

# OPTIONS FOR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING LIVEABILITY

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Prepared for Penrith City Council and the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

## Acknowledgements

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## About the Report

This report has been produced by Net Balance Management Group for Penrith City Council and the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government to map current research and thinking on the state of community liveability indicator development in Australia.

It is our intention this report facilitates further thinking and research in this area by:

- a) Increasing the amount of information in the public domain on community indicators.
- b) Providing a starting point for local councils seeking to develop their own community indicators.
- c) Stimulating discussion on the options for local government in developing an indicator framework that comprehensively covers the scope of their activities.
- d) Breaking down barriers with reporting on community indicators, including concerns about reporting on issues that councils do not control, and the importance of establishing an appropriate context if different local government areas are being compared.
- e) Critically examining the advantages, challenges and limitations of community indicators.

The measurement of community wellbeing is a dynamic and continually evolving area. This report endeavours to provide a comprehensive 'snapshot' of publicly available information as at October 2011, and aims to build on existing research pieces and initiatives, rather than replicate previous work. During the course of our research, we were made aware of a number of relevant initiatives underway which were not accessible for inclusion within this report, as they were pending completion, or not publicly available.

Whilst we have made every reasonable endeavour to ensure the accuracy, currency and reliability of information, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, with respect to this report. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors, unless otherwise referenced.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

Community 'liveability' indicators (hereafter referred to as 'community indicators'), are increasingly being used to report on the interconnected nature of many social, economic and environmental aspects of society, and to reflect the increasing focus on wellbeing, and quality of life within communities. At a local government level, community indicators provide a means to engage communities, inform improvements in service delivery, inform policy and planning development, and facilitate more meaningful performance reporting. While there are a number of different frameworks in existence, there is currently no consistent approach adopted by local government across Australia, nor specific guidance provided by the Federal or State governments.

Penrith City Council (PCC), in partnership with the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG), has established a project to develop a robust community indicator framework that will address the needs of PCC and be applicable, at least in part, to other local governments across Australia.

The project aims to establish a more consistent basis for council community indicator reporting with a view to ultimately creating a framework that can be broadly applicable across Australian local governments and other organisations.

## 1.2 Project Structure and Objectives

The project comprises two stages:

- *Stage 1:* the collation of existing research and knowledge on current community indicator frameworks that may be applicable in the local government context.
- *Stage 2:* informed by the research and analysis from Stage 1, the development of a suite of community indicators suitable for standard application by growth area councils, by PCC and potentially, other councils across Australia.

This report comprises the findings of Stage 1. The specific methodology for Stage 2 is contingent on the outcomes of the Stage 1 research.

## 1.3 Project Partners

PCC and ACELG engaged Net Balance in July 2011 to undertake Stage 1 of the project. Reference to 'project partners' within this report refers to these three organisations.

## 1.4 Overview of Stage 1 Report

This Stage 1 report (report) aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing community indicator frameworks that may have utility in the local government community reporting context. The report discusses in detail six community indicator frameworks shortlisted through independent research and discussions with local government personnel (see Acknowledgements). By examining the relative merits and shortcomings of different approaches, particularly in relation to their applicability in a local government context, this report aims to be an information resource that can assist councils to think through their own approach.

The scope of this report includes:

- Background information on community indicator frameworks and reference to other projects being undertaken in this area, including definitions of key terminology informed by a review of existing research discussions with local government stakeholders in various states across Australia.
- Key considerations for local government in developing a community indicator framework, highlighting the need for greater links to state and national strategic planning/reporting processes.
- The methodology used to identify and analyse the shortlisted community indicator frameworks.
- Analysis of the six shortlisted community indicator frameworks and approaches being adopted by local councils, both nationally and abroad, including a brief background of each framework, key attributes, strengths and weaknesses and practicality of application in a local government context.
- A high level outline of indicators within the six indicator frameworks and their taxonomy.
- An introductory analysis of those indicators that may provide representative benchmarks for the activities of local government in relation to improving quality of life for communities.
- Recommendations of potential next steps for PCC and ACELG on this project and to inform a pathway for Stage 2.

### **1.5 Key Assumptions, Scope and Limitations**

The research of existing community indicator frameworks has been primarily drawn from publicly available information (as at August 2011). From the spectrum of community indicator frameworks reviewed, a shortlist was identified against the requirements of local government in Australia for more in-depth study. This report does not advocate the particular frameworks selected, nor is any selected framework being proposed as a 'one-size-fits-all' solution for local councils. Several of the frameworks analysed, broadly demonstrated recurring or common structural and thematic attributes and approaches. In those instances, the shortlisting is intended to identify 'representative' *framework types*<sup>1</sup>. Otherwise, community indicator frameworks were selected where they provided a significant variance to the representative approach, or a unique feature of interest.

Financial, human resources policy, organisation resource consumption, and other 'council' service performance indicators are excluded from the scope of this report.

A glossary of key terms used within this report is provided at *Appendix A: Glossary*.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Community Indicators Victoria framework was informed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts and so is taken to be representative of this type of approach.

## 2. Background to Community Indicators and Frameworks

*'Community (progress) indicators are no more - and no less - than tools for translating the abstract goals of citizens and communities into clear, tangible and commonly understood outcomes and for assessing and communicating progress in achieving these outcomes and goals.'*<sup>2</sup>

In Australia and internationally, many local councils, national and state governments, communities, and other organisations have increasingly developed and used community indicators over the last decade. Such indicators have been perceived as an extension of more traditional econometric measures of progress, aiming to provide broader insight on progress relating to community wellbeing and quality of life. For local government, community indicators inform regulatory compliance reporting, strategic decision-making, policy direction, measure progress on policy outcomes against targets, and provide a measure of accountability on service delivery performance with local communities.

A significant body of local and international work exists on community indicator frameworks, as well as the development and use of these frameworks by local government and communities at differing levels of granularity. From a high level desktop review, the following reports were identified as relevant in providing the local government background context on existing community indicators and their application:<sup>3</sup>

- *Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) framework development report – 'Measuring wellbeing; engaging communities'*
- *City of Sydney by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney – 'City of Sydney Indicator Framework Final Report'*
- *Division of Local Government (DLG) of the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Premier and Cabinet 'Community Indicators Project: Community Strategic Planning Indicators Resource'.*

For the purposes of this project, the above reports have been used as reference points from which more tailored aspects of community framework and indicator development may be evolved, to meet the community reporting needs of Penrith City Council and other local councils, in NSW and nationally.

This report also looks at two levels of 'granularity' around community indicator reporting:

- a) *Framework level* - in terms of the broader scope, grouping, theming and taxonomy of the suite of indicators; and
- b) *Indicator level* - in terms of the specific profile of an indicator, measurement intent and application to measuring policy outcomes.

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2 Salvaris and Wiseman (2004)

3 An earlier research project (1999) sponsored by the City of Onkaparinga in South Australia, and assisted by the Local Government Research and Development Scheme, resulted in the production of an indicator development guide 'Monitoring outcomes: achieving goals' which also provides useful guidance for councils in this area.

## 2.1 Community indicator frameworks

This report defines a 'community indicator framework' as an overarching structure or approach used to measure progress in the community over time, through a suite of indicators relating to elements including 'liveability', 'quality of life', 'wellbeing' and/or 'sustainability'. Such frameworks may also be referred to as the 'quadruple bottom line' (QBL) which acknowledges environmental, social, economic and governance issues. A community indicator framework will encapsulate clearly defined themes<sup>4</sup>, categories of measurement and measurement processes, as well as identify relevant and reliable data sources. Community indicator frameworks will ideally be aligned to and informed by organisational decision-making and policy requirements.<sup>5</sup>

Indicator frameworks generally fall into two categories:

- i. those developed from the 'top-down' by planning experts and councils; and
- ii. those developed from the 'bottom-up' by community organisations.

Reporting to the community at a local government level has traditionally been driven by 'top-down' state regulation and reporting requirements (for example, operational planning and annual reports, and State of the Environment reports), focusing predominantly on areas of council control and delivery. Our research however suggests that to capture aspects of most importance and concern to the local community, there is a need to engage the public in the policy and program evaluation process.<sup>6</sup>

Ideally a community indicator framework will incorporate bottom-up community-identified elements *within* a top-down approach, and thereby capture the views and inputs of a range of stakeholders. The intent is a more coherent approach to measuring evidence of policy outcomes from a community perspective, within a public reporting context, as well as integrating council's broader performance and compliance reporting agendas. An integrated approach will address the needs of council from a policy setting and decision-making perspective, as well as enable reporting and strategic planning to focus on areas of community concern. It is arguable this also yields a more democratic approach, facilitating more effective evidence-based policy setting decisions and focusing evaluation mechanisms on community trends and outcomes.

## 2.2 Defining 'community indicators'

There exists a plethora of terms connoting 'community indicators'. These include references to 'liveability', 'quality of life', 'wellbeing' and 'sustainability' to name a few. These terms are used interchangeably, and in some contexts, one may be a subset of the other (for example in the State of Australian Cities 'Liveability' is a subset of 'Quality of Life'). At other times, there will be specific elements of distinction, (for example, the depth of focus on environmental issues). In this report, we have endeavoured to identify frameworks and indicators using any of the above terminology, and refer to these broadly under the term 'community indicators'.

Our interpretation of 'community indicators' refers to measures of outcomes on aspects of 'liveability' of particular interest to a local community, in respect of personal and community aspirations. Community indicators enable tracking of trends and assessment of progress for local

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<sup>4</sup> Thematic areas are often referred to as 'domains'. For example the Community Indicators Victoria framework includes 5 domains: (1) healthy, safe and inclusive communities; (2) dynamic, resilient local economies; (3) sustainable built and natural environments; (4) culturally rich and vibrant communities; (5) democratic and engaged communities

<sup>5</sup> The DLG Community Indicators Project report provides a useful overview of community indicators.

<sup>6</sup> (Quinlivan, 2008).



communities on key areas of their interest. This definition is in keeping with other frameworks including the City of Sydney, and CIV.<sup>7</sup> The discussion paper for the Victorian Community Indicators Project of August 2005, provides a useful overview of community indicators and frameworks.<sup>8</sup> There is also a distinction between 'community indicators' and 'council performance indicators'. 'Community indicators' are taken to provide a measure of policy outcomes. They focus on outcome measures on key areas of interest and relevance to a community and its wellbeing (irrespective of the level of council control), which may reflect broader socio-economic demographic attributes.

'Council performance indicators', typically measure inputs or outputs in relation to the achievement of specific performance or service delivery objectives as set by council and within council control. Referred to by PCC as 'city indicators', these respond to operational/ delivery actions and governance responsibilities of a council, and are typically in accordance with a council's organisational plans and regulatory reporting requirements.

There is nonetheless a spectrum between *concern* and *control*, of which the distinctions may be made as follows:

- i. *community concern* - where council does not have direct control or influence but could play an educative, advocacy or lobbying role on behalf of the local community,
- ii. *council influence* - where council has partial or shared responsibility for outcomes with the community and other groups, and is distinguished from the traditional sphere of
- iii. *council control* - which relates to a council's areas of core service provision and other statutory responsibilities.

As an example, looking at the theme of 'health':

- Community Indicator (community concern) – *Life expectancy at birth*
- Community Indicator (council influence) – *Early childhood health centre attendance in last 12 months for children 0-4 years*
- Council performance indicator (within council control) – *Kilometres of dedicated walking and cycling trails.*

For meaningful reporting and specificity, it is recommended councils first review, and regroup where appropriate, potentially overlapping existing measures before seeking to develop new indicators.

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<sup>7</sup> See the City of Sydney Indicator Framework Final Report p13-19 (City of Sydney, 2011); and the Final Report of the Victorian Community Indicators Project (Wiseman J. *et al.*, 2006)

<sup>8</sup> Wiseman J. *et al.*, 2005: p. 6.

### 3. Considerations in Developing Community Indicator Frameworks

There are several drivers behind the development of community indicator frameworks at national, regional and local levels. Community indicator frameworks provide the engagement ‘architecture’ for framing the capture and evaluation of community issues of importance. They also provide a system for tracking and measuring policy outcomes and formalising inputs into decision-making. Frameworks also offer comparative profiling against other regions and enable the tracking of progress towards broader regional planning goals. Other drivers for councils include regulatory reporting requirements at a local level, and consideration of possible future requirements from a national level.

CIV<sup>9</sup> identifies key drivers for developing and implementing community indicators as:

- highlighting particular issues and trends important to local communities
- facilitating more effective citizen involvement in these areas
- focusing on a small number of ‘headline’ wellbeing measures
- measuring community trends and outcomes, rather than local government performance
- capturing social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance trends and outcomes; and
- facilitating better quality reporting and accountability.

#### 3.1 Regulatory requirements

It is important to understand the regulatory context in developing a community indicator framework to ensure data availability aligns with existing reporting requirements. The information obtained through those indicators also needs to inform policy, decision making and meet statutory requirements in a timely manner.

All councils across Australia are required to report periodically on their performance. There is, however, no uniform approach, with notable variances in requirements for both plan and policy development and reporting on progress. Best practice in councils has seen reporting develop against QBL principles relating to *environmental, social, economic and governance* issues. A number of states have encouraged ‘State of the Environment’ (SoE) style reporting to facilitate high level reporting of performance on key environmental areas. A number of councils have independently adopted a similar approach to reporting on key local social issues.

Recent regulatory changes in New South Wales (see section 3.1.1) contained in the *Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009 (NSW)* and the implementation of an ‘Integrated Planning and Reporting’ (IP & R) framework have introduced requirements beyond traditional reporting by councils. In addition to reporting on council operational activities and outputs, councils must now also identify community aspirations and goals. Councils are required to report on how their activities contribute to achieving these higher order objectives.

In Victoria, the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003* aimed to integrate a ‘triple-bottom line’ approach to policy and planning and strengthen local democracy and community engagement. The Act requires local governments in Victoria to develop integrated four-year Council Plans.

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<sup>9</sup> Wiseman J. *et al.*, 2006.

In Queensland, the *Local Government Act (2009)* similarly requires every Queensland council to develop a long term 'whole-of-community' plan (at least 10 years) that identifies a community's goals and aspirations for the future which can interface with a council's goals, strategies and policies to achieve this. The process is informed by stakeholders across government, business, interest groups, individuals and community organisations.

Western Australia is currently implementing IP&R requirements similar to New South Wales.

### **3.1.1 New South Wales**

A comprehensive overview of the regulatory framework and recent New South Wales IP&R Framework is provided in the *NSW DLG Government Community Indicators Project Report* (2011). The IP&R guidelines,

*'recognise that most communities share similar aspirations: A safe, healthy and pleasant place to live, a sustainable environment, opportunities for social interaction, reliable infrastructure, etc. The difference lies in how each community responds to these needs.'*<sup>10</sup>

Key aspects include:

- Requirements on councils to develop a Community Strategic Plan (CSP)<sup>11</sup> to identify the priorities and aspirations for the area over a 10 year period and addressing civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues.
- The CSP should be informed by community consultation and based on social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.
- The CSP may include objectives to be delivered by State agencies and community groups (that is, objectives not in council's direct area of control).
- The CSP forms part of a broader reporting framework and must include ways to measure progress towards the broader community aspirations it outlines. Councils are expected to report quarterly on budget matters (by exception), six monthly on their progress against the four year delivery program and four yearly on their progress towards the aspirations in the Community Strategic Plan. An annual report must also be prepared, which contains both full financial reports and information on what the council has achieved that year, in the context of what was outlined in the Operational Plan. Generally, the indicators by which councils measure their progress may be set by individual councils (See Figure 1).

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<sup>10</sup> NSW Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Planning a Sustainable Future: Planning and Reporting Guidelines for local government in NSW, 2010

<sup>11</sup> Section 402 of the *Local Government Act 1993* NSW.





**Figure 1.** NSW Local government IP&R framework.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.2 Other influences

Given PCC's positioning as a growth area metropolitan council, it was considered pertinent to look at issues of specific interest to this type of council, as there are community needs and interests regarding liveability which will be unique to PCC's peri-urban context.

#### 3.2.1 National Growth Areas Alliance

PCC is a member of the **National Growth Areas Alliance** (NGAA) which represents some twenty four councils around Australia, whose growth rate will be double that of the national rate over the next twenty years. Common themes of these cities include housing affordability, environmental conservation, and the specific needs of young families. Issues specific to these regions include:

- High petrol costs due to lack of public transport services
- Fewer local jobs
- Deficiency in education, health, and community services
- Deficiency in housing diversity and high housing stress
- The NGAA aims to achieve similar performance to metropolitan areas in these growth regions, and sees some key goals as:
  - Improved access to employment opportunities (including secondary and tertiary education facilities, and diversity of local employment)
  - Improved personal mobility through public transport and to reduce the environmental impact of car emissions
  - More local community services (including prevention and early intervention programs, skill development for parents, children, and young people, support for vulnerable families)

<sup>12</sup> NSW Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Planning a Sustainable Future: Planning and Reporting Manual for local government in NSW, 2010.

