



Discussion paper

Culture, Wellbeing and the Living Standards Framework: A Perspective (DP 19/02)

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This Discussion Paper provides a perspective on how to better reflect culture in the Living Standards Framework (LSF). It was jointly commissioned by the Treasury and Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage; and written by Lincoln University economists Professor Caroline Saunders and Professor Paul Dalziel, working with Dr Catherine Savage (Ihi Research).

It forms part of a series of papers published by the Treasury to generate discussion on key issues in developing the LSF and the LSF Dashboard.

The Treasury developed the LSF to strengthen the quality of its policy advice through the more consistent use of wellbeing data and evidence. The LSF Dashboard pulls together a range of wellbeing indicators which inform the Treasury's advice on policy priorities for improving New Zealanders' living standards.

The LSF and the LSF Dashboard are a work in progress and will continue to evolve over time. As well as culture, priority areas for further work include better reflecting Te Ao Māori and Pacific perspectives, child well-being and distributional indicators in the LSF and the Dashboard.

This paper is the first step in the process to better incorporate culture into the LSF and Dashboard. Key questions considered in the newly released paper include:

- What are the different dimensions of culture that matter for New Zealanders' wellbeing?
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages of creating a fifth capital stock under the heading Cultural Capital in the LSF?
- What set of indicators and statistical measures should there be to monitor the contribution of cultural capital to future wellbeing?

This discussion paper is based on AERU Research Report No. 353 of the same title. The full references for the sources cited in this report can be found in this paper. A copy of the full Research Report can be downloaded at:

<https://www.sustainablewellbeing.nz/wellbeing-book> (<https://www.sustainablewellbeing.nz/wellbeing-book>).

Submissions on the paper can be made to the Treasury (cea@treasury.govt.nz) and now close on 15 November 2019. The Treasury will consider the submissions in its planned refresh of the Living Standards Framework and Dashboard, which it anticipates will be released in 2021.

Disclaimer

This paper is part of a series of discussion papers on wellbeing in the context of the Treasury's Living Standards Framework. The discussion papers have been published to support discussion on intergenerational wellbeing perspectives and do not represent the Treasury's position.

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information herein is accurate, the AERU does not accept any liability for error of fact or opinion which may be present, nor for the consequences of any decision based on this information.

This discussion paper is based on AERU Research Report No. 353 of the same title. This shorter paper has been produced by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Wellington, with the permission of the authors. Sources cited in this discussion paper are referenced in the research report.

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▼ Formats and related files

Culture, Wellbeing, and the Living Standards Framework: A Perspective (DP 19/02) (/sites/default/files/2019-06/dp19-02-culture-wellbeing-lsf_2.pdf)

(PDF 1.05 MB)

Executive Summary

As part of its work programme to develop the Living Standards Framework (LSF) and the LSF Dashboard, the New Zealand Treasury has commissioned a series of discussion papers and reports designed to offer perspectives on important aspects of intergenerational wellbeing.

This publication, commissioned by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) and the Treasury, contributes to that series. It is based on a larger research report, AERU Research Report No. 353, which contains more details on the themes in this paper.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to analyse culture and wellbeing in the context of the LSF. It provides an integrated analysis of how culture might be embedded in the LSF and the LSF Dashboard. Questions for discussion are included at the end of each chapter.

Readers are advised that the report does not address sport and recreation. This is a specialist field requiring more attention than can be provided in this discussion paper.

Chapter One introduces ways in which 'culture' and 'wellbeing' can be understood in a policy context.

Chapter Two explains the capabilities approach to wellbeing, which pays attention to the capabilities of persons to lead the kind of lives they value—and have reason to value (Sen, 1999: 18). It surveys wellbeing measurement frameworks, and sets out five themes:

- Cultural development of children.
- Cultural efficacy and competence.
- Cultural safety and respect.
- Cultural assets and taonga.
- Cultural engagement and vitality (see Table 2.4, Section 2.5).

Chapter Three addresses cultural wellbeing, including an analysis of these five themes.

Chapter Four summarises the main features of the LSF, including the four types of capital: human, social, financial/physical, and natural. It asks whether the LSF needs a separate capital stock termed cultural capital, explaining that culture is already a cross-cutting factor (see Figure 4.2, section 4.3). It suggests inclusion of two further categories of current wellbeing: Families and Whānau, and Business.

Chapter Five offers an economic rationale for public investment in culture, and introduces a draft framework prepared by the MCH for analysing the economic value of culture. It uses this material to present for discussion a 'cultural wellbeing framework' that aligns with the LSF (see Figure 5.2, section 5.6).

Chapter Six explores how statistical indicators of cultural wellbeing might be developed.

Chapter Seven is a brief conclusion with eight key points for further development of New Zealand's statistical monitoring of cultural wellbeing, including in the LSF: four are addressed to MCH and four to the Treasury.

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