

Things That Matter National Report: Resilience at the Centre

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In the Australian governments recently released Measuring What Matters: Australia's First Wellbeing Framework, we see, not unsurprisingly, that underneath all the key metrics for well-being, a Resilience is either central or indispensable.

Pairing with this research is other data evaluating the need of and for Social Cohesion; for any community, let alone a nation, a resiliency informed cohesion is one vital key to well-being.

The Australian Cohesion Index outlines this in detail. Some keys in this context are trust, well-being, national identity, and inclusion. These are all part of creating and sustaining this cohesion. All these too are elements in and around resiliency.



The 'Measuring What Matters Framework'

The Measuring What Matters Framework (the Framework) has been developed through extensive research and consultation to identify the best available indicators of Australia's wellbeing. The consultation process, which included over 280 submissions from people and organisations and more than 65 meetings, including with other countries and international organisations, has informed the Framework with five wellbeing themes:

Healthy: A society in which people feel well and are in good physical and mental health, can access services when they need, and have the information they require to take action to improve their health.

Secure: A society where people live peacefully, feel safe, have financial security and access to housing.

Sustainable: A society that sustainably uses natural and financial resources, protects and repairs the environment and builds resilience to combat challenges.

Cohesive: A society that supports connections with family, friends and the community, values diversity, and promotes belonging and culture.

Prosperous: A society that has a dynamic, strong economy, invests in people's skills and education, and provides broad opportunities for employment and well-paid, secure jobs.¹

As earlier stated, each of these requires a resiliency factor to work, and we note that the Well-being theme in the centre is Sustainable. This infers not only the natural environment, but all environments that a citizen may find themselves in.

There are various definitions of resilience, and when it comes to Things That Matter Most, understanding what it is and how to generate this vital cultural asset is a priority.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary... ***Resilience is the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress. It is also defined as an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change. Resilience is characterized by the ability to withstand shock without permanent deformation or rupture, and the tendency to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.****

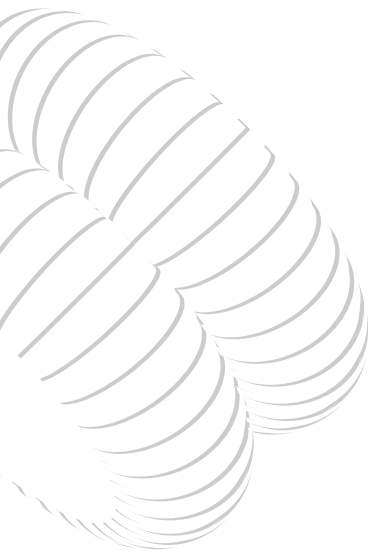
The Dalgarno Institute understands the imperative of resilience in our communities, families and individuals, and is more acutely aware because of the diminishing of resiliency in those contexts.

We have had our own working definition of resilience for well over a decade.

Resiliency is like a bungee rope, it won't stop you [and/or community/family] from falling, [or being 'bent out of shape'] but it will stop you from going 'splat'. Resilience helps you bounce back. It is managing complex issues of difficulty, duress, trauma or disappointment with, well-developed problem-solving skills, persistence of will, all founded on hope. Hope is not just the positive expectation of good, it's also the reasonable grounds for it – Weaving that bungee rope starts with your 'reasonable grounds' – What are yours/ours?

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We understand that as much as environments can build or demolish resiliency on many metrics, we also understand that resilient people foster better environments and for any society that is a good thing. Whilst this document is new in name and style, it's intent and much of its content reflect earlier federal government attempts to develop and strengthen well-being and the things that matter most, particularly for our new and or emerging Australian citizens, from back in 2005.