- More diverse housing (including planning requirements and incentives for a mixture of tenures, sizes, and affordability).

As deduced from our research and the NGAA's objectives, a community indicator framework relevant for growth area councils will need to acknowledge the above particular features of the region's demographic profile, in addressing broader community wellbeing, liveability and sustainability outcomes. For example, the framework for a growth area council may need to examine the potential socio-economic impact of extended infrastructure and/or Greenfield housing developments on community wellbeing, community leadership, or feelings of connectedness.

Alternatively, the interplay of environmental aspects such as local biodiversity and areas of regional environmental significance, recreation, with community health; or the impact of local services and access to public transport versus employment productivity levels, and household income levels. Some of these aspects may differ with other 'types' of councils and their respective demographic profiles. The flexibility of a common community indicator framework for such contextual differences will be a fundamental consideration if a harmonised national framework is proposed.

### **3.2.2 Federal indicator development**

Federally, focus has been observed on reviewing strategic planning frameworks at a 'capital cities' level, and essentially as a 'top-down', principles-based approach. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Council has been examining capital city strategic planning system reforms, to develop best practice principles for dealing with future impacts of population and economic growth, climate change, housing affordability and urban congestion. Working with the Major Cities Unit of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, the aim has been to develop harmonised criteria that can be applied nationally, not only to capital cities, but potentially all Australian cities, so as to

*'... ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable and socially inclusive and are well placed to meet future challenges and growth.'*

Nine criteria have been developed requiring capital city strategic planning systems to take a more integrated approach and a longer term horizon; provide for nationally significant economic infrastructure; create better connections with regional centres; ensure appropriate balance of infill and greenfield development; provide more effective implementation arrangements and encourage private sector investment and innovation.

The COAG criteria, listed in *Appendix C: COAG Reform Council on Capital Cities – 9 National Criteria*, focus on planning of major cities. Key areas identified, however are still likely to have some relevance for indicator development, as ultimately it will be important to measure how implementing the planning criteria affects quality of life within cities. The intention is to submit these nine criteria to COAG in December 2011.

The Major Cities Unit has also been advising the federal government on policy, planning and infrastructure impacting on Australian cities and suburbs, releasing a series of discussion and research papers looking at the state of Australian cities and urban design principles. In May 2011, a **National Urban Policy 'Our Cities our Future'**, focusing on major cities, was released for public consultation. Chapter 5, of that publication itemises a suite of high level indicators such as access/mobility, housing affordability and mix, supporting community wellbeing, and defines 'liveability' as:

*‘... the way the urban environment supports the quality of life and wellbeing of communities. Quality of life and wellbeing encompasses mental and physical health, happiness and life satisfaction for individuals and supportive social relationships in communities. Quality of life is enhanced by environmental sustainability, in particular with regard to low levels of pollution and access to quality open space and natural landscapes. Wellbeing is important to economic prosperity as poor health and depleted social cohesion have high economic costs as well as social costs.’*

A Sustainable Population Strategy Taskforce was also established in May 2010 to support the development of a strategy to ensure that future population change is compatible with the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of Australia<sup>13</sup>. Correspondingly, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is developing a set of sustainability indicators to measure Australia's progress towards more sustainable communities. With funding of some \$10.1 million, the **Measuring Sustainability Program** is intended to better inform decision makers, and provide a channel for data agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to regularly release data at a national, state, and where available, regional level.

Separate to federal government efforts, there is also a current proposal from a range of stakeholders examining the opportunity to create an Australian National Development Index, using the Community Indicators Victoria framework as a foundation. This idea includes in its objectives,

*‘to build a foundation to articulate a shared vision of what really constitutes sustainable wellbeing (in Australia), and to measure national progress toward, or movement away from, achieving that vision’.*<sup>14</sup>

To assist in any future reporting for national purposes, the framework developed by PCC should aim to align with likely national requirements. Whilst several of these initiatives are in development or consultation stage, engagement with the Federal level is encouraged so as to facilitate agreement on the development of coherent linkages or hierarchies that harmonise high order indicator frameworks with local ‘bottom-up’ localised community indicators. It would make sense for councils to remain aware of these developments and to look actively for opportunities to engage with these consultation initiatives.

### **3.3 Challenges with community indicators**

*Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.*  
*Albert Einstein (attributed)*

There are a number of challenges to consider in community indicator development and reporting:

- **Data usefulness:** Ensuring qualitative data or concepts collected (such as community perceptions of wellbeing) are structured to inform organisational strategy/policy, decision-making and planning requirements and to add value to quantitative data sources. These data sources should help councils meet the changing needs for future infrastructure planning and service delivery.
- **Data availability:** The variation in availability and reliability of data both within and between states (including varying data boundaries around different population sets), as well as the

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<sup>13</sup> Further information available here: <http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population/about/index.html>

<sup>14</sup> Further background information to the proposal is available here:  
[http://www.acfonline.org.au/uploads/res/ANDI\\_Backgrounder.pdf](http://www.acfonline.org.au/uploads/res/ANDI_Backgrounder.pdf)



frequency of reporting of such data, will impact the type of community indicator framework developed and its comparability between regions.

- *Cost of data collection and analysis:* Data availability and cost of collection is a perennial challenge for consistent indicator reporting. Ideally, data will either be readily available, or able to be sourced at a reasonable cost/benefit ratio for new measures. To determine appropriate methods for data collection, consideration will need to be given to a proportionate cost for the type/quality of information obtained. For example, some data will be cost effective for councils to obtain (e.g. ABS data) although more difficult to influence for new measures. Other data is more expensive to collect (e.g. community survey responses), and may be less easily comparable across regions, but easier to tailor for specific data sought. In Victoria, Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) collects and collates data from a range of sources and makes it available to local councils and regions for their usage. This reduces the data collection and cost burden for Victorian based organisations (as the cost is borne instead by CIV and its funders).
- *Council's ability to influence:* Reporting on issues of concern and/or interest to the community will not always align with a council's direct area of control. Consideration needs to be given to how council will respond to and use information on areas outside their direct area of control or influence, for example, a potential advocacy or educative role.
- *Complexity:* Addressing the interconnectedness of indicators and potentially conflicting elements without adding overwhelming complexity to the framework is a challenge. A clear explanation of the rationale behind particular indicator groupings, and an explanation of key terminology, should aid in minimising confusion.
- *Comparable versus contextual:* If a harmonised national community indicator framework containing a suite of core, or universally applicable indicators is to be established, a key challenge will be ensuring comparability through the core indicator group, while also assisting local councils to track progress on issues of particular importance to their local context (e.g. a growth area council versus coastal). The Global Reporting Initiative reporting principles and framework offer insights into how these aspects might be approached, particularly through boundary setting and materiality considerations (see discussion in Section 0).

## 4. Framework Analysis Methodology

A review of twenty-six existing community indicator frameworks (see Appendix B) and associated literature (see Bibliography at Appendix D) has been undertaken to identify archetype community indicator frameworks. Of these, six community indicator frameworks were shortlisted in terms of their structure and content as the focus for further analysis.

These frameworks were chosen because they met the principles outlined below, and were identified by the authors as offering a point of difference to a particular area of interest for councils interested in developing a community indicator framework. For each of the six frameworks selected, a sample set of indicators was then extracted for more detailed analysis.

Following the framework analysis, Section 6 provides an overview of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework, which is widely used as a voluntary sustainability reporting framework. As an internationally adopted tool developed through in-depth, multi-stakeholder engagement across business, government and community sectors, and addressing QBL focus areas, it presents a unique precedent for consideration. The GRI is not a community indicator framework per se, but is explored because its architecture provides insights for lateral application.

### 4.1 Other considerations in selecting frameworks

This report aims to build on current thinking and research and is informed by:

- *Community Indicators Victoria framework development report – ‘Measuring wellbeing; engaging communities’*
- *City of Sydney by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney – ‘The City of Sydney Indicator Framework Final Report’*
- *The Division of Local Government (DLG) of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet ‘Community Indicators Project: Community Strategic Planning Indicators Resource’.*

This area is dynamic and at the time of authoring this report, new initiatives under development were being identified (for example, the work of the SHOROC councils in developing ‘Health of the Region’ indicators, not yet publicly available).

Our research was also informed by several individual perspectives from different Australian states, on the current status of community indicator developments within their regions. It was found, some of these models are still in early stages of development, or being overhauled. For example, a current leading model in Western Australia, by the City of Melville, will soon be undergoing significant review. An analysis of the model in its current form would, in the opinion of the authors be too premature to be meaningful.

Similarly in Queensland, significant work is underway to develop a ‘Community Indicators Queensland’ framework. Informed by the CIV model, this too was not at a stage of development conducive to inclusion. Led by the Urban Research Program at Griffith University, the draft indicator framework is currently being piloted across five local government authorities in Queensland with outcomes expected in March 2012.

We also draw attention to the work in progress by the City of Onkaparinga in South Australia which offers potential future insight.<sup>15</sup> An early study on indicators by the University of Adelaide used the City of Onkaparinga as a case study and also provides a useful guide on indicator development.<sup>16</sup>

## 4.2 Principles used to identify Frameworks for full analysis

Informed by the above desktop research, the following principles were synthesised by the authors in shortlisting frameworks for full analysis:

- *QBL outcomes* – the architecture and objectives of the framework focusing on measuring environmental, social, economic and governance policy outcomes
- *Universality* – the categories of measurement and measurement processes enable a broad range of local councils to report
- *Localisation* – application of the framework to the Australian context with potential extension to the demographic profile of a particular local government area
- *Currency* – the framework elements and theming are in use at time of writing or recently developed within the last three years
- *Comparative Utility* – the framework:
  - Enables councils to plan and assess progress towards goals
  - Enables benchmarking (from a baseline state) and trend analysis over time.
- *Uniqueness* – where multiple frameworks provide a similar approach a single framework has been selected as a representative example
- *Cycling* – framework protocols for ongoing data collection enables trend establishment over reporting cycles and historical measurement of progress for local government reporting.

*Note: As outlined in the assumptions in Section 1.5, although indicators are used by Councils to collect information on a range of issues, it is emphasised, this report is not examining those frameworks specifically designed to measure policy performance, service level reporting or corporate performance (such as financial performance or council operations).*

## 4.3 Frameworks selected for inclusion

In applying the above selection principles, six frameworks were shortlisted for further analysis. These are listed in Table 1 below, including a brief of selection rationale.

A full list of the twenty-six considered frameworks and analysis against the selection principles is provided at Appendix B: *Sample of existing frameworks*.

**Table 1.** Shortlisted Frameworks for Analysis.

Shortlisted Frameworks	Application of the Principles
<b>International framework examples</b>	
<b>1. Quality of Life in Bristol</b>	This framework addresses QBL outcomes through a range of indicators which are applicable to local councils in an Australian context. The framework commenced in 2001 and provides annual reporting on progress towards the city's 20:20 Plan. The framework represents a simple, clear structure, which sources data solely from a community survey. This allows an assessment of the capacity of community surveys to measure community wellbeing.

<sup>15</sup> See <<http://www.onkaparingacity.com/monitor/>>

<sup>16</sup> See <<http://aisr.adelaide.edu.au/cio/>>.



Shortlisted Frameworks	Application of the Principles
<b>International framework examples</b>	
<b>2. Quality of Life London</b>	This framework addresses QBL outcomes through an integrated structure, with indicators potentially applicable to local councils in an Australian context. Three reports have been produced since commencement of the framework in 2004 and provide a snapshot of the city to help inform policy making. The framework has a unique structure, due to the integration of social, environmental, and economic aspects.
<b>Australian state framework examples</b>	
<b>3. South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP)</b>	This framework addresses QBL outcomes through a range of indicators which are applicable to local councils in an Australian context. The framework allows for reporting every two years to chart progress towards targets set within the indicators. The SASP structure offers a unique approach not captured by the other chosen frameworks. Of particular interest was the direct relationship of the framework with the State's Strategic Plan and how this affects the indicator framing and reporting procedure. This approach was identified by the authors as a useful example of the linkage between local delivery plans and targets to State plans, thereby offering an insight into potential connections between state and local government reporting.
<b>4. Community Indicators Victoria (CIV)</b>	This framework addresses QBL outcomes through a range of indicators which are applicable to local councils in an Australian context. The framework provides updated data on indicators for use by local councils across Victoria for reporting and policy development purposes. While other research pieces exist on the Community Indicators Victoria framework (for example the DLG research on the applicability of the CIV framework for NSW), discussions with a variety of stakeholders in local government across Australia have identified this framework as a leading community indicator framework in Australia. The authors therefore considered it relevant to include an analysis of this framework.
<b>Australian local framework examples</b>	
<b>5. (Draft) City of Sydney Indicator Framework</b>	This is not publicly available as yet. This new framework addresses QBL outcomes through specific grouping of the indicators. The framework was chosen to provide an example of how the Community Indicators Victoria model has been applied by a single local council outside Victoria and adapted to their local (Sydney) context. Reporting has not yet been undertaken against the framework; however it is designed to facilitate periodic reporting (as will be required under the NSW IP&R guidelines) and to enable tracking of progress towards the City's 2030 Plan.
<b>6. State of the Shire (Sutherland Shire)</b>	This framework addresses QBL outcomes through specific grouping of indicators, and is applicable to local councils in an Australian context. The framework was initiated in 1997, and is regularly reported against to measure progress towards the Shire's vision and to assist in determining future actions to achieve this. The framework incorporates a reporting procedure not captured in the other frameworks. Reporting is focused on trend direction analysis towards set goals and is accompanied by an overview of why the trend is occurring and what the Council's proposed response is to address areas of need or concern.

## 4.4 Analysis approach

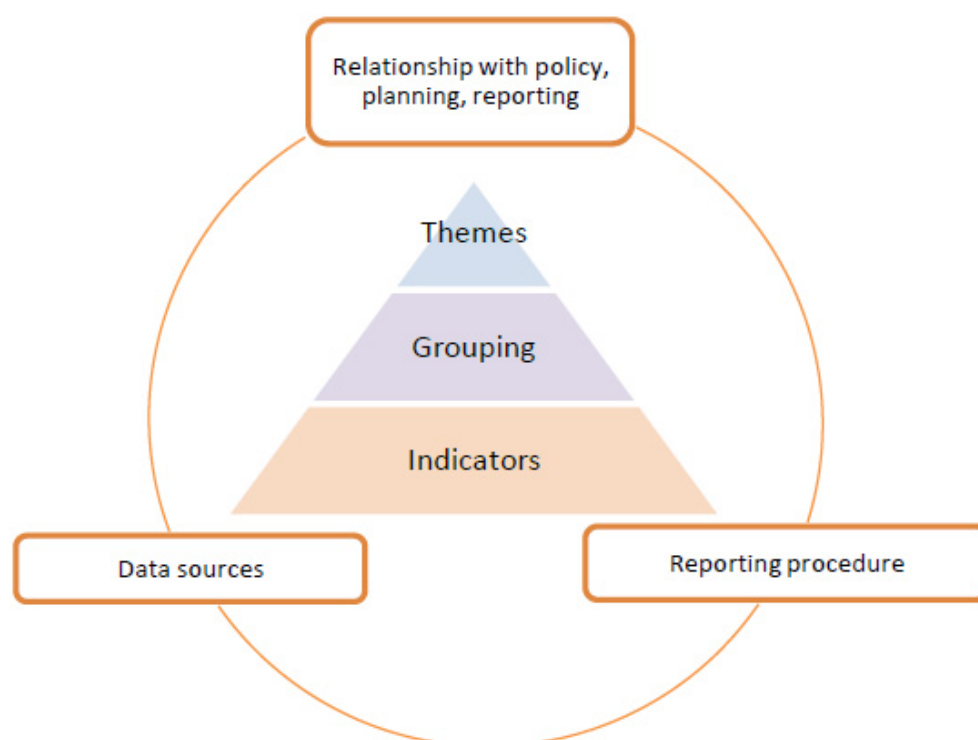
Analysis of the shortlisted frameworks is divided into two sections:

- i. the overarching *framework* structure, and
- ii. a high level analysis of particular *indicators* used within frameworks against a set of criteria.

### 4.4.1 Framework structure

Through our literature review and discussions with the project partners we identified a number of core structural elements to form the foundation for the framework analysis. These elements are shown in Figure 2 below. They include the framework taxonomy and three core framework considerations identified of interest to the project - including data sources, reporting procedures, and the relationship of frameworks and indicators to council policy, planning and reporting requirements.

The framework analysis section (Section 5) examines the structure of each of the six chosen frameworks according to these structural elements, and assesses the framework content against a set of criteria outlined in Table 2 below.



**Figure 2.** Structural elements of a community indicator framework.

The table over page outlines the assessment criteria used to review the shortlisted frameworks and the analysis of indicators within each.

