



# Child wellbeing indicators in Australia What have we learned and where should we go?

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# Overview

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**Intro & Outline**

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**Acknowledgments**

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**Review of child & youth outcomes frameworks**

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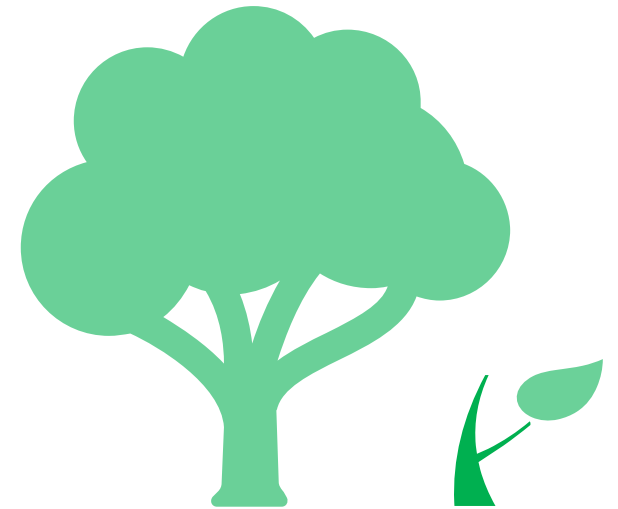
**New approaches for governance & accountability**

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**International inspiration**

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**Where to from here?**



# Acknowledgements



Dr Kate Lycett



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# What have we looked at?

We've reviewed 14  
indicator frameworks  
specifically designed for all  
children and/or young  
people

Provisional - work in progress



# What have we looked at?

Reviewed 14 indicator frameworks specifically designed for all children and/or young people

7  
National



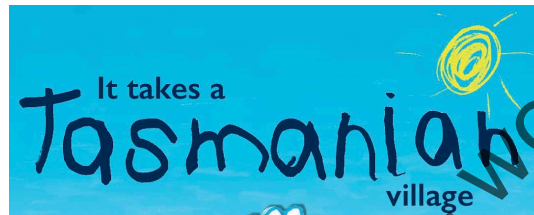
\*Work in progress

# What have we looked at?

Reviewed 14 indicator frameworks specifically designed for all children and/or young people:

4

State



**Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS)**



Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Western Australia

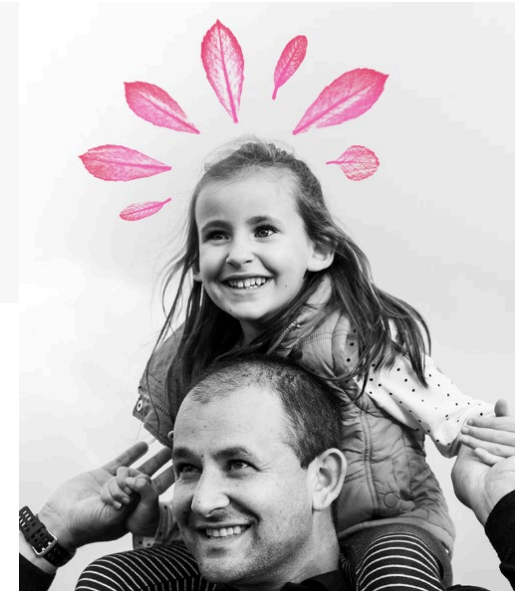
**Indicators of Wellbeing**

# What have we looked at?

Reviewed 14 indicator frameworks specifically designed for all children and/or young people:

1

International



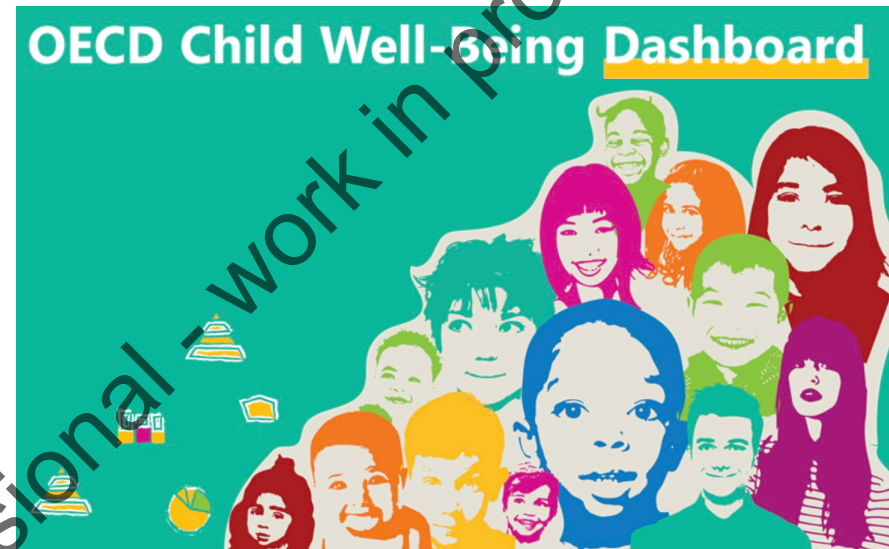
Provisional - work in progress

# What have we looked at?

Reviewed 14 indicator frameworks specifically designed for all children and/or young people:

