 2020](#) on [YouTube](#).