**Table 2.** Criteria for Assessment of Frameworks.

Assessment Criteria	Description
<b>a) Framework structure</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	Purpose and motivation for developing and reporting against the framework.
<b>Indicator themes</b>	Generally indicators within a framework are arranged within a number of high level subject areas or themes. These themes may either be framed as pure subject areas or provide guidance on the desired direction of the indicators they represent.
<b>Indicator grouping</b>	Some frameworks further break down the indicators as groups within each theme. This may assist with data collection and analysis, and reporting on an aspect of the theme that is informed by several indicators. These groupings may either be framed as pure subject areas, or provide guidance on the desired direction of the indicators they represent.
<b>Indicator/measure</b>	Indicators are also referred to as ‘measures’ in some frameworks. The formation of indicators is different between frameworks. This may include how questions are formed in community surveys, where specific aspects of council performance are reported against, or if an indicator provides a general topic that is to be discussed with respect to council performance in that particular period.
<b>Relationship with policy, planning and reporting</b>	The purpose of local government indicator frameworks typically includes aspects of informing policy and planning, reporting for legislative requirements or to the community, and measuring progress against the policy.
<b>Data sourcing</b>	A variety of data sources are used in reporting against indicators for example: ABS statistics, Census data, community surveys, council data.
<b>Reporting procedure</b>	How the indicators are reported against, including the identification of trends, summary tables.
<b>b) Framework content (indicators)</b>	
<b>Councils’ ability to influence</b>	Can the council influence the indicator outcome or trend?
<b>Intention</b>	Is there consistency between the intention of indicators and consequent reporting of trends?
<b>Uniqueness/usefulness</b>	Is there similarity between indicators? Are multiple indicators being used to measure the same thing? Would indicators benefit from simplification? Is this possible? Does the framework include indicators which provide information on more than one theme/group?
<b>Universality and comparability</b>	Does the indicator framework provide sufficient ‘common ground’ to enable applicability across a variety of local government regions? Comparability between Australian local councils. Could councils use this indicator for comparison against each other?
<b>Data Utility</b>	Ease of data compilation and manipulation required.
<b>Traceability over time</b>	Ability of the indicator to show a meaningful trend over a period of time.
<b>Responsiveness</b>	The degree to which the indicators clearly direct the council response.
<b>c) Overall assessment</b>	
<b>Consistency</b>	Alignment with organisational strategy, objectives and initiatives.
<b>Connectivity</b>	Do indicators provide information consistent with the needs of state and/or national level reporting? Do indicators provide information for input into planning and policy decisions?
<b>Rigour</b>	Including replicability, auditability, data source credibility, relationship of indicator to trend extraction.



Assessment Criteria	Description
<b>d) Overall assessment</b>	
<b>Utility</b>	Ease of use of framework, comprising data sourcing, reporting, relationship with policy and program development.
<b>Strengths</b>	Specific strengths of the overall framework, with particular reference to the analysis criterion.
<b>Weaknesses</b>	Specific limitations of the overall framework, with particular reference to the analysis criterion.

#### 4.5 Shortlisted frameworks

In the following section, Section 5: Framework Analysis, each of the six shortlisted frameworks is analysed according to the above assessment structure.

The shortlisted frameworks include:

1. *Quality of Life Bristol*
2. *Quality of Life London*
3. *South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP)*
4. *Community Indicators Victoria (CIV)*
5. *(Draft) City of Sydney Community Indicator Framework*
6. *State of the Shire (Sutherland Shire).*

## 5. Framework Analysis

### 5.1 Quality of Life Bristol

The Quality of Life Bristol framework measures community perceptions on quality of life aspects and tracks progress towards the city's *20:20 Plan*, using a traffic light 'info graphic'. The development of the framework was informed by the European Common Indicators<sup>17</sup> program.

The framework uses five outcome-based themes directly underpinned by a suite of indicators. The indicators comprise national and city-specific indicators, and are reported annually following a community survey. The results enable comparison of responses between wards (suburbs) within the Bristol area. The survey has been undertaken for 10 years, and is seen as a communication tool for the community to provide feedback to the council, as well as a reporting tool for council back to the community.

Action area: influence local decisions and shape public services	
2. A city of strong and safe communities	
Indicator	% respondents who feel they can influence decisions in their local neighbourhood
Why is this indicator relevant?	<p>This is an indicator of community cohesion and measures whether residents feel empowered to make a difference both to their own lives and to the area in which they live. If the indicator increases it shows an improving trend with more people feeling influential in their locality.</p> <p>In Bristol, this indicator has been measured since 2005 and was developed as a improvement target for the Local Area Agreement 2007-2010. In 2008 it became a national indicator and was measured using the local Place survey.</p> <p>It is still an important indicator for the council and the success of neighbourhood partnerships. It is also relevant to the national implementation of the 'Big Society', which is dependant on a willingness to engage in local decision-making.</p>
What is the indicator showing?	<p>This indicator measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>25% in the Bristol Place survey 2008</li><li>23% in the Quality of Life survey 2008</li><li>23% in the Quality of Life survey 2010</li></ul> <p>For the past six years there has seen no significant improvement in trend with residents feeling influential, from 22% in 2005 to 23% in 2010. Bristol did not compare well with the core cities average, at 30% in 2008.</p> <p>Neighbourhood analysis has shown 'feeling influential' was low in wards in the east of the city and this pattern has been seen in previous years. The proportion of residents who felt they could influence decisions was particularly low in Stockwood (11%) and Southmead (13%). Residents feeling most influential lived in Ashley (36%) and Windmill Hill (35%). Further analysis has also found a relationship between the those residents who felt most influential are residents most satisfied with how the council runs things (see page 91).</p>

Figure 3. Quality of Life in Bristol Report (p. 37).

This framework was shortlisted because it demonstrated a simple, clear structure, and solely sourced its empirical data from community surveys. This enabled a direct assessment of the community survey's capacity to measure community wellbeing.

The analysis was undertaken of the *Quality of Life in your Neighbourhood Survey results 2010* (Consultation, Research and Intelligence Team, 2011). For further information see <<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/qualityoflife>>.

<sup>17</sup> Refer to <[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/common\\_indicators.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/common_indicators.htm) for further information>.

Framework	Quality of Life in Bristol				
a) Framework structure					
Level:	Local	Owner:	Government	Year initiated:	2001
Purpose and relationship with policy, planning and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To measure progress towards the 20:20 Plan (to become one of the top 20 European cities)</li><li>To inform planning and policy decisions by council and partner organisations (such as the Bristol NHS, Safer Bristol Partnership and local community groups) by understanding how well 'local priorities express community needs and aspirations'.</li></ul>				
Indicator themes	<p>The framework uses five outcome-oriented themes for the indicators. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reduce health and wealth inequality</li><li>A city of strong and safe communities</li><li>Making our prosperity sustainable</li><li>Raising aspirations and achievement of our children, young people, and families</li><li>Satisfaction with public services.</li></ul>				
Indicator grouping	There is no further grouping of the indicators in this framework.				
Indicator/meas ure style	<p>The indicators in this framework are expressed quantitatively and are drawn from an annual community survey. The data is aggregated as percentages of respondents' answers to each question. For example, under the theme of 'Reduce health and wealth inequality', some of the indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>% respondents who feel their health has been good/fairly good in the last 12 months</li><li>% respondents who live in households with a smoker</li><li>% respondents taking exercise at least 5 times a week.</li></ul>				
Data sourcing	Data for this framework is drawn from responses to an annual community survey. The indicators are structured as a percentage of respondents providing information or agreeing with certain statements. There are no indicators which rely on council or national data sources. The survey is conducted across a group from the Electoral Register selected at random and usually receives over 5,000 responses (19% response rate).				
Reporting procedure	<p>The council undertakes the community survey and reporting annually. The report includes an executive summary which presents all the indicators by their theme and the trend that has been identified. The trend is reported as traffic light faces (green 'happy', orange 'neutral', red 'sad'). For each indicator the following areas are covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Why is this indicator relevant?</li><li>What is the indicator showing?.</li></ul> <p>The results are also presented by each ward (suburb) within the local government area.</p>				
b) Framework content					
Councils' ability to influence	The majority of the indicators have minimal or some council influence, with only a small number with significant council influence. As the indicators are based solely on community perceptions, information is provided on areas of direct council influence, however the link of council influence to the indicator itself is indirect.				
Intention	The trends established for this framework are presented as the direct output of the indicator, without significant additional extrapolation to other council areas or community concerns. As a quality of life indicator framework the emphasis on the perceived quality of life aligns the indicators well with the intention. Several indicators would be better suited to actual data, and here the intention does not provide useful information. For instance the perception of stream health is less useful than actual results on stream health.				



### c) Framework content

Uniqueness/usefulness	The majority of the indicators cover a unique area. Two indicators are used for physical activity to differentiate the degree of activity. There are several indicators around local services, including facilities, children's playgrounds, and teenagers' facilities. None of the indicators are represented in multiple themes.
Universality and comparability	A high proportion of the indicators are relevant to most councils and would be comparable if a similar survey were conducted. This is due to the format as a community perception, which can be applied broadly across local councils irrespective of the specific council facilities etc.
Data Utility	As the data source is a single survey that directly inputs to the indicators the data is easy to obtain and there is minimal manipulation required. However, development, distribution, communication and collation of the survey results would require reasonable time and resources to execute.
Traceability over time	The consistent and simple nature of the indicators as a percentage of population perception allows trend establishment over a long period irrespective of changes in specific community or council activities.
Responsiveness	Some of the indicators provide clear information to inform a council response and action. Generally these indicators are around satisfaction with council facilities or services. A high proportion of the indicators are not structured to direct council response. These are generally to do with individual behaviour which council may be able to advocate or educate on, but are ultimately up to the residents to act upon. Some indicators address this dichotomy, for instance healthy eating is measured by both servings of fruit and vegetables as well as good access to fruit and vegetable shops.

### d) Overall assessment

Consistency	The framework tracks progress against the council's 20:20 Plan. Detailed analysis of the legislative requirements for the Bristol City Council has not been undertaken.
Connectivity	Several of the indicators are also used in the National Communities and Local Government Citizenship Survey.
Rigour	The data is sourced from an annual community survey of randomly selected residents from the Electoral Register. Approximately 5,000 residents respond each year representing a 19% response rate. This allows for good comparison between years and is a transparent approach to data reporting. Trend extraction is simple and consistent for all indicators (change in percentage of respondents). As data is based on perceptions of a sample group some caution needs to be exercised and an error margin is added to the results to account for this.
Utility	The framework is simple, providing clear relationships between data sourcing, indicator formulation and themes.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The council views the survey as a way for residents to communicate with council</li> <li>▪ Positively phrased indicator groupings are likely to add positively to communication between council and residents</li> <li>▪ Simple and transparent data collection and reporting.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The framework is based only on community surveys, not reinforced by council data</li> <li>▪ The framework does not provide integrated reporting of council activities and performance alongside community perception</li> <li>▪ Several indicators measure perception of councils' assets where direct measurement would provide a more meaningful method to track progress</li> <li>▪ Surveys can be resource and time intensive and require buy-in from the community to be successful and ensure a representative group is reached.</li> </ul>
Applicability to local councils	This format could be adopted by local councils in Australia. The structure allows for easy manipulation of questions to suit a local context, enables comparison between councils, and as data is sourced from local residents via a community survey the methodology could be replicated in numerous contexts.

## 5.2 London Quality of Life Indicators

The London Sustainable Development Commission was established in 2002 to advise the Mayor of London on ways to make London a sustainable, world-class city. The London Quality of Life Indicators framework provides the measurement of progress towards that goal.

In 2003, the Commission published 'A Sustainable Development Framework for London' which outlines 14 overarching objectives to inform strategy, policy or project decisions. These objectives relate to the Commission's four areas of sustainable development and form the basis for the indicator framework:

- Taking **Responsibility** for the impact of one's actions on other people and the environment, and thinking longer term
- Developing **Respect** for London's diverse communities and for London's environment
- Managing **Resources** more prudently to reduce London's environmental impact
- Getting **Results**, which achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives simultaneously to improve the quality of life of Londoners now and in the future.

The London framework is an example of a move away from the '3 pillars' of 'social', 'environmental', and 'economic', to a more integrated approach aligned to the four areas outlined above. There have been three reporting cycles against the indicators since the first report in 2004, with data sourced from community survey, council data and research, and national organisational data.

The analysis was undertaken of the *London's Quality of Life Indicators 2008-09 Report: Executive Summary* (London Sustainable Development Commission, 2009). For further information see <http://www.londonsdc.org.uk>.



Figure 4. Quality of Life London framework.

Framework		Quality of Life London			
a) Framework structure					
Level:	Local	Owner:	Government	Year initiated:	2004
Purpose and relationship with policy, planning and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To identify priorities for improving sustainability within London</li><li>To provide an overview of how well London is progressing against a core set of key sustainability indicators</li><li>To inform the ongoing work programme of the Commission</li><li>To inform dialogue and debate with key stakeholders in London to develop shared recommendations for action</li><li>To challenge policy makers to promote a better quality of life for all Londoners</li><li>To lead to coordinated and sustained action.</li></ul>				
Indicator themes	<p>The Quality of Life London framework has moved away from the traditional elements of sustainability with social, environmental, and economic, in order to address the often integrated and overlapping nature of each. The themes align with the Sustainable Development Commissions key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Responsibility</li><li>Respect</li><li>Resources</li><li>Results.</li></ul>				
Indicator grouping	Indicators within the indicator themes are allocated to one of the three key ‘pillars’ of sustainability: social, environment and economic. For example: Social/Responsibility; Social/Respect, Social/Results, and Social/Responsibility.				
Indicator/measure style	There are 28 topic-based indicators in total across the 4 themes (and allocated to environment, social or economic). For example: Social/Responsibility – Childcare measured by childcare nursery places per 100 children.				
Data sourcing	<p>Data for the indicators is collated from a range of sources. The percentages listed are based on a sample of indicators chosen from the framework for further analysis. The source types and typical sources are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Annual London Survey – 7%</li><li>Data available from the council but collected for other purposes (Mayor's Green Procurement Code, London bird species index, etc.) – 41%</li><li>Data collected by council for the framework through additional research (Best Foot Forward 'City Limits' study) – 26%</li><li>Data collected by National organisations (Department of Work and Pensions, British Crime Survey etc.) – 26%.</li></ul>				
Reporting procedure	<p>Reports have been produced three times since reporting began in 2004 A summary of key issues identified is given up front, and then a visual summary of progress is presented with each indicator given a traffic light plus grey (for insufficient information for trend establishment) symbol. The indicators are grouped according to their progress, with the following information presented in table form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Indicator group and indicator</li><li>Measure in previous and current reports</li><li>Movement/progress</li><li>National average.</li><li>A detailed report is also available.</li></ul>				



Framework Quality of Life London	
<b>b) Framework content</b>	
Councils' ability to influence	The majority of the indicators have minimal or some council influence, with only a small number with significant council influence. There are no indicators representing complete council control.
Intention	The indicators align well with the framework purpose, providing a clear picture of the state of the community as well as direction to the policy-makers on areas requiring increased services, advocacy, or education.
Uniqueness/usefulness	The framework consists of 28 indicators covering a large range of elements of community. None of the indicators are used for multiple areas, as they are each reported on according to one theme (see Figure 2). Generally each indicator represents a single aspect. Indicators which cover a similar element of the community include housing affordability, business survival, and income inequality.
Universality and comparability	The indicators cover a broad range relevant to most councils. The format of the indicators is general which would allow easy translation to other councils. The indicators are also generally comparable between councils.
Data Utility	The data for the indicators comprises community survey, council data, and national organisational data. There is a range of ease of data extraction and manipulation; however the methodology for the more involved indicators is clear to allow consistent tracking.
Traceability over time	The clarity of the indicators allows for trend data to be collected and therefore indicates good traceability over time. Several indicators are a total quantity which is traceable over time but do not allow for comparison with changing populations. For example, the flooding indicator measures the number of properties at risk and people signed up to the flood warning system.
Responsiveness	The indicators have been developed to enable information to be collected to inform decision-making and identify key areas for attention. The indicators therefore inform a council response, rather than explicitly directing it.
<b>c) Overall assessment</b>	
Consistency	The London Sustainable Development Commission is an independent body that informs local policy development. Detailed analysis of the legislative requirements has not been undertaken.
Connectivity	The London Sustainable Development Commission is an independent body. Its purpose is to inform policy development, but it is not connected directly to any levels of government.
Rigour	The framework utilises a range of data sources, however due to the low number of indicators (28) these are easily manageable and reduces risk of error. Some data appears to be sourced from specific research which may not be easily replicable for later reporting. The data sources and discussion of the trend established is included in the detailed reporting of the indicators only. The transparency around the trend establishment is not as good as some other frameworks.
Utility	The framework includes a good reporting structure that is easy to read as indicators are directly reported on. The theme arrangement is confusing, and the relationship of each indicator to the themes and groups is unclear. The lack of clarity around the themes does not affect the understanding of the indicators, as they are reported on directly, along with the data source and previous result and national average. The low number of indicators (28) presents a concise picture of progress.