2

Multi-national



# Matrix Overview of Child & Adolescent Wellbeing Frameworks - National

Yes  
No

**\*Work in progress**

Framework	Number of indicators	Government Led	Ages (yrs)				Developed with Input from Young People	Report Release Frequency		
			0-6	7-13	14-20	21+		Annual	3 years	5 years
<b>National</b>										
Children's Headline Indicators (AIHW)	19	Yes	0-12	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress
National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People: 2020-2030 (Federal Gov)	34		0-24	Yes	Yes	Yes	No data yet			
National Early Development Census (AEDC)	16		5-6	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress
The Nest (ARACY)	74	Work in progress	Yes	Yes	0-24	Yes	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress
Australian Children's Wellbeing Index (UNICEF/ARACY)	43									
National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Mental Health Commission)	Not yet specified	Yes	0-12	Work in progress	Work in progress	Yes	Work in progress	Work in progress	Work in progress	Unclear
Australia's Youth Policy Framework (Federal Gov)	6 priority areas no specific indicators		Work in progress	15-24	Unclear					

Provisional - work in progress

# Matrix Overview of Child & Adolescent Wellbeing Frameworks – State & International

Yes  
No

\*Work in progress

Framework	Number of indicators	Government Led	Ages (yrs)				Developed with Input from Young People	Report Release Frequency		
			0-6	7-13	14-20	21+		Annual	3 years	5 years
<b>State</b>										
Tasmanian Child & Youth Wellbeing Strategy (TAS Govt)	> 100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VCAMS (VIC Government)	> 100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Certain indicators only	Yes	Yes	Yes
WA Child Development Atlas (Telethon Kids Institute)	> 100	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No data yet	Yes	Yes
WA Wellbeing Monitoring Framework (CCYP WA)	tbc	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>International</b>										
Child & Youth Wellbeing Strategy (NZ)	36	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OECD Child Well-Being Dashboard (Global)	56	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not reported	Yes	Yes	Unclear
UNICEF Child Health & Well-Being Dashboard (Global)	24	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Not reported	Yes	Yes	Unclear

