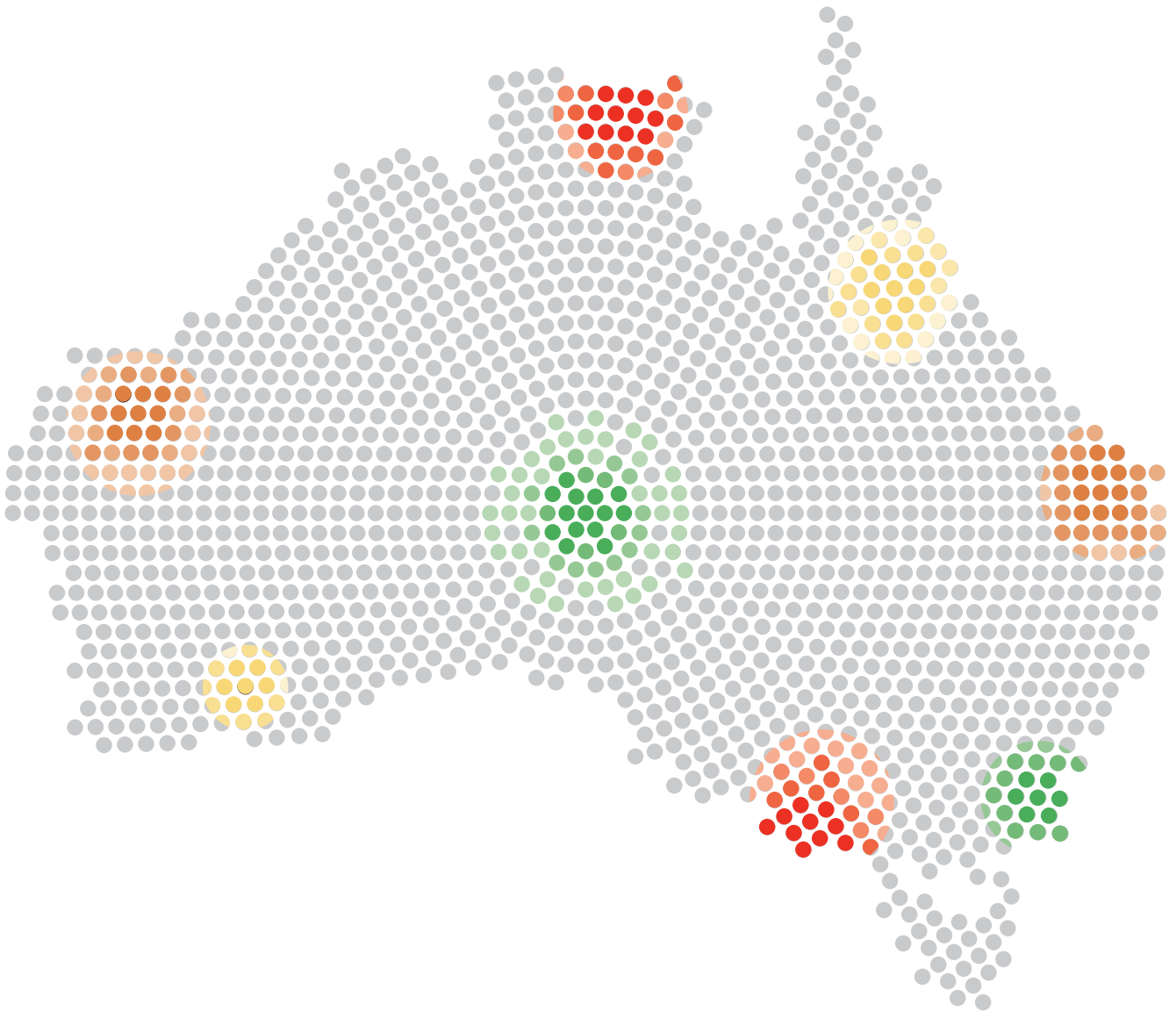

TRANSFORMING AUSTRALIA

SDG PROGRESS REPORT 2020 Update



www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com





Transforming Australia SDG Progress Report

2020 Update

Australia has an opportunity to use the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals to design a recovery strategy from COVID-19 that strengthens our resilience to future shocks and ensures long-term, sustainable prosperity for all Australians.

The **Transforming Australia SDG Progress Report 2020 Update** measures Australia's performance against a set of 56 indicators linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This report builds on targets and measures of progress that the independent National Sustainable Development Council developed in 2018.