Framework	Quality of Life London
<b>c) Overall assessment</b>	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key areas for attention identified from the indicators</li> <li>▪ Indicators focused around challenge areas for policy makers</li> <li>▪ Attempt to integrate aspects of sustainability rather than address them separately</li> <li>▪ Provides comparison to a national average on some indicators.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The replacement structure for the three pillars of sustainability is confusing and unclear why an indicator is grouped a certain way</li> <li>▪ Research to inform several of the indicators appears to be additional to normal council data collection.</li> </ul>
Applicability to local council	Directly applicable, as this was developed by and for a local council. Given this was developed for London, a large metropolitan hub, several of the indicators will not be directly applicable to different 'types' of council, such as rural and growth area councils.

### 5.3 South Australia's Strategic Plan

*South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP)* was released in 2004, to drive progress towards aspirational community targets for the State by 2014. The Plan comprises six outcome-oriented themes, with indicators structured as targets to be achieved within a stated timeframe, generally 2014, and biannual progress reporting. Target interpretation, identification of appropriate indicators and data sources, and measuring and reporting progress against targets is undertaken at a State level by an independent Audit Committee. The progress reporting helps identify where targets require modification to best reflect and track the desired outcome.

An updated Strategic Plan was subsequently released in 2007 following recommendations from progress reporting. A further revised 2011 Plan was released during the finalisation of this report in September 2011.

This framework was chosen due to the unique approach it presents in attempting to achieve a collaborative approach between State Government agencies, unions, the business sector, local government, community groups, social interest groups and individual South Australians towards achieving state wellbeing goals. Of particular interest was the alignment of the framework, indicators and reporting procedure with the State's Strategic Plan. This is useful to local councils in demonstrating the translation of a delivery plan into measurable indicators and targets enabling progress against the plan to be tracked and assessed. The framework also highlights some of the challenges of linking councils planning and reporting with state plans and requirements. The analysis was undertaken of South Australia's Strategic Plan Progress Report (2010). For further information see <<http://www.saplan.org.au>>.

Figure 4 shows an example of indicator reporting against the SASP. For each indicator, progress is tracked both as a trend using a rating of 1-3, and with respect to achievement of the targets using ratings of 1-5. For each indicator, the results are conveyed graphically and further discussed in explanatory notes.

Target		Progress Rating		Achievability Rating	
PREVENTATIVE HEALTH					
2.1	Smoking	1	Positive movement	2	On track
2.2	Healthy weight	3	Negative movement	4	Unlikely
2.3	Sport and recreation	2	Steady or no movement	2	On track
HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY					
2.4	Healthy South Australians	1	Positive movement	3	Within reach
2.5	Aboriginal healthy life expectancy	1	Positive movement	2	On track
2.6	Chronic diseases	2	Steady or no movement	4	Unlikely
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING					
2.7	Psychological wellbeing	2	Steady or no movement	2	On track
PUBLIC SAFETY					
2.8	Statewide crime rates	1	Positive movement	1	Achieved
2.9	Road safety – fatalities	1	Positive movement	4	Unlikely
2.10	Road safety – serious injuries	1	Positive movement	3	Within reach
2.11	Greater safety at work	1	Positive movement	2	On track
WORK-LIFE BALANCE					
2.12	Work-life balance	2	Steady or no movement	3	Within reach

**Figure 4.** South Australia's Strategic Plan Progress Report 2010 p. 40  
Improving Wellbeing – Overview & Highlights.



Framework South Australia's Strategic Plan					
a) Framework structure					
Level:	State	Owner:	Government	Year initiated:	2004?
Purpose and relationship with policy, planning and reporting	The target measures in South Australia's Strategic Plan represent a set of indicators that are meaningful to the broad community as a way to define the progress of the state, in a broad sense. The Plan enables the State to measure its progress towards aspirational community targets by 2014.				
Indicator themes	<p>The framework uses six outcome-based themes. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Growing prosperity</li> <li>▪ Improving wellbeing</li> <li>▪ Attaining sustainability</li> <li>▪ Fostering creativity and innovation</li> <li>▪ Building communities</li> <li>▪ Expanding opportunity.</li> </ul>				
Indicator grouping	The indicators are grouped in four to six topics of interest.				
Indicator/measure	<p>The framework is made up of 100 topic-based indicators with single associated measures. These are split into key measures, and some associated supplementary measures, which are relevant and meaningful to consider alongside the key measure to provide a more complete picture.</p> <p>For example, the Preventative Health (under the theme Improving Wellbeing) includes the following indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Smoking: Reduce the percentage of young cigarette smokers by 10 percentage points between 2004 and 2014: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Key measure: smoking prevalence for 15 to 29 year old South Australians, 3-year moving average</li> <li>– Supplementary measure: smoking prevalence for South Australians across the population, 3-year moving average.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				
Data sourcing	<p>Data for the indicators is collated from a range of sources. The percentages listed are based on a sample of indicators chosen from the framework for further analysis. The source types and typical sources are listed below:</p> <p>Australian Bureau of Statistics data (typically direct Census data) – 37%</p> <p>South Australia Strategic Plan Household Survey (biannually with progress report) – 5%</p> <p>Data collected by State organisations (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Boards and Committees Information System, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, Aboriginal Leadership Register, Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) etc.) – 49%</p> <p>Data collected by National organisations (National Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Australian Energy Market Operator, Australian Sports Commission: Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey etc.) – 8%</p> <p>External organisations (KPMG Competitive Alternatives: KPMG's Guide to International Business Location survey) – 2%.</p>				
Reporting procedure	Reporting occurs every two years, and is undertaken by an independent Audit Committee. Progress is tracked both as a trend using a rating of 1-3, and with respect to achievement of the targets using ratings of 1-5. For each indicator the results are given graphically and further discussed in explanatory notes.				

Framework South Australia's Strategic Plan	
<b>b) Framework content</b>	
Councils' ability to influence	The indicators present a range of levels of influence by council. The influence is generally less than the other indicator frameworks due to the regional focus and a number of measures used will be affected by national policies, macroeconomic conditions, and the activities of other states rather than by the South Australian Government, local businesses or communities.
Intention	The intention of the indicators is clear through the direct incorporation of targets.
Uniqueness/usefulness	Numerous indicators and targets are used for a single area, such as employment or business health in the region. For instance indicators around employment include general employment rates, Defence employment, participation, growth rate, productivity, and industrial relations. These allow tracking against specific targets for each indicator, however not all the indicators may be necessary to provide a picture of employment for the area.
Universality and comparability	Due to the formulation of the indicators as target focused they are not directly applicable to local councils. However if the formulation is modified to allow comparison (such as removing the target), the aspects covered by the indicators would allow comparisons to be made between councils.
Data Utility	The indicators are generally based around existing measures which may be easily extracted from state or national organisation data. For example affordable housing opportunities to increase by five percentage points.
Traceability over time	Due to the formulation of the indicators as targets for particular years, the traceability over time is low for the framework. The indicators and targets will need to be revised as each target year is reached.
Responsiveness	A high proportion of the indicators are framed to clearly direct council response. For instance, for areas which typically would not be considered to be within council influence, such as biodiversity, the indicator provides a clear direction of 'five well-established biodiversity corridors'.
<b>c) Overall assessment</b>	
Consistency	As a State-wide framework there is little obvious connection to local councils' strategy and operation, although some councils such as the Cities of Playford and Salisbury have used the SASP to inform the development of their own strategic plans and targets.
Connectivity	As a State-wide indicator framework, the connection with State reporting can be developed on the basis of common indicators. There is an opportunity for the State Plan to inform subsequently regional and council strategic plans however, there is not a formal mechanism in place to achieve this.
Rigour	Clear data sources, data manipulation reported. State level data doesn't allow for interrogation of the data at a more local level.
Utility	The framework provides a clear approach to reporting against a specific strategic plan. The calculation methodologies and reporting procedures are clear. However due to the target based approach continual revising of the targets and indicators is required.

Framework	South Australia's Strategic Plan
c) Overall assessment	
Strengths	<p>There has been significant community involvement in the development and revision of the SASP and target setting within the Plan to ensure reports are understandable and meaningful for the community. This has been achieved primarily through the Community Engagement Board whose role it is to promote the Plan and foster consultation and partnerships.</p> <p>Indicators are clear on the desirable direction and data sources.</p> <p>The target rating scale enables clear identification of progress and achievability against targets.</p> <p>Targets are reviewed every few years to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and are amended where necessary.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Structure does not allow for easy comparison between councils.</p> <p>Continual update of indicators required as targets and target years are reached.</p> <p>State wide data sources are not reported at a regional level (there are different boundaries for state, local and council reporting areas which makes comparison difficult).</p> <p>Some data sources are subject to periodic revision which will affect assessment of trends over time.</p> <p>Data is collated for South Australia as a whole so allows comparison to other states but not between regional areas within SA. There may be an opportunity through the existing data sources to track progress on a more local basis, although the aforementioned challenges with data boundaries may make this difficult.</p>
Applicability to local councils	<p>This framework is not directly applicable to local councils as the indicators are currently framed, however it demonstrates an approach that may be adapted to council delivery plans and measuring progress towards specific strategies. The framework highlights some of the challenges of linking councils' planning and reporting with state plans and requirements.</p>



## 5.4 Community Indicators Victoria

The Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) is a State-wide indicator framework managed by an independent organisation, comprising members from the Institute of Community Engagement and Policy Alternatives (ICEPA), Victoria University, the VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Social Well Being, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne and the Centre for Regional Development at Swinburne University of Technology.

The CIV framework is the culmination of significant research and is based on the **Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts**, which similarly collects data for a wide area for use by local councils. The Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts is considered to be 'probably one of the world's best systems of wellbeing and progress measures' (Wiseman J. , et al., 2006).

The CIV indicators are split into 5 outcome-oriented categories, and topic-based categories underpinned by the indicators, referred to as 'measures'. The data is sourced from state, national, and council data available, and a new state-wide community survey. Analysis of the data provided is the responsibility of individual communities and local councils.



**Figure 5.** Example snapshot of CIV profile report for Ballarat.  
Available at <[http://www.communityindicators.net.au/live\\_reports/ballarat\\_profile](http://www.communityindicators.net.au/live_reports/ballarat_profile)>

Recent research interest has focused on the application of the CIV framework, (for example DLG research on the applicability of the CIV framework for NSW). Discussions with several stakeholders in local government and urban studies suggest the CIV framework is perceived as a leading community indicator framework in Australia, that currently 'fills a gap', and irrespective of its limitations, potentially relieves a council's need for a 'bespoke' approach to framework and indicator

development, when time and resources are stretched. The perceived seminal nature of the CIV framework as a precedent and its increasing application and derivation by a number of local councils<sup>18</sup>, has therefore warranted its short listing.

The analysis was undertaken of [www.communityindicators.net.au](http://www.communityindicators.net.au) and 'Developing a Community Indicators Framework for Victoria: The final report of the Victorian Community Indicators Project' (VCIP) (Wiseman J. , et al., 2006).

Framework	Community Indicators Victoria				
a) Framework structure					
Level	Local	Owner	Government	Year initiated	2005
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To provide communities and councils with data that may be able to be used to measure progress over time on key community wellbeing indicators and inform policy</li><li>To improve citizen engagement, community planning, and policy making</li><li>To build healthy, just and sustainable communities</li><li>To assist public and private planning</li><li>To help local governments shift focus from inputs and outputs to outcomes for their communities</li><li>To monitor results and progress over time.</li></ul>				
Indicator themes	<p>The framework uses five outcome-based themes for the indicators. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Healthy safe and inclusive communities</li><li>Dynamic resilient local economies</li><li>Sustainable built and natural environments</li><li>Culturally rich and vibrant communities</li><li>Democratic and engaged communities.</li></ul>				
Indicator grouping	<p>The indicators (within themes) are grouped by topic (referred to as policy area) to identify areas of interest (the framework refers to this level as the indicator). An example of grouping from the Healthy safe and inclusive communities includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Personal health and wellbeing</li><li>Community connectedness</li><li>Early childhood.</li></ul>				
Indicator/measure	<p>The framework refers to indicators as ‘measures’. Each group has either single or multiple data sources for each measure. An example of grouping from the Healthy safe and inclusive communities, group (policy area) Personal Health and Wellbeing includes: Self-reported health.</p> <p>Subjective wellbeing (Australian Unity Personal Wellbeing Index: completely dissatisfied = 0; completely satisfied = 100).</p> <p>Life expectancy (at birth: in years, for males and females separately).</p>				

<sup>18</sup> Councils using the CIV information within their own reporting contexts include: Baw Baw Shire, City of Whittlesea and City of Sydney. Other case studies are outlined on the CIV website: [http://www.communityindicators.net.au/civ\\_examples](http://www.communityindicators.net.au/civ_examples).

Framework	Community Indicators Victoria
<b>a) Framework structure</b>	
Data sourcing	<p>Data for the indicators is collated from a range of sources. The percentages listed are based on a sample of indicators chosen from the framework for further analysis. The source types and typical sources are listed below:</p> <p>Australian Bureau of Statistics data (typically direct Census data) – 20%</p> <p>CIV Survey (telephone based undertaken in 2007 to fill indicator data gaps)– 29%</p> <p>Data available from the council but collected for other purposes (Local Council Records, Bicycle Victoria maps, VicRoads maps, and Parks Victoria Metropolitan Trail Network. etc.) – 2%</p> <p>Data collected by State organisations (Annual Survey Public Library Services in Victoria 2004- 05, Sustainability Victoria Annual Reports, Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development Victorian Population Health Survey 2008, etc.) – 44%</p> <p>Data collected by National organisations (Australian Early Development Index , Medicare Australia, Australian Childhood Immunisation Register etc.) – 5%.</p>
Reporting procedure	As the framework is not linked to a specific council, the data is available for all stakeholders to use. The data is published on a website, which allows a breakdown and reporting of required information by specific areas. The reports are numeric only, there is no additional analysis of the data presented provided by CIV.
<b>b) Framework content</b>	
Councils' ability to influence	The majority of the indicators have minimal influence by the councils. A small number have significant influence by councils. There are very few indicators under direct council control. There are no indicators looking at governance, such as efficiency or satisfaction with council services.
Intention	The framework presents a range of aspects which are well aligned with community wellbeing. The relationship of the indicators to council strategies is possible but not explicit for this framework as the purpose is to provide data for use by communities and councils, who can then provide their own interpretation of the data.
Uniqueness/usefulness	Due to the number of indicators there is more cross-over and separation of aspects into multiple indicators than was found in other frameworks. For instance, servings of fruit and vegetables per day are asked separately, whereas other indicators combine this question.
Universality and comparability	The indicators cover a broad range relevant to most councils. The format of the indicators is general which allows easy translation to other councils. The indicators are also generally comparable between councils.
Data Utility	The data for the indicators are a range of community survey, council data, state data and national organisational data. There is a range of ease of data extraction and manipulation; however the methodology for the more involved indicators is clear to allow consistent tracking.
Traceability over time	Due to the clarity of the indicators there is good traceability over time. Some indicators are a total quantity which is traceable over time but does not allow for comparison to changing population.
Responsiveness	The topic-based framing of the indicators generally does not provide a clear link between the indicator trend and subsequent required council action. However the detail of the indicator measurement provides more information, which if incorporated into reporting could help direct council action. For instance highly skilled workforce is further detailed as people employed in highly skilled occupations: expressed as a percentage of people who are working in the area, which provides more information to direct action by the council.

Framework	Community Indicators Victoria
<b>c) Overall assessment</b>	
Consistency	As a State-wide framework the connection to individual councils' strategy and operations is dependent on how the councils choose to align with the framework.
Connectivity	As a State-wide indicator framework the connection with State reporting can be developed on the basis of common indicators.
Rigour	The framework utilises a large number of data sources, a significant number of which are from State organisation data sources. These data sources will need to be closely monitored for changes in methodology for data collection, which may affect the traceability of the results. The data is managed through transparency of reporting the source data in the reports created. There is no trend analysis provided by CIV, it is therefore up to the individual council to maintain consistency and transparency around how the data is presented and extrapolated.
Utility	The theme and grouping structure of the framework is clear and the indicators align well within them. However the framework has a large number of indicators which may be cumbersome and resource intensive for some local councils.
Strengths	<p>Strong research basis of international developments and best practice</p> <p>Informed by significant consultation with councils and communities</p> <p>Includes state-wide indicators as well as local specific indicators</p> <p>Focus on measuring what is valued rather than what is easily measured – balance between objective and subjective data</p> <p>Information is easily accessible for community users</p> <p>Enables comparison between areas on similar measures</p> <p>Broad uptake across Victoria, as well as being used to inform frameworks for City of Sydney and in Queensland</p> <p>Developed to align with existing national approaches e.g. State of Australian Cities.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Does not provide analysis of data – this is the responsibility of council and/or community users of the data</p> <p>A lot of the indicators rely on Census data which is only collected every 5 years which may not be frequent enough for reporting requirements of councils in other states (for example, NSW councils are required to report every four years)</p> <p>CIV is managed by an independent body that requires ongoing funding and resourcing which makes its replicability in other states more challenging.</p>
Applicability to local councils	Directly applicable to local councils in Victoria as it is designed to provide them with community data to inform decision-making and policy relevant to communities. For councils outside Victoria the CIV provides a useful approach to understand and measure community wellbeing.