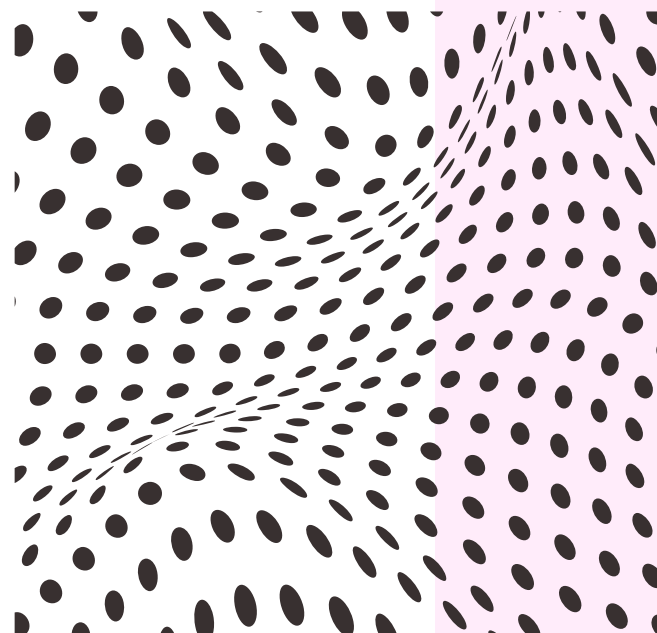
One such example can be seen in the following focus on our emerging citizens. As a clearly mandated component of the 'context' outlined in the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools, we have the following...

The National Goals include the goals that students when they leave school should: ...have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of i) morality, ii) ethics and iii) social justice, and the capacity iv) to make sense of the world, v) to think about how things got to be the way they are, to vi) make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and vii) to accept responsibility for their own actions. ...Values education is an essential part of effective schooling.²

We all understand that 'context is everything' - it gives us not only the, 'what, where and When', but most importantly the 'why.' It is the motivation, the intent and because of the Context, that should drive the implementation.

When we take an inventory of the above very important statement, you'll find seven key points that the Authors of the National Framework of Values Education in Australian Schools, believe are vital for students to not merely 'complete' their schooling, but grow into a participating (and we would argue, more resilient) community member; benefiting society as a positive culture contributing adult. These are key points,

- Exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of***
- i) morality***
- ii) ethics***
- iii) social justice***
- iv) sense of the world***
- v) how things got to be the way they are***
- vi) rational and informed decision-making processes and***
- vii) accepting responsibility for their actions.***



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The statements are not only fair, but reasonable and the purpose admirable and worthy, but if we are to take steps forward to achieving these ends, with any real consistency, we need to ask some important foundational questions, and then from there begin to construct a sound home for such outcomes so students can find strong and solid reasons to apply these values and not fall down after the first 'puff of critical wind' or challenge to their validity.

Some of this, too, can be a bit confusing. On one hand there are many messages in our society, both stated and unstated, that you should 'find your own way, do what you feel is best for you and ignore any idea, notion, evidence or even fact that does not affirm your agenda.

Yet two of our National values, and very good ones, are learning how to make rational and informed decisions, and learning to take responsibility for your own actions.

Great! But if I am going to accept responsibility for my actions (and I must), then I must at least know how to make rational and informed decisions, mustn't I? And to do that I have to get some idea of what's needed to make rational and informed decisions and by what standard.

These all presuppose that I need to defer to some benchmark and listen to some advice about what may be right and wrong, good or bad, true or false, but that would mean I just can't do what I feel is best or do what suits me alone!

There is more to this than just a quick glance reveals.

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The following are the [Nine Values for Australian Schools](#): (that, by the way, have never been rescinded) Of these values, 5 of them have a lot to say about how we should approach the Alcohol & Other Drug Issue. (The ones in yellow are part of the Dalgarno Institute's Curriculum and year 7-9 student pledge.) Alcohol and other drug use/misuse in your school years will detrimentally impact on at least five of these values.

World renown psychologist, Rollo May, famously stated that "A person can meet anxiety to the extent that their values are stronger than the threat." [↗](#)

Building resiliency is both about promoting and guarding values to ensure that mechanism has best opportunity to inform worldview and values development. When this mechanism is eroded by AOD (Alcohol & Other Drugs) use, then both perception and behaviour change, and can change more permanently if AOD initiation is done during brain development, up to 25 – 28 years of age, but more severely if uptake begins under the age of 18.



1. Care and Compassion

Care for self and others. (AOD use will diminish this)

2. Doing your best

Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence. (AOD use will diminish this)

3. Fair Go

Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society. (AOD use will diminish this)

4. Freedom

Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others.