Provisional - work in progress

# Coverage and reporting:

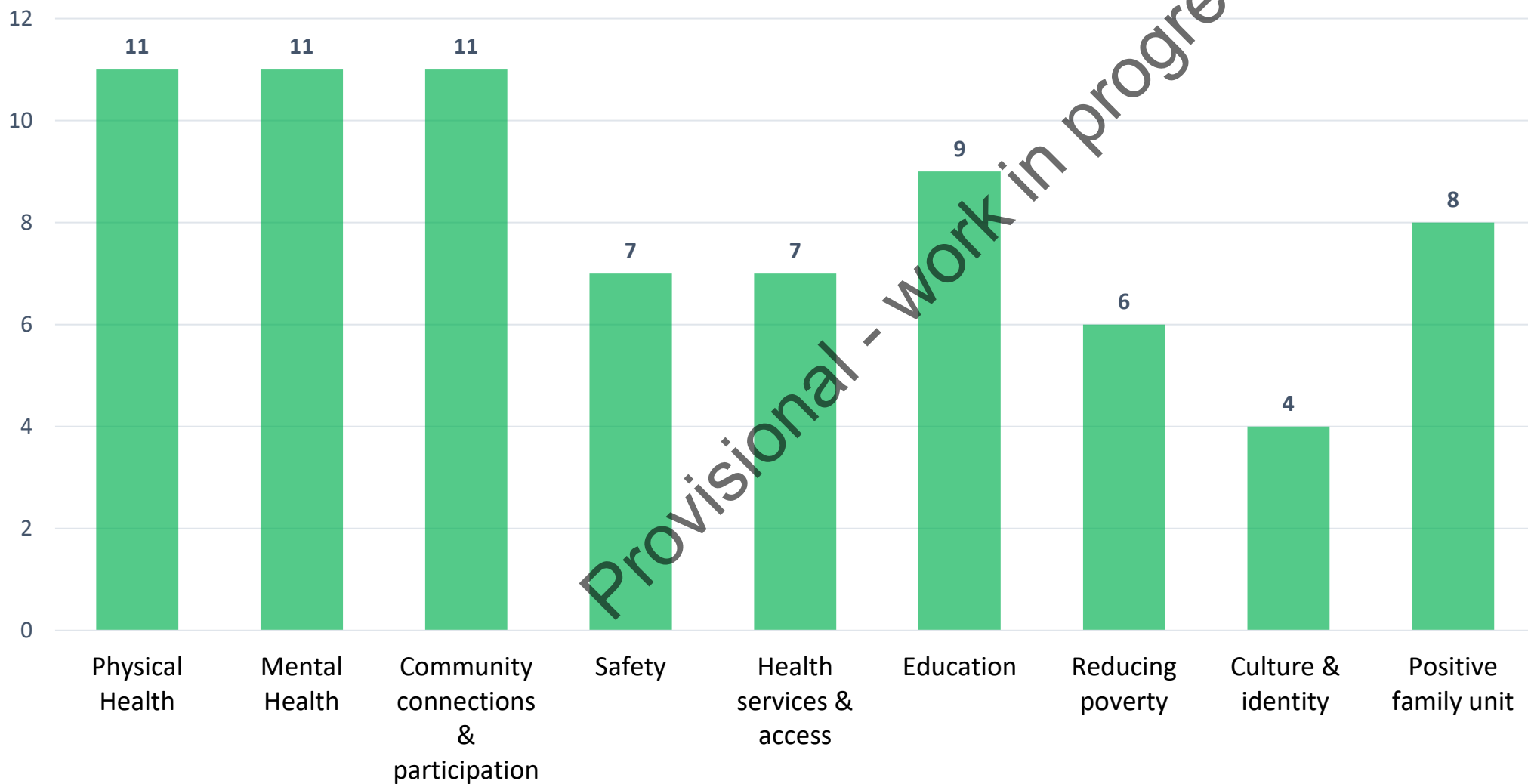
Across the 14 indicator frameworks for children and young people:

- 8 of these led by government
- 7 cover the full developmental spread from birth to young adulthood
- Half were developed with direct input from children and young people
- Only 4 produce annual reports on indicator performance

Provisional - work in progress

# Reoccurring Outcomes

Across the 11 Australian indicator frameworks for children and young people:



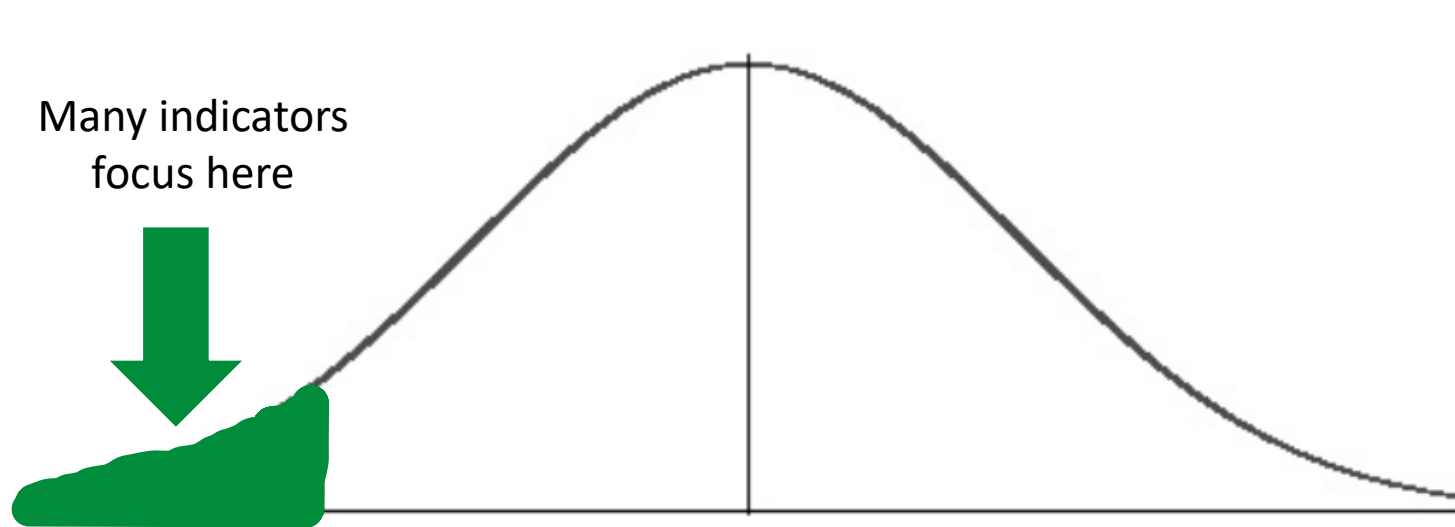
# What has worked well...