## 5.5 City of Sydney Indicator Framework

The City of Sydney community indicators framework was endorsed by the relevant Council committee for exhibition in November 2011. It is understood development of the framework has been informed by Australian and international best practice, in combination with an understanding of the Council's strategic vision, policies, plans and strategies. The draft framework is based predominantly on the CIV framework, with the same five outcome-oriented categories being used.

The framework has been developed to measure progress towards the vision of a *Sustainable Sydney 2030* (City of Sydney, 2008). It incorporates specific indicators to be assessed against desired trends, council policy, comparability with other frameworks, and potential benchmarks.

This framework is the newest of the frameworks assessed and was developed following a review of literature and best practice on community indicators both in Australia and internationally. The framework was also chosen as an example of how the CIV framework may be applied by a single local council outside Victoria.

Analysis was undertaken of the *Community Indicator Framework Final Report (Phase 1)*<sup>19</sup> and *City of Sydney Indicator Framework Final Report (currently in draft)*.<sup>20</sup>

Framework	City of Sydney				
a) Framework structure					
Level:	Local	Owner:	Government	Year initiated:	2011
Purpose and relationship with policy, planning and reporting	To measure progress towards the Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision To inform policy and planning Support engagement on local issues Raise awareness of, and bring focus to, concepts of wellbeing.				
Indicator themes	The framework uses the same five outcome-based themes as the CIV framework. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Healthy safe and inclusive communities</li><li>▪ Dynamic resilient local economies</li><li>▪ Sustainable built and natural environments</li><li>▪ Culturally rich and vibrant communities</li><li>▪ Democratic and engaged communities.</li></ul>				
Indicator grouping	The indicators are grouped by topic (policy areas) to articulate areas of focus				
Indicator/measure	The framework identifies indicators which are supported by one or more data sources. Each group has either single or multiple data sources. For example, the Water Waste Recycling group includes the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ People in households collecting waste water (percentage of adult population, measured by nine survey questions)</li><li>▪ Water recycling in open space and community facilities (number of parks and community facilities using rainwater tanks or recycled water from stormwater harvesting or other recycling facilities).</li></ul>				

<sup>19</sup> City of Sydney, 2011

<sup>20</sup> Partridge, Chong, & Herriman, 2011.

Framework	City of Sydney
<b>a) Framework structure</b>	
Data sourcing	<p>Data for the indicators is collated from a range of sources. The percentages listed are based on a sample of indicators chosen from the framework for further analysis. The source types and typical sources are listed below:</p> <p>Australian Bureau of Statistics data (typically direct Census data) – 13%</p> <p>City of Sydney Residents and Households Surveys (paper based and online) – 31%</p> <p>Data available from the council but collected for other purposes (Child Care Needs Assessment, commercial and residential monitors, visitor accommodation monitor etc.) – 3%</p> <p>Data collected by State organisations (NSW Health, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW DET, Department of Health and Ageing etc.) – 14%</p> <p>Data collected by National organisations (Australian Early Development Index , National Schools Statistics Collections National Schools Statistics Collections etc.) – 7%.</p>
Reporting procedure	Not yet reported against, but councils in NSW must report every four years against their progress towards the aspirations in their Community Strategic Plan, so reporting will likely to align with this.
<b>b) Framework content</b>	
Councils' ability to influence	The councils have minimal influence over the majority of indicators, with only a small number influenced significantly by councils. There are no indicators under direct control of councils.
Intention	As the framework has not yet been reported on, the alignment of the indicators with the trends cannot be easily determined. However the framing of the indicators suggests the trends presented will be closely linked to the specific indicators.
Uniqueness/usefulness	Some of the areas are underpinned by three or four indicators in the same area. This gives additional detail in each of the areas, however conversely requires significant additional data collection and manipulation.
Universality and comparability	A wide range of indicators covered, relevant to most councils. The format of the indicators which allows easy of translation to other council contexts. The indicators are also generally comparable between councils. At the same time, some of the indicators are of particular relevance to the context of City of Sydney as a central business hub and tourist attraction, so these elements will be less relevant to other councils.
Data Utility	The data for the indicators come from a range of community surveys, council data, and national organisational data, with varying ease of data extraction and manipulation. The methodology for the more involved indicators is clear, which will enable consistent tracking.
Traceability over time	Due to the clarity of the indicators there is good traceability over time. Some indicators are a total quantity which is traceable over time but does not allow for comparison to a changing population.
Responsiveness	The topic-based framing of the indicators generally does not provide an explicit link between the indicator trend and subsequent required council action. However the detail of the indicator measurement provides more information, which if incorporated into reporting could help direct council action. For instance, early childhood health is further detailed as centre attendance in last 12 months for children 0-4 years, which provides more information to guide council.

Framework	City of Sydney
<b>b) Overall assessment</b>	
Consistency	The intention of the framework is to align with, and measure progress against, the City's 2030 vision.
Connectivity	The framework uses the CIV's five themes, which are aligned with the NSW legislative focus on QBL issues (social is split into community and cultural). The legislation requires reporting progress, but is not prescriptive on how the progress is measured, allowing the council to develop the framework to best suit the objectives of the 2030 plan.
Rigour	The framework utilises a large number of data sources, a significant number of which are from State organisation data sources. These data sources will need to be closely monitored for changes in methodology of data collection, which may affect the traceability of the results. As the framework has not yet been reported on, the rigour of trend establishment and transparency cannot yet be determined.
Utility	The theme and grouping structure of the framework is clear and the indicators align well within them. However, the framework has a large number of indicators which may be cumbersome and resource intensive for some councils.
Strengths	<p>Alignment with the CIV will make a move to a national or even state-wide framework simpler if this is the base model chosen and enables comparison to other councils using the CIV framework.</p> <p>The framework clearly distinguishes between indicators which fall under council's direct control, influence or concern.</p> <p>A sub-set of indicators has been identified against which the City of Sydney can benchmark itself against other relevant bodies (e.g. on some measures this is other international cities such as London and New York, on others it relates to local comparisons. Consideration has been given to the type of information available).</p> <p>Indicators use a balance of objective (e.g. ABS data) and subjective (e.g. survey) measures.</p> <p>The framework clearly articulates where particular indicators are comparable to other regions either through type of data (e.g. ABS data source) or through alignment with other city/regional reporting frameworks (e.g. CIV).</p>
Weaknesses	<p>There are a large number of indicators (99 in total) which require significant resources to capture information and report against.</p> <p>A number of the indicators are context specific (e.g. to a large, international city) and would not be directly relevant to other types of councils.</p> <p>Data collected from NSW state based organisations would need to be assessed to see if similar data sources are available in other states to enable comparison/transfer to councils nationally.</p> <p>The development of the framework and implementation require significant resources in time and funding.</p>
Applicability to local councils	Directly applicable as this was developed by and for a local council. Given this was developed for the City of Sydney, a number of indicators and measures will not be directly applicable to different 'types' of councils such as rural and growth-area councils.

## 5.6 State of the Shire – Sutherland Shire

The *State of the Shire* report (2008) aims to 'provide a snapshot of the quality of life and wellbeing for the Shire', and encapsulated in 2007/08 for the first time the former Sutherland Shire State of the Environment report.

The report provides feedback on progress towards the Council's strategic plan *Our Shire Our Future - Our Guide for Shaping the Shire to 2030*. The report summary page shows progress of each aspect towards, or away from, the Shire Plan. The Sutherland Shire indicators use the QBL categories of 'people', 'place', 'nature' and 'governance' to group indicators. These are underpinned by outcome-based sub-categories, which sit above topic-based indicators (e.g. Stormwater infrastructure). Data is sourced from a quadrennial community survey, as well as council, state, and national data sources. The reporting period varies slightly, with reports produced in 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2008. A report released in 2009/10 provided updates to the environmental aspects of the Plan including land, air, noise, water, biodiversity, waste and heritage.

SCORECARD	
PEOPLE (Formerly - Safety, Social cohesion, Health, Leisure and Education)	
Direction	Trend
Direction 1 - A safe community where everybody has the opportunity to take part in social life	➔
Direction 2 - A harmonious community based on respect and responsibility, where everybody is made to feel welcome and valued	➔
Direction 3 - A healthy and active community with appropriate activities and services for all stages of the life cycle	➔
Direction 4 - A strong community based on networks of families, neighbourhoods, community groups and local businesses	➔
Direction 5 - A learning community which values education and embraces life long learning opportunities	➔
Direction 6 - A prosperous community with economic opportunities which value people and nature	➔

Figure 6. Extract from State of the Shire 2007/08 Report (p. 5).

This framework was selected as an example of an established Australian community indicator framework with a distinctive structure and reporting procedure. The framework uses a QBL structure, with each QBL area underpinned by goal-based sub-categories. Reporting is focused on trend direction analysis towards these set goals, accompanied by an overview of why the trend is occurring and what the Council's proposed response is to address areas of need or concern.

Analysis was undertaken of the *State of the Shire 2007/08 Report* (Strategic Planning and Environmental Science and Policy Units, 2008). The next full update of the report is scheduled for 2011/12.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For further information refer to:

<[http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Council The Shire/Our Future/State of the Shire report](http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Council%20The%20Shire/Our%20Future/State%20of%20the%20Shire%20report)>.



Framework	State of the Shire (Sutherland Shire)				
a) Framework structure					
Level:	Local	Owner:	Government	Year initiated:	1997
Purpose and relationship with policy, planning and reporting	To report progress against and to assist in determining future actions to maintain or improve the Shire's vision (Our Shire Our Future - Our Guide for Shaping the Shire to 2030).  New Integrated Planning & Reporting requirements in NSW require councils to produce a 10-year Community Strategic Plan and to report progress against this. The existing framework used by the Shire should position the council well to meet these new requirements.				
Indicator themes	The Sutherland Shire indicators are separated into four themes which reflect the QBL goals. The naming of these themes recently replaced more descriptive terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ People</li><li>▪ Place</li><li>▪ Nature</li><li>▪ Governance.</li></ul>				
Indicator grouping	The first three of the indicator themes are further broken down into six groups (referred to as 'directions') which identify areas of particular concern for the council. The directions are outcome-based.  For example, the first three groups of the <i>People</i> theme are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A safe community where everybody has the opportunity to take part in social life</li><li>▪ A harmonious community based on respect and responsibility, where everybody is made to feel welcome and valued</li><li>▪ A healthy and active community with appropriate activities and services for all stages of the life cycle</li></ul> There is no grouping under the Governance theme.				
Indicator/measure style	Each grouping has two to six topic-based measures informing the group. One group has 16 indicators informing it.  For example, within the Place theme, the group 'Local suburban activity centres that support a healthy local economy and build a sense of community', contains the following indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Population density</li><li>▪ Social contact at local facilities</li><li>▪ Local employment opportunities.</li></ul>				
Data sourcing	Data for the indicators is collated from a range of sources. The percentages listed are based on a sample of indicators chosen from the framework for further analysis. The source types and typical sources are listed below:  Australian Bureau of Statistics data (typically direct Census data) – 23%  SSC Neighbourhood Interaction and Participation Surveys (NIPS) carried out in 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2007 – 12%  Data available from the council but collected for other purposes (council's website, State of the Shire Environment report, GIS, Economic Development Unit, Customer Utilisation Surveys, GreenPower reporting etc.) – 35%  Data collected by State organisations (Department of Environment and Climate Change, NSW Summary Report on Adult Health by Health Area 2007, NSW Ministry of Transport's Travel Data Centre, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, etc.) – 14%  Data collected by National organisations (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, National Health Survey, Air Services Australia etc.) – 7%.				

Framework	State of the Shire (Sutherland Shire)
<b>a) Framework structure</b>	
Reporting procedure	<p>The reporting frequency varies, with four reports produced since 1997.</p> <p>A summary of each group is included, with an arrow towards or away from the Shire Vision.</p> <p>The 2007/2008 report was structured to discuss each group (or direction). The following sections are addressed for each group and include discussions of each of the relevant indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the indicator?</li> <li>▪ What is happening?</li> <li>▪ What is the response?</li> </ul>
<b>b) Framework content</b>	
Councils' ability to influence	The majority of the indicators have little council influence, with only a small number with significant or complete council influence.
Intention	A range of indicators are used to inform the groups or 'directions'. Some of these are well aligned with the group, however for some indicators the link between the direction and the indicator is not clear. For example, four indicators underpin 'A safe community where everyone has the opportunity to take part in social life'. The four indicators are all around safety, and do not reflect the opportunity aspect. A summary of the directions is included at the beginning of the report, and these are clearly reported as moving towards or away from the Shire plan.
Uniqueness/usefulness	Several of the indicators measure progress in a similar area, for instance transport mode share and vehicle kilometres. Conversely, a few indicators inform more than one group. For example, domestic violence is used as a measure of strong communities and safe communities.
Universality and comparability	A high proportion of the indicators are relevant to most councils and enable comparison. This is due to the topic-based framing of the indicators (e.g. voting, socio-economic diversity), which would not require modification to be picked up by other local councils.
Data Utility	The indicators are informed by a range of data sources. The framework does not include specific information on how the data should be manipulated, which reduces the usability for other councils as organisational knowledge is required.
Traceability over time	The majority of the indicators are formulated in a way which allows traceability over time.
Responsiveness	The topic-based framing of the indicators generally does not provide an explicit link between the indicator trend and subsequent required council action. For instance population density, footpaths/roads, aircraft noise provide council with information on a specific area, but do not direct the council's response. Several of the targets, however, include wording such as opportunities, affordability, mix, which demonstrates a more direct link to an appropriate council response for the indicator.
<b>c) Overall assessment</b>	
Consistency	The framework enables Council to demonstrate progress towards its 2030 vision and strategic plan. The report includes a discussion of the Council's response to identified trends which shows a clear connection between the outcome of the reporting and council activities.

Framework	State of the Shire (Sutherland Shire)
<b>c) Overall assessment</b>	
Connectivity	The framework aligns with the new integrated planning and reporting requirements for NSW local government which encourages reporting against QBL aspects (social, environmental, economic and governance). The legislation requires reporting of progress, but is not prescriptive on how the progress is measured, allowing the council to develop the framework to best suit the objectives of the 2030 plan.
Rigour	A large number of data sources are utilised by the framework. However the data sourcing and manipulation is clear. This is achieved through transparency in reporting against the indicators, with the source data provided and discussion of the trends established from the data.
Utility	The high level framework of four themes provides a clear and logical structure. Groups beneath this are reported as 'Direction 1', followed by the goal-oriented sentence, further underpinned by topic-based indicators. The connection between the goal-oriented group and the indicators is not always clear, and in some instances the high level group appears to report on an aspect not covered by the indicators associated with it.
Strengths	<p>Report includes a discussion of what is being done to address the results of the indicators</p> <p>The framework is aligned with new requirements for IP&amp;R in NSW</p> <p>Data combines information on community perceptions (survey) as well as quantitative measures</p> <p>The scorecard provides a useful summary on overall results</p> <p>The groupings provide a picture of an overall aspect of society, and the trend that the Shire is working towards</p> <p>The community has been consulted in the identification of key areas for focus.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Data is sourced predominantly from the quadrennial community survey and Census data (every five years with some annual updates) which could pose a challenge for councils' annual and quadrennial reporting requirements. This may be acceptable for certain indicators where more regular sourcing may not provide meaningful information (e.g. community attitudes may not be likely to shift significantly in a one or two year period), however for other indicators, more regular sourcing will be beneficial for tracing trends over shorter timeframes.</p> <p>A number of the indicators are specific to the local context (e.g. coastal area). While these will be useful for councils in a similar context, they are less likely to be applicable to all councils.</p> <p>Several of the indicator groupings are not well aligned with the indicators chosen.</p>
Applicability to local councils	Directly applicable as this was developed by and for a local council. However, given this was developed for the Sutherland Shire, a number of indicators and measures will not be directly applicable to different 'types' of council - for example, rural and growth-area councils.

## 5.7 Framework comparison

A scoring mechanism has been established below in Table 3 to assess the shortlisted frameworks against the criteria developed in section 4. The sample of indicators represents approximately half of the indicators for each framework to ensure consistent representation of that framework in the analysis. Over two hundred and fifty individual indicators (from a set of over five hundred) have been analysed, consisting of thirty to sixty indicators per framework, and representing a cross-section of thematic areas for each framework. While this analysis does not cover every indicator from every framework, the authors are of the opinion the sample size provides a reasonable representation of the types of indicators used.

Each indicator was assessed against each of the criteria and given a score based on a five point scale. A score of '1' was applied to indicators which 'do not meet the specific criteria'. A score of 5 was applied to indicators which 'completely meet the specific criteria' (Table 3 below outlines the complete breakdown of scoring for each criterion). An average score was then determined for each framework and criterion (e.g. average score for *Quality of Life Bristol* for council influence).

A matrix of these scores is presented in Table 4. A colour scale has been used to highlight the relative difference in scores (rather than using absolute scores). This acknowledges the subjective nature of the scoring against the criteria and the fact the analysis is based on a sample of indicators rather than the entire set. The best performing criteria (for each framework, based on the average score of the indicators assessed for that framework) are given a darker colour, and poorer performing criteria a lighter colour.