A primary objective of this updated report is to stimulate a national conversation and dialogue about what Australia can and should be in the future, particularly as we look to recover from COVID-19.

This report makes three important contributions:

1. It proposes an initial set of **quantitative 2030 targets** for Australia across 56 economic, social and environmental SDG indicators;
2. It **assesses Australia's progress** towards these targets from 2000, highlighting where we are falling behind and where accelerated action is needed; and
3. It evaluates the **effects of COVID-19** on Australia's capacity to achieve the SDGs.

ASSESSMENT OF TRENDS

● On track

>90% of the desired rate of change (compound annual growth rate or CAGR) to meet the target.

● Needs improvement

Current value is better than target value, but trend >0% in wrong direction OR 50–90% of the desired rate of change (CAGR) to meet target.

● Breakthrough needed

0-50% of desired rate of change (CAGR).

● Off track

Current value is worse than target value and observed rate of change (CAGR) >0% in wrong direction.

Visit the transforming Australia website for further information

The Transforming Australia website contains further information on this report.

Charts for each indicator are available through the Explore by Goal section of the website.

A full dashboard, available under the Analysis section of the website, contains information for each SDG indicator on: key data points (the first and latest data points, and a data point for 2015), the long term trend (or compound annual growth rate), the 2030 target or benchmark value (and source), a 'traffic light' assessment of progress towards each target (based on long-term and short-term trends), and a qualitative assessment of COVID-19 impacts (expressed as 'arrows').

A set of explanatory videos, available on the homepage of the website, provide further information regarding the how, what and why this work is necessary.

www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com

Report findings

The report shows that Australia is performing well in health and education, but is failing to reduce CO₂ emissions, waste and environmental degradation, and to address cost of living pressures and economic inequality.

Of the 56 indicators examined in this report, only 12 are assessed as on track to meet the 2030 targets. 23 indicators are assessed as off track, 11 are classified as breakthrough needed and 10 need improvement.

The report also shows COVID-19 has exacerbated trends — including higher levels of unemployment, poverty and psychological distress — that were emerging before COVID-19, and that could fracture Australian society.

Economic findings

- Women, young people and those without high school qualifications are more likely to have had their employment disrupted by COVID-19.
- Australia has relatively low levels of government debt, which will help in the COVID-19 recovery, however household debt is well above the OECD average.
- Indicators of economic dynamism — including research and development expenditure and investment in knowledge-based capital as shares of GDP — are stagnant or trending downwards.
- Wealth inequality has increased significantly, with the share of household net worth of the poorest 40% declining by 30% since 2004.

Social findings

- Australians are living longer but are more obese and, since the pandemic, are drinking more alcohol.
- Domestic violence has increased during COVID-19.
- Homicide rates have halved since 2000, yet the prison population has increased by 32% since 2006.
- Women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and are more likely to lose their jobs and experience psychological distress. Women also continue to lose out on pay equality and housework parity.
- Indigenous life expectancy has increased but remains well below the national average. Indigenous Australians make up just over 3% of the Australian population but more than 27% of the prison population.

Environmental findings

- Australia's greenhouse gas emissions have declined only marginally since 2000 and little progress has been made since 2013. Australia is well off track to meet a 2030 emissions target that is consistent with the Paris Agreement to keep global warming to well below 2 degrees celsius.
- Australia's per capita material footprint is one of the highest in the world — more than 70% above the OECD average — and rising.
- Hard coral cover on the Great Barrier Reef has declined and the trend for threatened species has worsened since 2000.
- Total forest area has increased steadily since 2008 after a period of decline. Yet research by ClimateWorks Australia indicates that 5 million more hectares of plantings are needed by 2030 to reach climate targets.

It's time to focus on sustainable development to ensure we build back better

As Australia plans its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, our recovery strategies should be based on a broader set of priorities than we have used in the past.

The SDGs, signed in 2015 by all 193 UN member nations, are a set of 17 interlinked goals adopted by all countries, including Australia, in 2015 and seen as “the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.”¹

The SDG framework provides a long-term vision and an integrated approach for placing sustainability at the core of our national planning and decision-making processes.

Use of the SDGs by state and local governments, civil society and business to help track performance is increasing and there is an opportunity for adoption of the SDGs more broadly in Australia, particularly as we look to build back better.

“...there is a huge opportunity to design a recovery strategy that begins to substantially address climate change, strengthens our resilience to future shocks and ensures long-term, sustainable prosperity for Australia.”