- ✓ Reflect tremendous evidence, expertise, consultation, relationships, goodwill
- ✓ Reflect the breadth and complexity of development and the social and environmental determinants
- ✓ Advance our knowledge
- ✓ Maximising the utility of administrative data
- ✓ Support transparency and accountability
- ✓ Identified gaps in data and evidence

# Challenges with these frameworks

- ❖ Don't solve problems in their own right
- ❖ Don't come with a manual
- ❖ Don't assign roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Too many
- ❖ Varied age coverage
- ❖ Still many data limitations and gaps

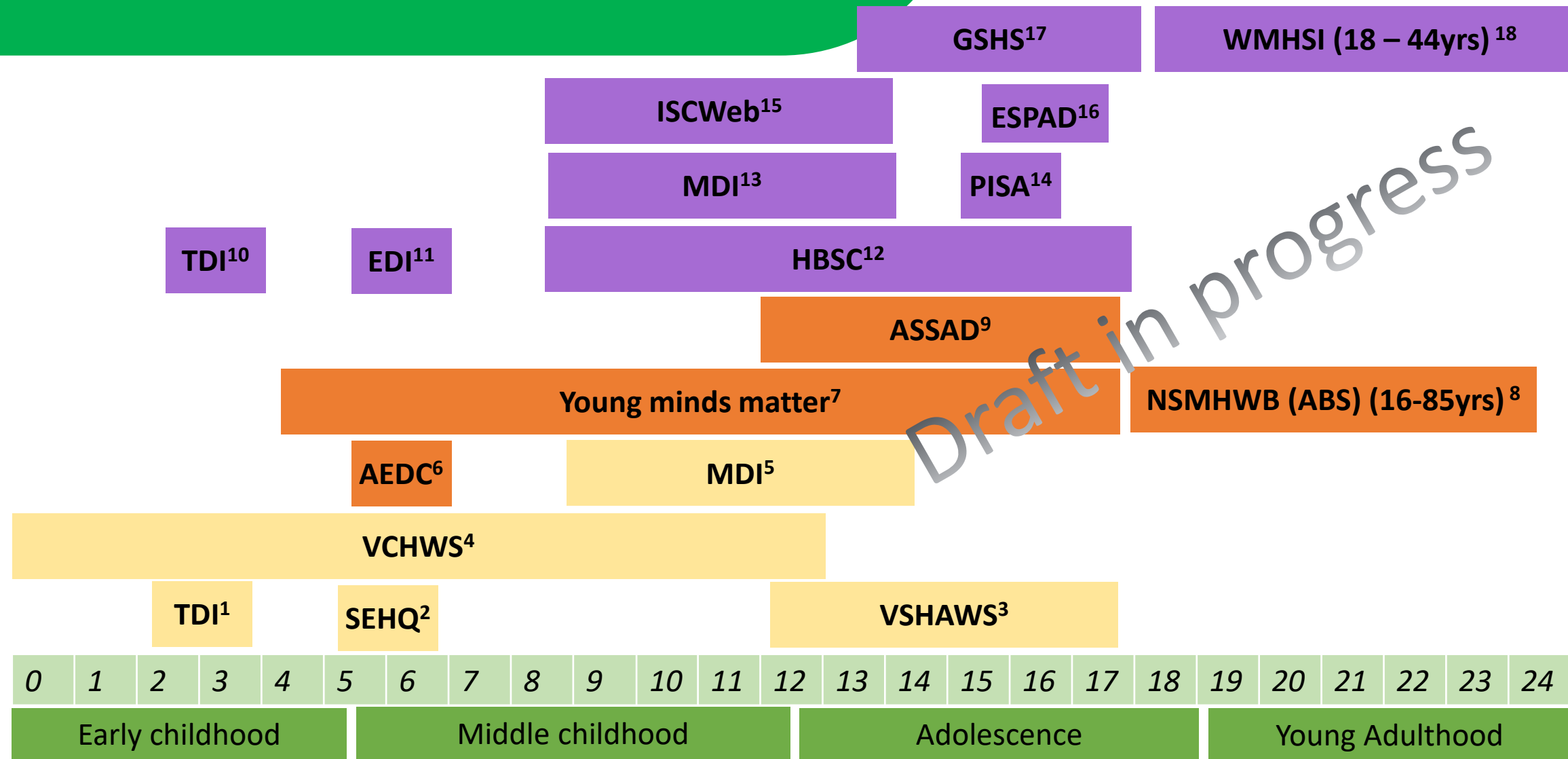
# Data limitations



- Data more readily available from service utilisation for those who need help and support
- But this doesn't tell us broader need in the community
- May be also a reflection of service availability and accessibility

- *Need more than what current service data can tell us*
- *Find ways to leverage universal touch points, enhance existing collections, data linkage etc*
- *Need to supplement with data collections – surveys of children and young people and their families*

# Data collections



Draft in progress

- Local - State of Victoria
- National – Australia wide
- International



What else might help in considering a wellbeing budget for children and young people in Australia?