The matrix in Table 4 indicates all the shortlisted frameworks that incorporate a significant proportion of indicators where councils have influence but not complete control. This is expected given the intent of frameworks aligning with community aspirations and goals, rather than strictly focusing on council areas of activity. The *Quality of Life Bristol* framework for example, scores highly for 'utility' due to the simple nature of the single community survey data source and indicator framing. South Australia's Strategic Plan scores low for 'universality' due to the particularity of state-focused targets incorporated into the indicators, which would not be replicable for the local council context. A fuller discussion of indicators against each of the criterion is provided at Section 7.3.4.



**Table 3.** Scoring criteria for framework analysis.

Criteria Score	Council influence	Intention	Universality	Utility	Traceability over time	Responsiveness
1	Completely out of control of local council	Indicator does not reflect trend analysis	Specific to this council only (i.e. council specific target, relevant to that council only)	No consistent data source (e.g. specific research required)	No trend able to be established	Indicator does not reflect council strategy, objectives and initiatives, or provide sufficient information to direct council response
2	Long-term potential links, e.g. council control of early childcare education link to secondary school leaving rates	Indicator has some link to trend analysis	Relevant to several councils	Difficult to source and manipulate data	Trend may be able to be established for short time period	Unclear how indicator trend will provide useful information to council or community
3	Secondary link between community and council, e.g. transport to school - council could implement education programs or walking school buses etc.	Indicator generally aligns with trend analysis	Relevant to a select group of councils	Data source or trend establishment face some difficulty (e.g. council data available but not compiled)	Trend may be established for reasonable time period e.g. goal should be achieved within mid-term	Some useful information provided by indicator trend
4	Direct link between community and council, e.g. council could improve facilities to improve service uptake	Indicator closely aligns with trend analysis	Issue is significant for most councils	Data source clear and minimal work required for trend establishment (e.g. census survey, other surveys, council records)	Relevant trend established for significant time period e.g. goal may be achieved in mid to long term	Significant direction for council response identifiable, and reasonably useful information for community
5	Council activities	Trend analysis directly relates to indicator	Issue is relevant to all councils	Clear to source data and easy trend establishment (e.g. direct survey for the indicators)	Trend relevant and measurable over long time period	Indicator clearly relates to council strategy, objectives and initiatives, and directs council response

**Table 4.** Matrix to show comparison of selected frameworks and indicator examples against selected criteria.

Framework	Theme example	Grouping example	Indicator example	Council influence	Intention	Universality	Utility	Traceability over time	Responsiveness	Average
Quality of Life Bristol	Reduce health and wealth inequality	None	% respondents who say they are happy							
Quality of Life London	Respect	Social	Neighbourhood Satisfaction (satisfaction with living in London)							
Community Indicators Victoria	Healthy, safe and inclusive communities	Personal health and wellbeing	Subjective Wellbeing (Australian Unity Personal Wellbeing Index: completely dissatisfied = 0; completely satisfied = 100.)							
City of Sydney Community Indicators	Healthy, safe and inclusive communities	Personal health and wellbeing	Subjective wellbeing (Score on personal wellbeing index: Completely dissatisfied =0, completely satisfied = 100)							
South Australia's Strategic Plan	Improving wellbeing	Psychological wellbeing	Psychological wellbeing: Equal or lower than the Australian average for psychological distress by 2014							
State of the Shire	People	A strong community based on networks of families, neighbourhoods, community groups and local businesses	Quality of life/optimism (Responses to the statement 'I have an optimistic view of the Shires future')							

Scale: Low score High score



## 6. Framework Structure: The Global Reporting Initiative

The **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)** framework was identified by the project partners as a framework of interest from a structural perspective. A brief introduction to the GRI and key aspects is provided here to identify key features of the structure, which may inform the architecture of a community indicator framework. Along these lines, the GRI was identified as a framework that could help promote excellence and continuous improvement in Australian local government, in a recent research paper undertaken by ACELG (Pillora & Artist, 2010).

It should be highlighted that while the GRI taxonomy is broadly relevant for local government, and there is a Public Agency Sector Supplement being piloted, the content is more relevant to the reporting of council operational performance, rather than community indicators. Nonetheless, it is the authors' opinion there is merit in exploring the GRI as a precedent reporting structure to examine opportunities for lateral application.

### 7.1 Overview

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a network-based organisation with participants representing businesses, civil society, labour and professional institutions.

The most current version of the framework is the G3.1 sustainability reporting guidelines, launched in 2011 (GRI, 2011), with version G4 currently under development. The guidelines set out principles and indicators that are used by reporting companies to measure and report their economic, environment and social performance, and enable organisations to:

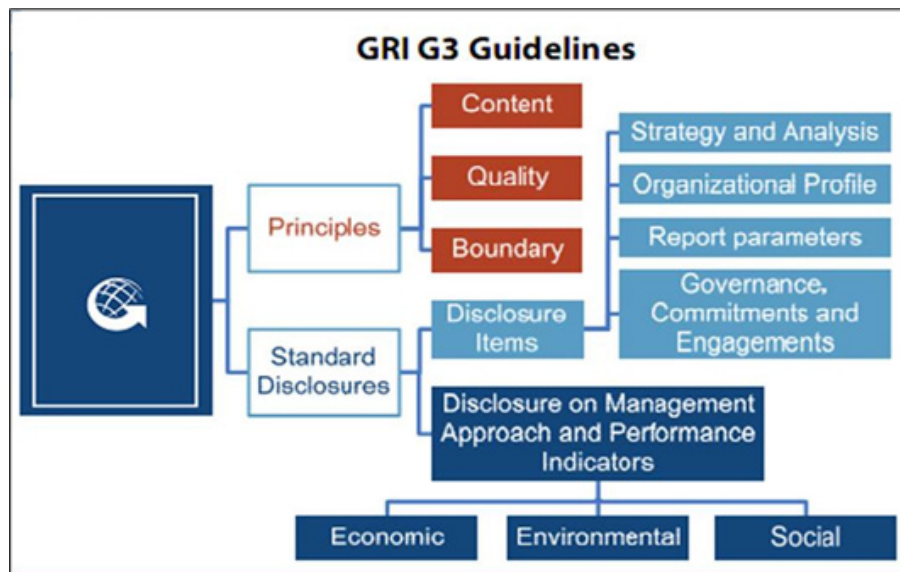
- benchmark their performance against laws, norms, codes, performance standards and voluntary initiatives
- demonstrate commitment to sustainability
- compare sustainability performance over time.

The intent of the guidelines and framework is to facilitate transparency and accountability of organisations' voluntary disclosures, providing stakeholders a universally-applicable, comparable reporting framework with which to understand disclosed non-financial information.

The GRI was developed through a systematic process of multi-stakeholder consultation and dialogue from business, civil society, academia, labour and other professional institutions around the world.

The guidelines are 'open-source' and reporting companies declare an Application Level ('C', 'B' or 'A') to indicate the extent to which their organisation has reported against the indicators.

## 7.2 GRI Framework



Source: GRI (as at 2010)

The Guidelines outline core content for reporting that is broadly relevant to all organisations regardless of size, sector, or location.

The Guidelines contain information on 'how to report', including principles, guidance and protocols, as well as 'what to report', including standard disclosures and sector supplements, to outline a disclosure framework that organisations can voluntarily, flexibly and incrementally adopt.

## 7.3 Key Points of Interest for Community Indicator Frameworks

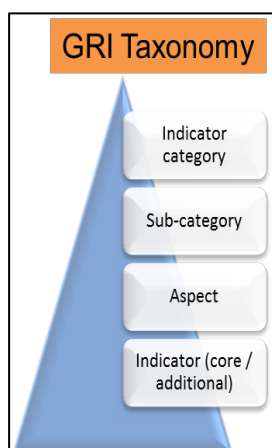
### 7.3.1 Principles

The GRI is underpinned by a set of principles which guide reporting. These principles include:

- **Content:** Determining the information to be included in a report to ensure a 'balanced and reasonable presentation of the organisations performance' (GRI, 2011, p. 7). Key elements to be considered within content are materiality, stakeholder inclusiveness, sustainability context and completeness.
- **Quality:** Guiding choices on ensuring the quality of reported information, including its proper presentation, and including considerations of reliability, clarity, balance (reporting both positive and negative performance), comparability, accuracy and timeliness.
- **Boundary:** A clear articulation of the areas to be reported, giving consideration to the extent to which the organisation has either control or influence over the reported aspects.



### 7.3.2 Framework Structure



The GRI structure follows a similar structure to that adopted in most community indicator frameworks as depicted in the diagram to the left. Categories are divided into three areas: economic, environmental and social. These are then divided into sub-categories, aspects and indicator levels which enable further detailed focus on specific areas.

All GRI Performance Indicators are designated as either 'core' or 'additional'. Core Indicators are those identified in the Guidelines to be of interest to most stakeholders and are material<sup>22</sup> to the organisation according to the GRI Reporting Principles. Additional Indicators are those identified in the Guidelines that 'represent emerging practice, or address topics that may be material to some organisations but not generally for a majority'.<sup>23</sup>

### 7.3.3 Sector Supplements

These documents respond to the limits of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Sector Supplements are additional indicators that complement use of the core Guidelines by capturing the unique set of sustainability issues faced by different sectors such as mining, automotive, banking, telecommunications, public agencies and others.

### 7.3.4 Indicator protocols

Protocols are the 'recipe' behind each indicator in the Guidelines, and include definitions for key terms in the indicator, compilation methodologies, intended scope of the indicator, and other technical guiding references.

### 7.3.5 Application levels

Application levels provide organisations with a pathway towards continuous improvement in reporting disclosure and enable those at different stages to report at a level appropriate to their current context and ability. There are three application levels ('C', 'B', 'A') with clear requirements outlined to meet each level. The levels relate to extent of disclosure against the GRI indicators, with 'A' being the most extensive. It should be emphasised that an 'A' level report, is not qualitatively superior to a 'B' or 'C' level report.

## 7.4 Application in a local government context


The GRI provides a useful precedent for developing a hierarchy of a 'core' set of indicators, which may have universal application for all councils, supported by 'additional' indicators which may accommodate specific indicators to respond to council type, based on size or geography. The concept of 'sector supplements' may be a future facility for reporting of a specific issue across the local government sector, or as a bridge with other frameworks at the State and or Federal level.

Key ways in which this could be used by local councils is through:

- The development of 'supplementary indicators' focusing on issues of relevance to specific contexts, for example: rural councils, growth area councils, coastal councils etc.

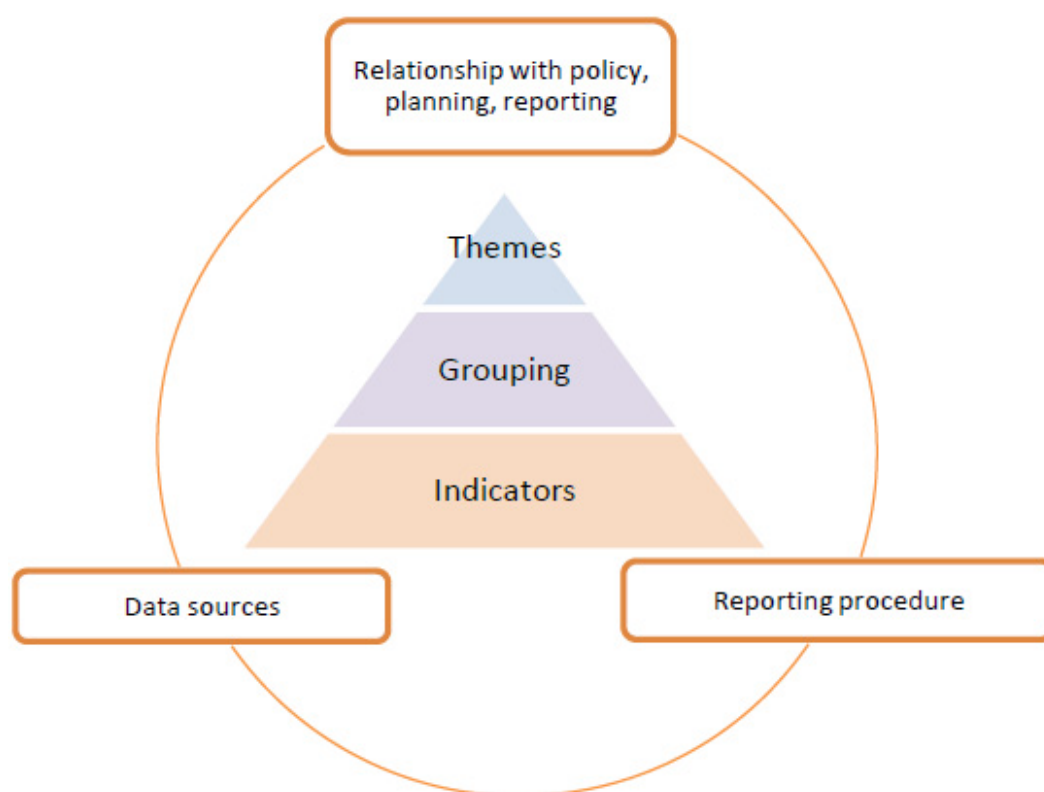
<sup>22</sup> Material issues are defined by the GRI as those issues which either '(a) reflect the organisation's significant economic, environmental, and social impacts; or (b) that would substantively influence the assessments and decisions of stakeholders.' (GRI, G3.1 Guidelines, p. 8, 2011)

<sup>23</sup> Per GRI, Technical Protocol 2011, p. 13, 2011

- 
- The articulation of key principles to guide reporting practices and intent
  - The development of protocols, or a guide, to provide a common reference point and understanding across councils adopting the framework and to foster comparability.

## 7. Framework Content Analysis

This section provides further discussion of the key topics and qualities of indicators included within the six identified frameworks, starting with a comparison of the themes and groups used to categorise indicators.



**Figure 7.** Structural elements of a community indicator framework.

### 8.1 Themes

The themes are used to reflect the high-level structure of the framework. These themes generally relate to triple or quadruple bottom line principles of environment, social, economic (and governance). The five themes used in the CIV framework, and adopted by the City of Sydney framework, are based on a QBL approach, but further split the 'social' theme into two, including 'culturally rich and safe and inclusive communities'. This division highlights the importance of these two social aspects in particular for community wellbeing/liveability. The overarching themes chosen for each framework will guide the allocation of indicators and should be chosen to best fit the strategies of the local government or legislative requirements.

### 8.2 Groups

Groups may be used to provide further granularity to the themes and structure to the indicators. For example, an 'environment' theme may then be grouped into topics of waste, water and energy. The group level assists in providing high level summaries of progress of the community against key topics or outcomes, without requiring the detail of the numerous indicators used to underpin each group.

In the frameworks assessed, there are generally two types of grouping used: either topic-based phrases, or outcome-oriented sentences. The topic-based grouping provides clear grouping of smaller numbers of indicators relevant to a specific feature, such as 'early childhood'. In contrast, the outcome-oriented grouping reflect a broader group of indicators relevant to an aspect of society, such as '[a] safe community where everybody has the opportunity to take part in social life', which combines safety with access to facilities and so on.

The outcome-oriented grouping provides positive and clear communication with stakeholders about the aims of council activities and reason for measuring progress. In some cases however, the choice of the indicators to reflect the group is unclear and potentially misleading. For instance, the State of the Shire group, 'A harmonious community based on respect and responsibility where everybody is made to feel welcome and valued', not only includes indicators around diversity, but also noise complaints and aircraft noise.

These indicators also do not include an assessment of community perception of the benefits of a multicultural community, as is measured by some other frameworks. It is therefore necessary in analysing frameworks to examine and understand the detail and rationale of how indicators, groups and themes have been structured and linked.

### **8.3 Indicators**

The sample of indicators used in the analysis of the frameworks have been organised into the groups and topics identified through the theme analysis.

The indicator analysis included:

- For each indicator the source data and source data category were identified
- The indicators were then organised into topics to allow comparison between the frameworks irrespective of variations in wording or data collection and manipulation processes
- The frequency with which topics occur within the chosen frameworks was assessed as a means of identifying those indicators which are most commonly used across frameworks.

#### **8.3.1 Data**

The main data sources identified for the indicators assessed are categorised below. The percentage figures represent the proportion of indicators analysed which drew data from these particular sources:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics data (typically direct Census data) – 19%
- Community survey undertaken by the local council for the purpose of the framework – 26%
- Data available from the council but collected for other purposes – 12%
- Data collected by council for the framework through additional research – 3%
- Data collected by State organisations – 27%
- Data collected by National organisations – 7%
- A combination of the above sources or external organisations – 5%.



### 8.3.2 Topics

To identify the common trends in indicator use across frameworks, the authors organised the selected indicators into topics to enhance their comparability. In this analysis, indicators were organised to identify the breadth of topics covered (i.e. more groupings identified rather than less). For instance, while diversity indicators could be included in topics such as governance, housing or employment, here, the authors have listed them within a separate 'diversity' topic.

