



31 January 2023

Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: [MeasuringWhatMatters@Treasury.gov.au](mailto:MeasuringWhatMatters@Treasury.gov.au)

Dear Minister

### **Measuring what matters consultation**

I am pleased to provide the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation's (ANMF) submission to the Treasury's consultation '*measuring what matters*'. The ANMF acknowledges the Labor Government's commitment to Australia's healthcare workforce, of which well over 50 percent are nurses, midwives, and care workers, and commends Labor for looking beyond traditional macroeconomic indicators to consider the broader range of holistic and interlinked social and environmental factors that must be considered to lift living standards, boost intergenerational mobility, and create more opportunities for more people.

### **About the ANMF**

The ANMF is Australia's largest national union and professional nursing and midwifery organisation. In collaboration with the ANMF's eight state and territory branches, we represent the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 320,000 nurses, midwives, and care workers across the country.

Our members work in the public and private health, aged care, and disability sectors across a wide variety of urban, rural, and remote locations. We work with them to improve their ability to deliver safe and best practice care in each and every one of these settings, fulfil their professional goals and achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Our strong and growing membership and integrated role as both a trade union and professional organisation provides us with a complete understanding of all aspects of the nursing and midwifery professions and see us uniquely placed to defend and advance our professions.

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Through our work with members, we aim to strengthen the contribution of nursing and midwifery to improving Australia's health and aged care systems, and the health of our national and global communities.

### ***A wellbeing-focussed budget framework***

The ANMF commends the Labor Government's plans to move towards a Federal Budget that is underpinned and guided by a focus on wellbeing and 'measuring what matters'. Looking to international examples including the OECD Framework for Measuring Well-being and Progress and other countries' approaches is a sound starting point, particularly with the acknowledgement that the development of appropriate and relevant indicators for Australia will demand adaptations and the identification of sound indicators for our unique context and community. Here, the ANMF encourages and recommends the Australian Government engage in ongoing dialogue and consultation across a diverse range of stakeholders with multidisciplinary expertise as well as the wider community, particularly those from vulnerable and marginalised communities such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse Australians, people affected by mental illness, and gender and sexually diverse people. This will ensure that both everyday Australians and experts with specialised knowledge are heard and understood. This will be integral to ensuring that what matters to everyone is adequately incorporated into data collection, planning, analysis, and decision-making and will help to support the future sustainability and integration of appropriate measures of wellbeing into Government policy making and budgets.

It is important that the views and priorities of ANMF members as well as the views of other union members and our broader community inform the development and ongoing refinement of an Australian Wellbeing Budget Framework. This is an opportunity to reframe and broaden the debate around what is valued and contributes to our individual and collective wellbeing. The ANMF and other unions are optimally placed to consult and work with the government to ensure that the diverse voices of working Australians are heard throughout the Wellbeing Budget process. One area where greater data collection and monitoring is necessary is the Australian nursing, midwifery, and care worker workforce, including the upstream education and training pipeline of students as they prepare for future careers in the health, aged care, and other (e.g., maternity care, disability, mental health, etc.) sectors. Improved insight into Australia's current and future healthcare workforce will be vital to ensuring success across a range of wellbeing domains and outcomes (e.g., access to services, health inequality, mental health etc.), so incorporation of healthcare workforce indicators into the Framework is strongly recommended.

We believe that the 2023-24 Federal Budget is a major opportunity to enshrine what matters most to Australians through the integration of more detailed and holistic consideration and measurement of agreed indicators that go beyond traditional macro-economic factors. This budget can also substantially contribute to breaking down existing barriers that prevent nurses, midwives, and carers from working to their full potential to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians, now and in the future.



The ANMF has five priorities that we seek to advance in the lead up to the Federal Budget 2023-24. Each of these priorities is integral to supporting optimal wellbeing for all Australians and should be addressed through the identification of relevant wellbeing indicators for each:

- 1. A high-quality, well-funded, and sustainable health and maternity care system with the capacity and resources to meet increased demand and complex needs across all sectors from preventive and primary health to hospital and end of life care.**
- 2. A strong, valued aged care workforce that is supported to work safely and effectively to deliver high-quality, dignified care to all residents and clients.**
- 3. A strong, valued post-pandemic healthcare and maternity workforce that is supported to work safely and effectively to deliver the best possible experience and outcomes to every patient and client.**
- 4. Gender equity in all Australian workplaces and enhanced recognition of and solutions to the increased burden on the nursing, midwifery, and carer workforce.**
- 5. Future-ready policies, legislation, and practices that genuinely and proactively address the climate crisis and its impacts on Australia, the region, and the world.**

In our wealthy, well-resourced, country, every Australian should be able to expect and receive the very best care, delivered in a timely fashion, according to their wishes, in a place of their choosing. A clear focus on identifying and monitoring what matters to the diverse Australian community with regarding to achieving optimal wellbeing is a necessity. To achieve this, genuine, significant, and sustained reform is urgently required. This is particularly apparent in the OECD indicators the Government's Budget paper (Statement 4: Measuring What Matters) identified as declining and/or performing below the OECD average (e.g., indicators for gender-related wage parity and safety, labour underutilisation, social support, species extinction, household debt, and material footprint etc.). Australia's less than successful performance in terms of the Closing the Gap initiative is another example of where further work is required. As recognised by the Treasury, the OECD and other countries have established existing approaches for embedding a wellbeing focus in measurement and monitoring. The [Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership \(WEGo\)](#) is a collaboration of national and regional governments that promote the sharing of expertise and transferable policy practices to deepen understanding and advance a shared ambition to building wellbeing economic. National government members currently include Scotland, New Zealand, Iceland, Wales, and Finland.

In line with our Federal Budget priorities, the ANMF recommends the following actions:

1. Australia should join the Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership (WEGo) and establish a independent body to lead the wellbeing management process.
2. [Social determinants of health](#) should be considered and incorporated into an Australian wellbeing focussed framework.



3. The Australian Government should ensure broad and ongoing consultation with experts, unions, and the wider community regarding Australia's Wellbeing Framework to enable sustainable and adaptable inclusion and measurement of what matters to all Australians.

The ANMF looks forward to the 2023 release of the Government's proposed stand-alone "Measuring What Matters Statement" and to working closely with the Government in the next steps to facilitating a more informed and inclusive policy dialogue on how to improve the quality of life of all Australians.

The ANMF also looks forward to working with the Government to help realise the full potential for nurses, midwives, and carers to have safe, rewarding employment and to continue supporting all Australians to stay healthy and to receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Annie Butler  
Federal Secretary