Professor John Thwaites

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Embedding a sustainable development approach

Using the SDGs as a framework to build back better requires three fundamental shifts: taking a long-term perspective; increasing the use of data and evidence; and incorporating a diversity of views, with an emphasis on building novel partnerships.

Long-term thinking

Taking a long-term perspective ensure that the choices we make today address both short-term priorities and the long-term stability and prosperity of Australia. Setting targets and being clear on the direction we are seeking to take are a critical part of this mindset.

“Targets are crucial — they set national priorities and level of ambition, provide investment clarity and certainty, and encourage a shift from short- to long-term thinking.”

Dr Cameron Allen

Data and evidence

Australia's effective response to COVID-19 has demonstrated the value of data and evidence for improving decisions. This approach is also fundamental to the SDGs to monitor Australia's progress and better inform policies, programs and investments that deliver long-term sustainable development. A focus needs to also be placed on building an evidence base of what works for what problem and in what context.

“The importance of timely, quality, open and disaggregated data and statistics has never been as clear as during the COVID-19 crisis. Such data are critical in understanding, managing and mitigating the human, social and economic effects of the pandemic.”²

Incorporating a diversity of views and building novel partnerships

Australia, along with all countries around the world, is facing a multitude of complex and integrated crises - a global health emergency, climate change, growing inequality, unemployment and biodiversity decline. The complexity of these issues requires a collaborative, solutions-focussed approach. Strengthening cooperation between government, business, social enterprise and society is required. But we need to go further, and look to build non-traditional partnerships and deliberately seek out a diversity of views and perspectives. A truly inclusive approach must be adopted.

“We need to share the responsibility of problem solving: government, public sector, private sector and the community all have a role to play in shaping our sustainable future.”

Professor Rod Glover

Focus on the future

Sustainable development holds the promise that we leave future generations with a world better than today's. As we look to rebuild from COVID, achieving this objective should be at the centre of our efforts. The SDGs provide a framework to ensure that we build a more prosperous, greener and fairer nation going forward.

“We need to turn the recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future.”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

² <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020.pdf>

PEOPLE

LIFE EXPECTANCY

AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY CONTINUES TO **IMPROVE**

82.8 YEARS



OBESITY

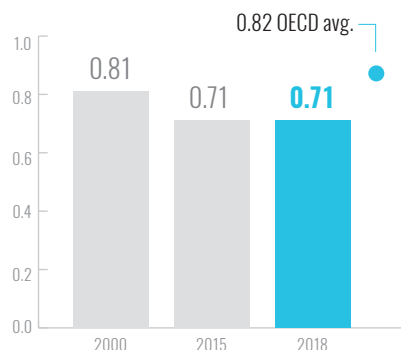


ALMOST 1/3
OF AUSTRALIANS
ARE OBESE

EDUCATION

 **45.7%**

More and more Australians are tertiary educated



BUT socio-economic inequality in maths education is growing

COVID-19: POSSIBLE IMPACTS



COVID IS EXPECTED TO LEAD TO **A RISE** IN FEELINGS OF LONELINESS, AND CONCERN ABOUT FINANCES AND THE FUTURE

What will these increases mean?



Disruptions to schooling likely to have a **negative impact** on learning particularly for disadvantaged students



What will the consequences of this be?



Psychological distress has **risen** during COVID

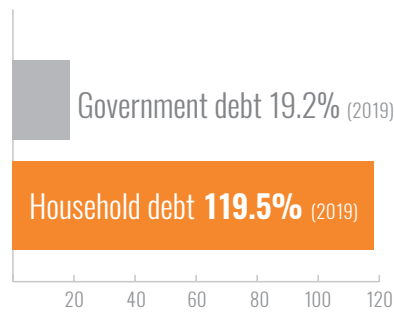
Will it continue to rise?