The topics have been assigned to *environment*, *social*, and *economic* themes (with *governance* captured within economic). The groupings indicate more topics for *social* than *environment* or *economic* categories. While this is reflective of the frameworks assessed, it is acknowledged the comparatively small number of environment topics identified does not appear to accurately represent council's legislative responsibility for environmental health (which may demonstrate certain limitations with existing frameworks regarding a true QBL approach). In this analysis, social indicators in each framework accounted for 32% to 78% of indicators, while environmental indicators accounted for 10% to 36%, and economic indicators for 12% to 38%.

Reasons for the uneven split of indicators may include:

- *Ease and/or availability of information gathering* (data may be readily available for certain aspects of social life in communities such as health whereby the data is collected by state government and made publicly available).
- *Relevance to wellbeing for the community frameworks* – only some aspects of the economy and environment may be considered relevant to community wellbeing. It is likely that State of the Environment reports, for example, would include a much broader array of environmental indicators, which although related, may not be captured in 'liveability' indicators.

Topics with a sub-title 'general' have been used to group together indicators that appear in only one or two of the frameworks assessed.

The topics are outlined in Table 5 below. This table is a descriptor of what was identified in the analysed frameworks. The categories are neither presented as indicative, nor prescribe of what the ideal set of topics should be.

**Table 5.** Indicator topic categorisation.<sup>24</sup>

Theme	Topic
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Biodiversity</li> <li>▪ Climate change</li> <li>▪ Environment – general (for example waste water recycling, ecological footprint, soil protection)</li> <li>▪ Water</li> <li>▪ Waste</li> <li>▪ Public space.</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community – general (for example overseas migration, work life balance)</li> <li>▪ Diversity – general (for example, immigration and settlement patterns, female local councillors, changes in age structure)</li> <li>▪ Diversity - perception</li> <li>▪ Education - adult</li> <li>▪ Education - early childhood and primary</li> <li>▪ Education - secondary school</li> <li>▪ Facilities and services</li> <li>▪ Health - child</li> <li>▪ Health - life expectancy</li> <li>▪ Health - mental and self-reported</li> <li>▪ Health - physical activity</li> <li>▪ Health - smoking</li> <li>▪ Healthy eating</li> <li>▪ Healthy weight</li> <li>▪ Safety - perception</li> <li>▪ Safety - reported</li> <li>▪ Satisfaction and belonging</li> <li>▪ Volunteering</li> <li>▪ Voting.</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Business</li> <li>▪ Employment</li> <li>▪ Financial stress</li> <li>▪ Governance</li> <li>▪ Housing - affordability</li> <li>▪ Housing – general (for example, housing mix, home internet access, ration of aged care places)</li> <li>▪ Income</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Mobility.</li> </ul>

<sup>24</sup> This table is a descriptor of what was identified in the analysed frameworks. The categories are not presented as indicative nor suggestive of what the ideal set of topics should be.

### 8.3.3 Common indicators

Fourteen topics were identified as common to at least five of the six chosen frameworks. These topics are listed in Table 6. This list of fourteen topics represents an average of twenty three indicators per framework. If we were to draw a set of 'core' liveability indicators from the frameworks analysed, this group represents, in the authors' opinion, a reasonable starting point for analysis, and for discussion and feedback.

**Table 6.** Themes and typical indicators identified in at least five of the six frameworks assessed.

Theme	Topic	Typical indicator(s)
Environment	Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>
	Waste and recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household waste and recycling</li> </ul>
Social	Health – physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in sporting and recreational activities</li> <li>Adequate physical exercise at least 5 times per week</li> </ul>
	Health - smoking rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of current smokers</li> </ul>
	Health – life expectancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life expectancy at birth, male and female</li> </ul>
	Satisfaction and belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of life, happiness, psychological or subjective wellbeing</li> <li>Feeling part of the community</li> </ul>
	Adult education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels of formal education</li> <li>Apprenticeship and vocational training</li> </ul>
	Early childhood and primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratio of childcare places</li> <li>Early primary school development</li> </ul>
	Council and community facilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in arts and cultural activities</li> <li>Assorted additional indicators such as facilities for children, teenagers, seniors, Aboriginal culture</li> </ul>
	Reported safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rates of crime</li> <li>Domestic violence</li> <li>Road safety</li> </ul>
	Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of volunteering</li> </ul>
Economic	Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport mode share</li> <li>Use of public transport</li> </ul>
	Housing affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically percentage of households with housing costs of 30% or more of gross income</li> </ul>
	Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment rate</li> <li>Local employment</li> </ul>

### 8.3.4 Indicator Discussion

#### **Councils' ability to influence**

The shortlisted frameworks incorporate a range of indicators that measure aspects of the community under varying degrees of local council control. Aspects under complete control of council are generally grouped under the *governance* theme, and include efficiency, ethical behaviour, asset management, and so on.

Of the frameworks assessed, an average of six indicators per framework were considered to be under complete control of the local council, however, not all frameworks included these indicators. The majority of indicators fall under *council influence*, with an average of thirty five indicators of those assessed situated in this category. This includes, for example, 'community satisfaction' with council activities and participation.

Some indicators are further beyond council control, but have aspects of community concern. These generally include aspects of biodiversity, tracking of significant health problems, and tracking of relationships between individuals in the community, such as 'People who can get help from friends, family or neighbours when needed', for example (from the City of Sydney framework), expressed as a percentage of the adult population.

***Intention – alignment of the intention of the indicator with the trend analysis***

It is important to align indicators with the desired trend or goal that they are trying to measure. This will enable analysis of the progress of the community towards these outcomes.

For instance, a *Quality of Life London* indicator measuring 'percentage of Londoners in the bottom 10% and top 10% of household income', used to establish trends of income inequality, is an example of a direct link between the indicator and trend. Conversely, a State of the Shire indicator which measures residents' views of the Shires' future, but is reported as 'optimism' and 'quality of life', is less well aligned. Generally, trends are either reported directly against indicator performance, or a summary of progress is reported at a group or theme level (incorporating the results of a number of different indicators).

Where frameworks report the trend of indicators directly, there is greater likelihood that the intention of the indicators will be clearly reflected in the discussion of the trends identified. An example of this is *Quality of Life Bristol*, which reports on a trend of percentage of respondents who feel they can influence decisions in their local neighbourhood. In some instances, the indicator may be reported clearly, but the information provided by the indicator does not fully align with the underlying causes. For example, perceptions of river health or footpath and road quality may be easy to measure, but may not accurately reflect the actual physical condition of those council assets.

Frameworks which report results at a group level rely on being able to establish a clear relationship between each indicator and the group under which they are reported. For example, 16 indicators underpin the State of the Shire group 'A healthy and active community with appropriate activities and services for all stages of the life cycle'. These indicators focus on physical activity and health, and generally reflect the statement, including indicators for a range of age groups. The group 'A strong community based on networks of families, neighbourhoods, community groups and local businesses' includes indicators around 'participation' and 'optimism', but not around 'business partnerships' (which is included in a different group). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude the indicators are not reflecting *all* the aspirations of the group.

While it is important the intention of indicators is aligned with the trend analysis, they will provide only part of the story. This is particularly so for issues which are difficult to measure. An ongoing discussion and interpretation of trends in reporting is therefore essential to help stakeholders understand any change that is occurring.

***Uniqueness/usefulness – similarity between indicators and indicators providing information on more than one theme/group***

The frameworks assessed incorporate a range of single indicators and multiple indicators measuring one topic. For example, smoking rates appear to be generally measured by one indicator only. Housing however may be covered by indicators on 'housing mix', 'housing affordability', and 'housing stress'.

CIV and City of Sydney frameworks have a large number of indicators, and often incorporate multiple indicators to inform each topic area. For instance, there are two indicators for 'healthy



eating', with servings of fruit and vegetables recorded separately. Similarly, 'employment' is covered by 'employment rate', 'unemployment rate', and 'local employment'. Other frameworks with a few indicators combined these into a single measure.

In some cases, multiple measures are required to establish a composite picture. Most frameworks incorporate an indicator for reported crime as well as perceived safety among the community. Both these indicators look at the same aspect, however they may show different results, where a community has low crime levels, but feels unsafe. Education services are likely to also require numerous indicators, which will allow tracking through the education system and identification of where influences occur.

There are limited examples of indicators that are useful for more than one theme or group. This is likely to occur only where the grouping is broad and high level and informed by a range of indicators. For instance, the *State of the Shire* framework indicator for 'domestic violence' is used as a measure both of 'strong communities' and 'safe communities'. 'School travel' is also an indicator collected to inform 'healthy and active communities', but would also provide information on 'transport mode share'.

#### ***Universality and comparability – relevance to most councils and subsequent comparability***


Universality of the indicators has been assessed based on each indicator's relevance to local councils without modification. Universality is dependent both on the topic and the framing of the indicator. Framing of indicators with percentages rather than a net change, will allow comparability across councils in a variety of contexts. For example, the *State of the Shire* framework has an indicator tracking the 'change in canopy'. As a percentage, this would allow comparison between councils with a broad range of green and open spaces. Similarly, climate change and energy indicators relating to the number of households would provide better comparison and traceability than an overall assessment.

South Australia's Strategic Plan is based on targets and target years which are unlikely to be able to be picked up directly by local councils. For instance, the indicator 'Participation by people with disabilities: Increase by 400 the number of people with disability involved in a day options program by 2014', incorporates specific targets which are not likely to be directly transferable to other communities. General wording such as 'increase' could allow a desired direction to be incorporated into the indicator, while allowing councils to have individual specific targets.

#### ***Utility – ease of data compilation and manipulation***

Data sourcing and manipulation methods which are transparent and logical to follow will increase the utility of the framework. Generally, indicators requiring significant data manipulation or have unclear data sources are less manageable and more prone to reporting inconsistency and assumption error. A community survey undertaken specifically for the purpose of the framework is the simplest and most manageable approach to the indicators. The *Quality of Life Bristol* framework uses this approach, however the risk is oversimplification of some aspects that may be better informed by other measures.

'Asset management' for instance, is not easily reduced to an indicator measured by a community survey. The *Quality of Life Bristol* framework attempts to do this, by way of example, with a perception of the 'state of the local river'. This indicator, however, is unlikely to provide sufficient information for directed action. Clear formulation of the indicator is required to achieve a useable and meaningful indicator.



Frameworks that describe the trend establishment in the indicator, and/or clearly present the trend establishment in reporting, offer a more manageable approach to indicators than frameworks with complicated data sources or methodologies which may not be well documented. This also removes the requirement for organisational memory.

***Traceability – meaningful trend establishment over time***

The indicators assessed generally evidence high traceability over time, however some types of indicator framing allow for more direct and transparent traceability. Indicators with numeric measurements expressed as a percentage or proportion of the population, or number of households, provide a clear measure to establish trends, and account for changes in population over time.

South Australia's Strategic Plan indicators are not easily traceable over the long term as targets are set for the short to medium term. This requires indicators to be revised as the target or target year is reached, and there is no requirement for the revised indicators to be compatible with the previous indicators, or to refer to baselines.

Several indicators assessed included a count of residents or businesses signed up to particular council programs. Here there is also a risk the indicator will become redundant through changes in council programs, or processes within the programs. For example, the *Quality of Life London* framework includes an indicator assessing housing against the council's *Decent Home Standard*. This may not show an accurate comparison of actual 'housing quality' over time, as the standards may be revised and modified, and will make comparison to other councils or transferability of approach difficult.

***Responsiveness – the degree to which the indicators clearly direct the council response***

Framing an indicator to direct action can help with addressing areas outside of traditional council influence. For instance, South Australia's Strategic Plan indicator for 'biodiversity' incorporates a target of a specific number of biodiversity corridors. Similarly, where many frameworks include a measure of 'life expectancy', the *State of the Shire* framework instead includes an indicator for major causes of death, which provides the council with information to link directly to council advocacy and community health education activities.

## 8. Recommendations and Next Steps

The research undertaken has suggested community indicators are developed at all levels of government nationally and internationally, with the intent of reporting on quality of life issues considered to be important to communities. The relevance of community indicators for activities of local councils has been the focus of this report.

In New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria (and soon in Western Australia) legislation requires local government to set long term community goals or aspirations in the form of a Community Strategic Plan, and include within that Plan some way of measuring and reporting progress towards those goals or aspirations. Importantly, the legislation also recognises in most cases, the requirement for other organisations or stakeholders to contribute toward achieving those goals. By implication, this acknowledges that in reporting on progress, local councils are reporting on issues which are often beyond their immediate control.

In New South Wales, the Community Strategic Plan is to cover a twenty year period, developed through a comprehensive community engagement process. To be a genuine community plan, councillors set the actions within the four year Delivery Program which is to respond to the aspirations set by the community. At the end of each four year council term, councils must report on how the actions taken under the Delivery Program have contributed to the achievement of the community aspirations within the Strategic Plan. Selecting community indicators that best measure progress against these aspirations is an important and challenging task.

This research project finds that there is significant diversity of interpretation between the issues that community indicators cover between national, state and local government levels, and across different geographical areas. The report provides a framework for evaluating community indicators which allows for both broad comparison and individual specialisation. It is hoped this approach will provide a comprehensive baseline to help councils make an informed choice on the most appropriate pathway for their indicator development. The report is a 'snapshot' of a rapidly evolving field of inquiry.

To understand how this work can contribute to reporting by local councils in the short and long term, and the relevance of potential linkages with other reporting frameworks in development, the following steps are recommended:

1. *Articulation of purpose:* Articulating a clear objective of why a community indicator framework is being developed; how it will align and rationalise with current indicators used by a council; and how the information collected will be used is important to ensure a framework is fit-for-purpose and will most effectively capture appropriate evidence of policy outcomes. The development of a set of principles (such as those used in the GRI framework), to underpin the development and design of a community indicator framework, will assist in aligning the framework and indicators with the overarching reporting objective.
2. *Indicator limitations:* Indicators provide 'point in time' information that is useful in providing feedback on how progress is tracking against a desired objective. It is important to remember that indicators are indicative only and their usefulness in telling the whole story on their own is limited. Indicators therefore need to be used with caution and contextualised to reflect the particular local community.

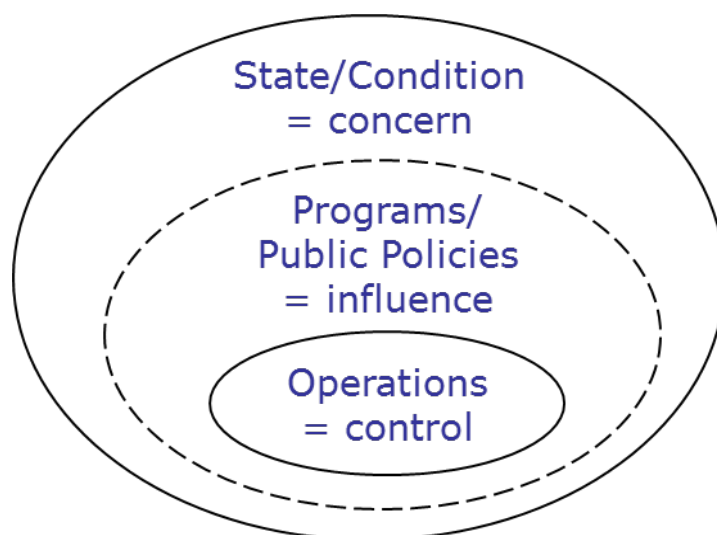
3. *Alignment and connectivity:* Themes should be aligned with strategic goals, as well as planning and reporting requirements for connectivity and clarity, and ensure the intention of indicators is consistent with these goals. Consideration should be given as to how indicators within themes can directly reflect council's medium to long term strategic targets.
4. *Identification of 'material' issues for the community and council:* Community consultation and stakeholder engagement are necessary to ensure the outcomes of the framework are relevant to the community and reflect key local issues, aspirations and any areas of concern. Stakeholders need to be identified and prioritised for involvement, as well as appropriate means of engagement planned. This will help ensure council goals are aligned with community objectives and that a resulting framework designed to inform council policy, decision-making and actions, actually aligns to these desired outcomes. Materiality is an important filter in determining what to report so that the most relevant, meaningful and useful information is reported rather than a 'catch-all' approach for the sake of measurement.
5. *Build on existing frameworks:* Considerable research exists to date on community indicator frameworks and building on these foundations is recommended. The CIV framework, for instance, is being adopted by councils across Victoria, trialled in Queensland (through the Community Indicators Queensland project), and has been used by the City of Sydney. The broad uptake of the CIV framework, its foundation on thorough international research and best practice, and the recent analysis by the DLG concerning its applicability to the New South Wales context<sup>25</sup> mean that as a framework, it warrants serious consideration as a guiding precedent for PCC and other councils. PCC may wish to use the New South Wales-focused City of Sydney draft framework to identify a set of 'core' indicators applicable to councils in general, and then develop a set of 'additional' indicators specifically to reflect the particular context of growth area councils like PCC. Additionally, other frameworks analysed in this report also merit consideration, particularly in relation to their identified strengths. It is important that in developing a suite of indicators consideration be given to the relative balance of indicators across the QBL areas, notably aspects of the environment (for example water and biodiversity), particularly as several frameworks analysed in this report have shown a greater weighting towards social themes.
6. *Data requirements and availability:* Understand the data sources available and required, as well as common or comparable data within and between councils and states to facilitate replication and comparability. Councils should not, however, be limited by what information is currently 'collectable', instead the focus should be on the material areas of interest and how these might best be measured. In identifying possible new sources of data, consideration should be given to collaboration opportunities with data providers such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to better leverage data provider strengths, data quality and reliability.
7. *Consultation and engagement:* Consider how engagement and progress reporting can assist with communication and meaningful consultation opportunities between the council and community, as well as facilitating a feedback loop on improving reporting scope and quality.

