

# A wellbeing framework in action

## ANU-ACT Government collaboration to centre wellbeing in policy decision-making

Dr Joanne Rathbone

ACT Wellbeing Framework Project



**ACT**  
Government



Australian  
National  
University

# 2025 National Forum on Australia's Wellbeing



## 7th OECD World Forum on Well-being

“need to strengthen the integration of data”

*ACT Wellbeing Framework – domains that impact quality of life for Canberrans, and indicators for wellbeing impact assessment.*



# ACT Wellbeing Framework

## ANU-ACT Government Partnership

Bringing **policy makers, data custodians, and experts** together to identify **life-course drivers of child wellbeing in the ACT**

- Develop cross-government partnerships and data infrastructure
- Identify policy targets to improve wellbeing of Canberrans
- Test world-first solutions that advance the science of wellbeing and tackle policy problems in novel ways

*“The job of any government is to secure the future of the nation. Nothing is more important to the future of any nation than its children, and ensuring they have every opportunity to live productive and happy lives”.*

*Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth*





**Engaging with inter-disciplinary experts across the ANU and national research institutions (>50 experts to date)**



## **Stream 1**

Child wellbeing in  
the ACT

Linking ACT Health  
and ACT Education  
jurisdictional data

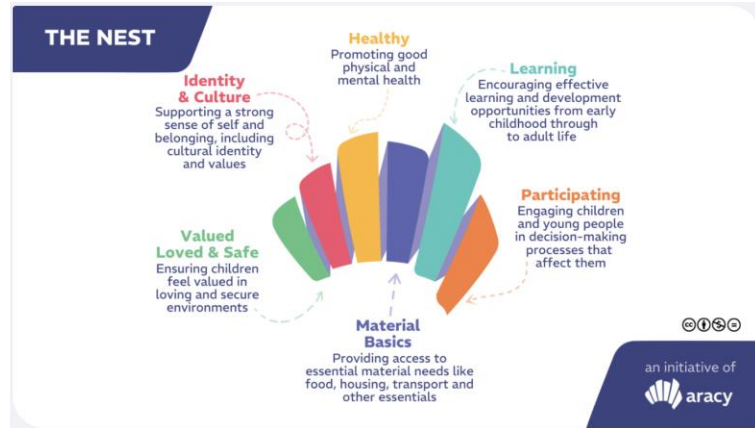
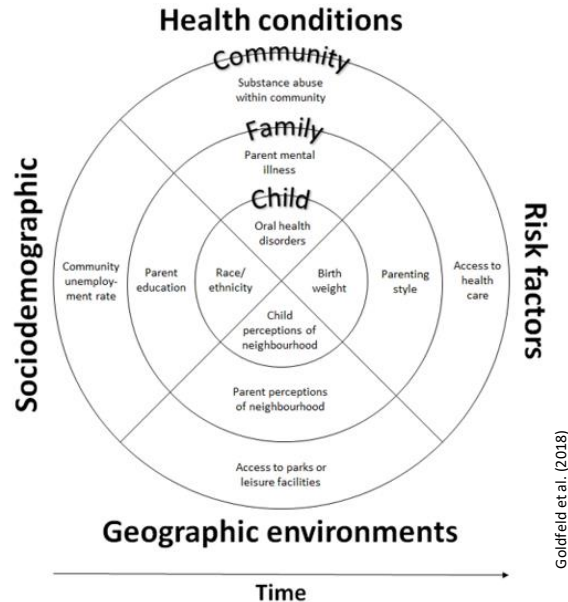


# Stream 1

Using linked ACT Health and ACT Education jurisdictional data to investigate life-course drivers of child wellbeing in the ACT

Unique longitudinal data that includes both **objective and subjective** indicators of disadvantage and wellbeing

- Enabling multi-dimensional approach
- Supporting Wellbeing Team (ACT CMTEDD) in setting up governance processes for data linkage and research partnership



## **Stream 1**

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## **Stream 2**

Building evidence  
base using national  
data

Projects that have  
policy impact built  
in from the start



# Stream 2

What should policy makers focus on to get more bang for their buck?

If we could increase school belonging among disadvantaged students, how would this impact their learning trajectories?



Testing **which social determinants** outlined in the National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025-2035 **uniquely predict self-harm and suicidal ideation** among Australian youth (aged 16-24)  
*Robertson et al. under review at Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*

Developing an agent-based modelling tool for **testing hypothetical interventions** to inform policy decision-making  
*Knight et al. in progress*

Investigating **which domains** of wellbeing are protective against youth self-harm and suicidality, and **how does the relative importance of protective factors change** as children grow and develop?  
*Campbell et al., 2025 Lancet Psychiatry*





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### **Stream 3**

Supporting Life  
Course Data  
Initiative + ACT  
pilot

Identifying  
pathways out of  
entrenched  
disadvantage for  
children and young  
people

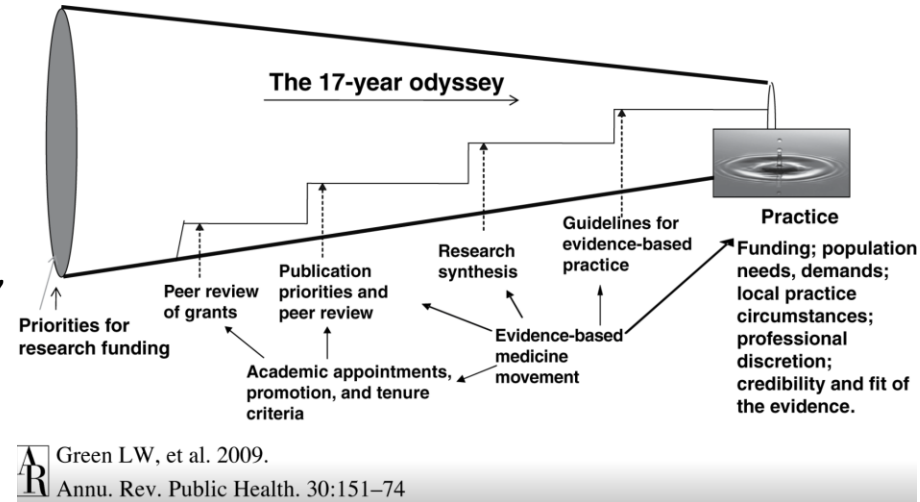


# Accelerating research impact

Common critiques of knowledge translation process:

- It is slow!
- Research findings are often not readily translatable or meet the specific needs of policy makers (e.g., in Australia, ACT)

Partnerships like the ANU-ACT Government partnership have the potential to generate novel insights, advance science, and shorten the knowledge translation lag (or gap)



# Thank you

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