# How to do this? (1)

*“Systems Leadership for Child and Youth Well-being”*

A Joint Every Child and ANZSOG Project

## **Stage 1 Synthesis Report, 2021**

Michael Hogan, Lin Hatfield Dodds, Laura Barnes and Karen Struthers

[https://www.everychild.co/systems\\_leadership\\_for\\_child\\_wellbeing](https://www.everychild.co/systems_leadership_for_child_wellbeing)

*“...focused on the opportunities for better aligned and integrated approaches across and within systems in governance, policy, programs, investment, workforce, community engagement and services and infrastructure” (p6)*

Six key systems elements to improve child and youth well-being:

Concerted leadership

Putting data and learning to work

Smarter investment

Integrated delivery

Engaged public

Stronger workforces

# How to do this? (2)

*“Child responsive budgeting”*

Thinking about children explicitly while constructing a budget (not as an afterthought)

*Alicia Mollaun  
2022, The  
Policymaker*

It is **not** a separate budget for children, rather considers their current and future needs when developing policy

Calls for:

Budget analysis from a child centred perspective

Analysis of children at **all** stages of the policy cycle

Better data to highlight importance of improved investment in children

Intergenerational focus

Advocacy from outside of government

# How to do this? (3)

## “Anticipatory governance”

Sindall, C., Lo, S., & Capon, T. (2021). [Governance for the well-being of future generations](https://doi.org/10.1111/jpc.15813). *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 57(11), 1749–1753. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpc.15813>

Boston, J. (2016). [Anticipatory Governance how well is New Zealand safeguarding the future?](https://doi.org/10.26686/pq.v12i3.4614) *Policy Quarterly*, 12(3), 11–24. <https://doi.org/10.26686/pq.v12i3.4614>

## This includes:

Genuine concern and attention to future generations

“*Intergenerational justice*” - current generations should act in ways that ensure that future generations are better off

Embed sustainability principle in all relevant policies

Comprehensive and holistic measurement and reporting

Participatory processes in policy making, especially long-term policy making

# International inspiration

## WALES

- *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act* (2015)
- Future Generations Commissioner
- 7 National Wellbeing Goals
- Sustainable development principle
- All public bodies have a duty in law to take action and set out how they will work towards the wellbeing goals
- Youth parliament
- Voting local from 16yrs
- Child poverty strategy

## SCOTLAND

- *Getting It Right For Every Child ...so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential*
- Built on the UNCRC
- Policy and legislation
- National performance framework
- Commitment to eradicate child poverty
- Emphasis on working together
- Embraces positive language

## NEW ZEALAND

- 1<sup>st</sup> Wellbeing Budget in 2019 including focus on improving child wellbeing
- Living Standards Framework - updated in 2021 to include a renewed focus on child wellbeing
- Child and youth wellbeing strategy 2019
  - *What makes a good life?* - Consultation with over 6000 children and young people including priority groups
  - Addressing data gaps

### References:

1. Welsh Government. (2015). *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Essentials Guide*. <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>
2. Scottish Government (2022) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-right-child-girfec-policy-statement>
3. New Zealand [Child and Youth Wellbeing \(childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz\)](https://www.childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz) and <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/tp/living-standards-framework-2021-html#section-1>

# Call to action:


*“It is time to reimagine wellbeing and place the future of our children and young people at the centre of public action”*

# MJA

The Medical Journal of Australia  
Australia's most trusted source of medical information

Editorials | [Open Access](#) |    

## The Future Healthy Countdown 2030: holding Australia to account for the health and wellbeing of future generations

Sandro Demaio, Sharon R Goldfeld, Anne Hollonds, George C Patton, Fiona J Stanley, Rosemary Calder, Kate Lycett, Zuleika Arashiro 

First published: 11 October 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.51746>

# Where to from here

- **Accountability is key**
- Consider *how* frameworks can be used at all levels
- Build on what has been done already
- Mix of outcomes and lead indicators
- **Start small and manageable**
- Focus 0-24
- Strengths based approach – avoid deficit focus
- Address priority data and evidence gaps
- **Include voice of children and young people**