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<sup>25</sup> (Elton Consulting and the Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS, 2011)



8. *Council spheres of influence and connectivity to planning:* In determining appropriate measures, consider how to frame indicators to achieve greatest benefit. To design reportable indicators, it is recommended the specific areas of interest be examined, the relationship with council functions and sphere of influence (see Figure 9), as well as the resulting inter-relationship between indicators. The GRI *boundary setting protocol* may provide useful example for defining these different facets.



**Figure 8.** Council spheres of influence.<sup>26</sup>

9. *Consider an appropriate structure for a framework relevant in multiple contexts:* The GRI provides a useful precedent for modelling the architecture of a potential national community indicator framework which could also work at a local level. The benefit of this approach is the hierarchy of a 'core' set of indicators, supported by 'sector supplements' (which focus on issues of relevance to specific contexts). To achieve this, an analysis of the common set of indicators used by most frameworks (identified in Section 7.3.3) could inform the basis for developing a 'core' indicator group.

Supplementing this would be an analysis of factors specific to particular local contexts (e.g. rural councils, growth area councils and coastal councils) to identify relevant 'supplementary' indicators. This structure should be reviewed in conjunction with the CIV and City of Sydney approaches to explore how they could work together.

10. *Align with state and national requirements:* To assist councils in any future reporting for national purposes, community indicator frameworks should have the capacity for alignment with state and national requirements. Ongoing active engagement with relevant state and national groups is therefore strongly encouraged.

While these recommendations and next steps are intended predominantly to assist individual councils make informed choices, recommendation 10 will require the engagement and commitment of a much broader group of stakeholders. Of primary importance will be the involvement of state and federal agencies working in this field to encourage comprehensive policy debate and facilitate active collaboration.

<sup>26</sup> Adapted from (City of Sydney by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney. (2011). City of Sydney Indicator Framework Final Report) and (Commissioner Environmental Sustainability Victoria, 2011)

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- Sarah McMahon, Consultation and Research Co-ordinator, Bristol City Council
- Paul Spink, Manager Strategic Planning, Sutherland Shire Council
- Athena Williams, Capacity Building and Training Manager, Community Indicators Victoria.

### About Net Balance

Net Balance is one of Australia's largest specialist sustainability advisory firms. We help corporate, government, private and not-for-profit organisations prepare for resilience to change. Our services cover sustainability strategy, reporting and assurance, social responsibility and community investment, climate change, environmental management, energy efficiency and greenhouse, and economics and policy. The Net Balance team guides organisations on best practice approaches for measuring and managing social and environmental performance.



## Limitations

Net Balance Management Group Pty Ltd (Net Balance) has prepared this report in accordance with the usual care and thoroughness of the consulting profession. This report has been prepared for use by Penrith City Council and the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, and only those third parties who have been authorised in writing by Net Balance.

The Report is based on generally accepted practices and standards at the time it was prepared. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report. It is prepared in accordance with the scope of work and for the purpose outlined in the project brief. The methodology adopted and sources of information used by Net Balance are outlined in this report.

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Appendix A: Glossary

Below is a working glossary of terminology used in this field, and how terms were defined for the purpose of this project. This is provided as a living document for revision throughout the project.

Term	Definition	Example	Source
Indicator Framework	<p>A community indicator framework is taken to be an overarching structure or approach used to measure progress in the community over time, through a suite of indicators relating to for example, liveability, quality of life, wellbeing and/or sustainability.</p> <p>In general, a framework will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Indicator theme and language</li><li>Indicator grouping</li><li>Indicators (measure)</li><li>Relationship with policy, planning and reporting</li><li>Data sourcing</li><li>Reporting procedure and frequency.</li></ul>	Community Indicators Victoria	
Aspirations/Results	Conditions of wellbeing/liveability our communities have identified as important to them.	Clean waterways Access to local jobs Healthy children	Results Based Accountability
Benchmark	Provides a time based or geographic point of comparison on a given measure.	Benchmark against figures from a base year (e.g. 2011) Benchmark against figures from another LGA or similar organisation Benchmark against different areas within the LGA (e.g. suburbs)	City of Sydney report
Council control	Areas of wellbeing which Council is able (and required) to directly influence.	Core business, statutory responsibilities, service provision. Council facilities and services, buildings and other assets. e.g. Provision of library services	City of Sydney report
Council influence	Areas of wellbeing in which Council is one of a number of players that have the potential to influence the overall trends or outcomes.	Early childhood/school readiness statistics (for Councils with child care centres) Health of water ways	
Indicator theme	High level grouping of indicators into areas of relationship. Referred to as ‘themes’ by Penrith City Council.	Health and wellbeing Environmental sustainability Economic prosperity	Various
Indicator grouping	Sub-grouping of specific indicators within each theme.	Environmental sustainability may be grouped into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Resource use (water and electricity, recycling etc.)</li><li>Clean air and water</li><li>Biodiversity.</li></ul>	
(Community) Indicators	<p>Broad range of measures and evidence designed to identify and communicate economic; social; environmental; cultural and governance trends; and outcomes at local, regional and national levels.</p> <p>A measure that helps quantify the achievement of a result</p>	Number/% of children ready for school Crime rates	<p>CIV Victoria report</p> <p>Results Based Accountability</p>



Term	Definition	Example	Source
<b>Community well-being indicators</b>	<p>(a) Aggregated or summarised statistics of social, economic, cultural, governance and environmental pointers relevant to a particular geographic area;</p> <p>(b) broad measures designed to assess the progress of society or the well-being of a community; and</p> <p>(c) a tool that can spotlight issues or trends affecting a particular area or population and enable an estimation of the factors that are influencing wellbeing within a wider system.</p> <p>How we measure the conditions of wellbeing/liveability we want for our communities.</p>		<p>City of Sydney report</p> <p>Results Based Accountability</p>
<b>Liveability*</b>	Liveability: A term used to focus in general on the characteristics of an area and the services the place can offer to residents.		Community Indicators Victoria
<b>Outcomes</b>	The effect (change created) of a policy, service or program on the recipients (community).		Dale Quinlivan LGMA congress paper 2008
<b>Quadruple Bottom Line</b>	Refers to environmental, social, economic and governance aspects.		IP&R
<b>Quality of Life*</b>	<p>Having access to quality education, jobs, services, housing and leisure</p> <p>Living in an environment which is healthy, resilient and stable now and into the future.</p> <p>Living and working within a society which is democratic, just, engaged, diverse, responsible, supportive and vibrant.</p> <p>Being fulfilled, healthy and with sufficient personal resources to enjoy live.</p>		London Quality of Life indicators
<b>Quality of Life*</b>	Focuses on the characteristics and wellbeing of people living in a given geographic area.		Community Indicators Victoria
<b>Result</b>	A population condition of well-being for children, adults, families and communities, expressed in plain language.	<p>Children ready for school</p> <p>A safe community</p> <p>A clean environment</p>	Results Based Accountability
<b>Wellbeing*</b>	Well-being relates to residents health and is measured through activity, illness, and public health matters. It relates to physical, spiritual and emotional health and well-being and is differentiated by things such as age, cultural background, gender, and occupation.		Cairns indicators

\* There are numerous definitions of liveability, quality of life and wellness/wellbeing. Given the level of cross-over between these areas, and the difficulty to clearly identify boundaries between them, for the purposes of this project it has been agreed that these terms will be used synonymously, under the term 'liveability'. This will ensure that no indicators/ frameworks or aspects are overlooked due to terminology.

## Appendix B: Sample of existing frameworks against project principles

Document title	Purpose	Reporting frequency	Reporting measure	QBL outcomes	Universality	Localisation	Currency	Comparative utility	Uniqueness	Cycling	Reference
ABS Measures of Australia's Progress	To help Australians address the question 'Is life in Australia getting better?'		Traffic light								<a href="#">Link</a>
ACF 2010 Sustainable Cities Index	Ranking Australia's 20 largest cities in terms of sustainability categorised as environment, quality of life, and resilience		Graphical ranking								<a href="#">Link</a>
Australian Unity Wellbeing Index	Inform public debate, including about the society Australian's want to live in Credible measure of wellbeing for policy making and planning Identification of people in society who may require assistance to avoid depression Provides information on both personal and national wellbeing		Numeric								<a href="#">Link</a>
Bega Valley Shire Council State of the Shire Report	Reflect key aspirations of 2006 20 Year Plan Report prepared every four years as a 'report card'	Quadrennial									<a href="#">Link</a>
Canadian Index of Wellbeing®	Report on the quality of life of Canadians Promote dialogue on how to improve quality of life through evidence-based policies	Periodic	Percentages								<a href="#">Link</a>
Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project	Promote sustainability Help engage Central Texans in public debate		Traffic light (status) and 3 arrows (trend)								<a href="#">Link</a>
Draft City of Sydney Indicator Framework	To measure progress towards the Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision To inform policy and planning Support engagement on local issues Raise awareness of and bring focus to concepts of wellbeing	Not yet reported against	Not yet reported against								<a href="#">Link</a>
Community Indicators Victoria*#	To improve citizen engagement, community planning, and policy making To build healthy, just and sustainable communities Assist public and private planning Help local governments shift focus from inputs and outputs to outcomes for their communities Monitoring results and progress over time	Single report not created – individually tailored reports can be downloaded from the website as required	Numeric reporting (without overlying analysis)								<a href="#">Link</a>
Economic Intelligence Unit	Assessment of which locations around the world provide the best or the worst living conditions, for use by companies to assess expatriate relocation packages		Point scoring relative to New York (given base score of 100)								<a href="#">Link</a>

Document title	Purpose	Reporting frequency	Reporting measure	QBL outcomes	Universality	Localisation	Currency	Comparative utility	Uniqueness	Cycling	Reference
European Common Indicators	A set of common indicators that are relevant to various sized cities within the European Union and can help guide sustainable development through measuring progress. Help identify areas where additional EU support and guidance is needed to encourage sustainable development.										<a href="#">Link</a>
Global City Indicators Program (World Bank) <sup>#</sup>	The Global City Indicators Program provides an established set of city indicators with a globally standardised methodology that allows for global comparability of city performance and knowledge sharing.										<a href="#">Link</a>
Global Reporting Initiative	To standardize disclosure among organisations, and provide a core set of indicators for all participating organisations to report against.	As required by individual organisations	Discussion (disclosure, not measurement)								<a href="#">Link</a>
Green Star Communities Framework	Best practice principles to guide sustainable communities in Australia, reinforced by a rating tool for best practice benchmarks.										<a href="#">Link</a>
Larimer County Indicators Report	Inform policy decision making.	Varies	Key findings (bullets), 3 arrows								<a href="#">Link</a>
Liveability Cairns City Council	Progressing towards the achievement of the Vision outlined in Future Cairns. Inform council planning for the following year's activities.		3 arrow system								<a href="#">Link</a>
Melville Scorecard	To determine levels of wellbeing in the community. To understand how community needs are changing . To identify opportunities for improvements .		Traffic light								<a href="#">Link</a>
nef - National Accounts of Well-being	To encourage governments to directly measure people's subjective well-being.		Well-being spider graphs (numeric)								<a href="#">Link</a>
Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts <sup>@</sup>	Information system to provide community, regional, and provincial data.	No single report created (continually updated)	Traffic lights based on ranking of all communities included								<a href="#">Link</a>
PlaNYC2030	Measure of progress towards 2030 plan.										<a href="#">Link</a>
Quality of Life in Bristol	Measure of progress towards 20:20 Plan (to become one of the top 20 European cities). Inform planning by council and partner organisations 'how well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?'	Annual	Traffic light								<a href="#">Link</a>

Document title	Purpose	Reporting frequency	Reporting measure	QBL outcomes	Universality	Localisation	Currency	Comparative utility	Uniqueness	Cycling	Reference
Quality of Life London	To challenge policy makers to promote a better quality of life for all Londoners. To inform and stimulate debate. Lead to coordinated and sustained action.	Quadrennial	Traffic light plus grey								<a href="#">Link</a>
South Australia Strategic Plan	The target measures in South Australia's Strategic Plan represent a set of indicators that are meaningful to the broad community as a way to define the progress of the state, in a broad sense.		Progress ratings 1-3, Achievability ratings 1-5								<a href="#">Link</a>
State of Australian Cities*	To answer the central questions of where are our cities now, and how are they progressing.		Each indicator graphically								<a href="#">Link</a>
State of the Shire (Sutherland Shire)	To assist in determining future actions to maintain or improve the Shire's vision.	Varies	2 coloured arrows								<a href="#">Link</a>
Sustainable Seattle - The Happiness Initiative* <sup>@</sup>	A regional sustainability indicator organisation 'To be a catalyst and resource for positive change'. To work with the community to measure and make progress towards sustainability. Goals are social justice, collaboration and stewardship.										<a href="#">Link</a>
Wellbeing watch: A monitor of health, wealth and happiness in the Hunter	To assess the quality of life in the Hunter, identify lifestyle trends and provide an understanding of the factors associated with wellbeing.		Numeric								<a href="#">Link</a>

Key:

\*Included in City of Sydney research

# Included in DLG NSW research


@ Included in CIV research



## Appendix C: COAG Reform Council on Capital Cities – 9 National Criteria

The COAG Reform Council has identified nine criteria for future strategic planning of capital cities. The Council has outlined that capital city strategic planning systems should:

1. Be integrated:
  - a. Across functions, including land-use and transport planning, economic and infrastructure development, environmental assessment and urban development, and
  - b. Across government agencies;
2. Provide for a consistent hierarchy of future oriented and publicly available plans, including:
  - a. Long term (for example, 15-30 year) integrated strategic plans,
  - b. Medium term (for example, 5-15 year) prioritised infrastructure and land-use plans, and
  - c. Near term prioritised infrastructure project pipeline backed by appropriately detailed project plans;
3. Provide for nationally-significant economic infrastructure (both new and upgrade of existing) including:
  - a. Transport corridors,
  - b. International gateways,
  - c. Intermodal connections,
  - d. Major communications and utilities infrastructure, and
  - e. Reservation of appropriate lands to support future expansion;
4. Address nationally-significant policy issues including:
  - a. Population growth and demographic change,
  - b. Productivity and global competitiveness,
  - c. Climate change mitigation and adaptation,
  - d. Efficient development and use of existing and new infrastructure and other public assets,
  - e. Connectivity of people to jobs and businesses to markets,
  - f. Development of major urban corridors,
  - g. Social inclusion,
  - h. Health, liveability, and community wellbeing,
  - i. Housing affordability, and
  - j. Matters of national environmental significance;
5. Consider and strengthen the networks between capital cities and major regional centres, and other important domestic and international connections;
6. Provide for planned, sequenced and evidence-based land release and an appropriate balance of infill and greenfields development;
7. Clearly identify priorities for investment and policy effort by governments, and provide an effective framework for private sector investment and innovation;
8. Encourage world-class urban design and architecture; and
9. Provide effective implementation arrangements and supporting mechanisms, including:

- 
- a. Clear accountabilities, timelines and appropriate performance measures,
  - b. Coordination between all three levels of government, with opportunities for Commonwealth and Local Government input, and linked, streamlined and efficient approval processes including under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999,
  - c. Evaluation and review cycles that support the need for balance between flexibility and certainty, including trigger points that identify the need for change in policy settings, and
  - d. Appropriate consultation and engagement with external stakeholders, experts and the wider community.

Source: <http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/agenda/cities.cfm>.

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## About ACELG

ACELG is a consortium of universities and professional bodies that have a strong commitment to the advancement of local government. The consortium is led by the University of Technology Sydney's Centre for Local Government, and includes the University of Canberra, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, Local Government Managers Australia and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia. This research was funded through the ACELG Research Partnership Program, established to assist councils and tertiary institutions conduct research that will benefit local government and build research capacity in the sector.

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An Australian Government Initiative

## About Penrith City Council

Penrith City Council is a local government area located on the western fringe of Sydney in a high growth area. It covers an area of 407 square kilometres and is home to more than 186,000 people, with the population expected by increase to more than 210,000 by 2031. Penrith Council has been a leader in the use of indicators as a way to measure progress towards becoming a more sustainable City, and has funded this research to ensure that its indicator framework remains contemporary and aligns with work currently being undertaken in both the national and state spheres of government.

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