5. Honesty and Trustworthiness

Be honest, sincere and seek the truth. (AOD use will diminish this)

6. Integrity

Act in accordance with principles or moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds. (AOD use will diminish this)

7. Respect

Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view. (AOD use will diminish this)

8. Responsibility

Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, nonviolent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment. (AOD use will diminish this)

9. Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion

Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others.

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Even after years of consultation, agreement and then implementation nationally, not unsurprisingly, this framework was challenged by an emerging small, but vociferous cohort of culture shapers that determined the framework to be too, to use their words 'conservative' and suggested a more 'diverse' approach, including student centric opinions.

What is concerning about this critique of what seems both sound and historically very beneficial values is that the now 'non-conservative' educator believes doing your best, care, compassion, responsibility, integrity, and honesty are no longer sound values.

One question right now is, with what do you replace these?

You will note that [all documents outlining the then governments position have now been removed from the internet.](#)³ This is of course all part of cultural recalibration. If you're going to lead a generation in a particular direction, you must minimise alternative voices. The new framers of values have decided that their definition of values cannot have what they perceive to be 'conservative' voices in them.

Of course, one could write volumes here on how this new 'values determining' process would work as the developing citizen (like all human beings) is merely a [wheelbarrow](#) for the first 12 years of life. Whatever they are filled with and whoever pushes them will significantly determine their information, perspective, direction and any 'insight' or understanding of the world that that may produce.

Another question here; Who has 'filled' that young wheelbarrow – primed them if you like, and will that make the emerging citizen, wise and knowledgeable, or simply 'pre- programmed'?

What's inescapable here is that whoever is 'educating' the children will determine what their 'opinion' will become. An emerging adolescent subject only to pop-culture or other anchorless psycho-social rhetorical bombardment will not have a sound fully formed, classically educated framework for decision-making. Rather you have a predisposition of cognitive dissonance that leads to simply parrot and or emote, rather than think logically, rationally and scholastically, because that capacity has not been granted them by the new emphasis.

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The imperative of well-being is inescapable to any people group, however, determining a collective metric for that gets trickier the more that radical individualism, unfettered from some objective values that are adhered to by the populace. The bigger the demographic and broader the mix of individualistic worldviews, beliefs and or values, the broader the net of cohesion must be to achieve some sort secure connectedness.

In his essay 'The Abolition of Man', Oxford scholar Clive Lewis wrote, "A dogmatic belief in objective value is necessary to the very idea of a rule which is not tyranny or an obedience which is not slavery."

The clear assumption here, building on fine works like [Lex Rex by Samuel Rutherford](#), is that if society doesn't have agreed upon collective values that are best-practice for community health, well-being, productivity, order and sustainability, that all citizens, from national leaders to children are equally subject too, you end up with coercive tyranny by the few, demanding all live the way 'they' prescribe. On the flip side you can have an emerging slavery of many compelled to comply regardless of whether it is best-practice for society, not just an individual or not.

So, the question comes, who determines best practice?

To determine what is best for a community (and not just an individual or an egocentric minority) one must look at historical and other anthropologically sound factors that have engendered the values that have equipped, empowered, and enabled community developing healthy structures, like the ones Australians agreed too, as being a starting point for What Matters Most.

In this statement of What Matters Most, the measuring indicator that just doesn't infer resilience but states it, is that of Sustainability. Now this is central as it is not just talking about our natural environment, but our social and economic environments too.

A society that sustainably uses natural and financial resources, protects and repairs the environment and builds resilience to combat challenges.

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- Exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of
- i) morality
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 - vi) rational and informed decision-making processes and
 - vii) accepting responsibility for their actions.

One must conclude, from any rational perspective, that if the above fundamentals (at very least II, III, VI and VII) are not part of the 'grown ups' policy, legislation, and thus cultural framing agenda, then how can that community and or society develop the Things That Matter Most, and sustain them?

By Dalgarno Institute

End note:

1. [p 4 Executive Summary, Measuring What Matters Statement](#)
2. Goal 1.3 (DEST, 2005, 2) excerpt Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, National Framework for Values Education In Australian Schools, Commonwealth of Australia
3. [Framing the framework: discourses in Australia's national values education policy | SpringerLink](#)

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