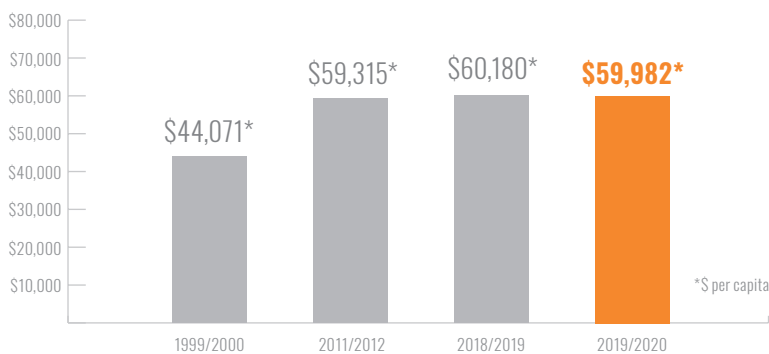
PROSPERITY

DEBT

GOVERNMENT DEBT IS COMPARATIVELY LOW (19.2% GDP IN 2019) BUT HOUSEHOLD DEBT IS VERY HIGH (119.5% GDP IN 2019)



NATIONAL DISPOSABLE INCOME



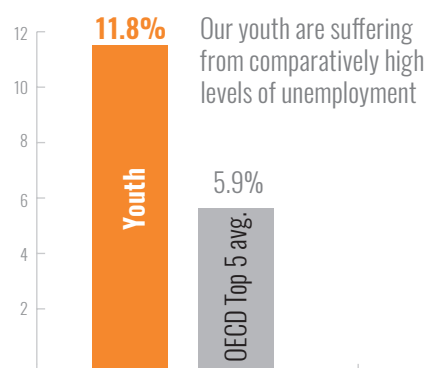
National disposable income in Australia has increased substantially since 2000, however gains have been marginal since 2011/12

JOBS



Unemployment has declined since 2000 but underemployment (people working less hours than they want) has increased

YOUTH JOBS



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Spending on research and development has **declined** and is well below world leaders

The percentage is a proportion of GDP



COVID-19: POSSIBLE IMPACTS



COVID-19 HAS LED TO A LARGE LOSS OF JOBS AND MANY HAVE LEFT THE WORKFORCE

\$ What will the recovery look like? \$

While government intervention has propped up the economy in the short term, we have borrowed from the future to do so

What are the long-term implications of this?

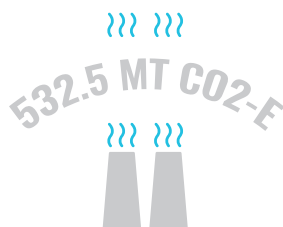
PLANET/PLACE

RESOURCES



RESOURCES

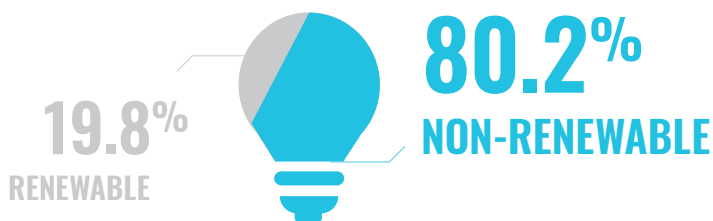
Per capita water and residential energy consumption are declining



GREENHOUSE GASES

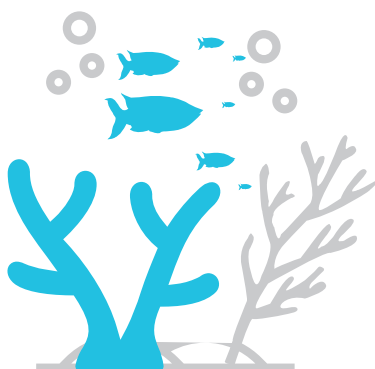
Australia's GHG emissions have declined only marginally since 2000 and are not consistent with keeping global warming below 2°

RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY



The renewables share of Australia's electricity generation **has risen sharply since 2012** but it remains a small share of our total energy consumption

GREAT BARRIER REEF AND ALL LIVING THINGS



OUR BACKYARD IS UNDER THREAT

There has been a significant decline in coral cover in the Great Barrier Reef and an increase in the number of species threatened with extinction

MATERIAL FOOTPRINT



AUSTRALIA'S PER CAPITA MATERIAL FOOTPRINT IS INCREASING, AND IS ONE OF THE **HIGHEST IN THE WORLD** AT >70% ABOVE THE OECD AVERAGE

COVID-19: POSSIBLE IMPACTS



COVID-19 MAY LEAD TO A SHORT TERM REDUCTION IN EMISSIONS WITH LESS TRAVEL AND ENERGY USE

Can the COVID recovery be seen as an opportunity to reset our relationship with the environment?

PARTNERSHIPS AND TRUST

CRIME



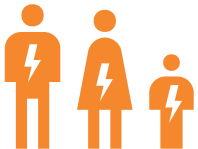
HOMICIDE

Homicide rates are down



PRISON

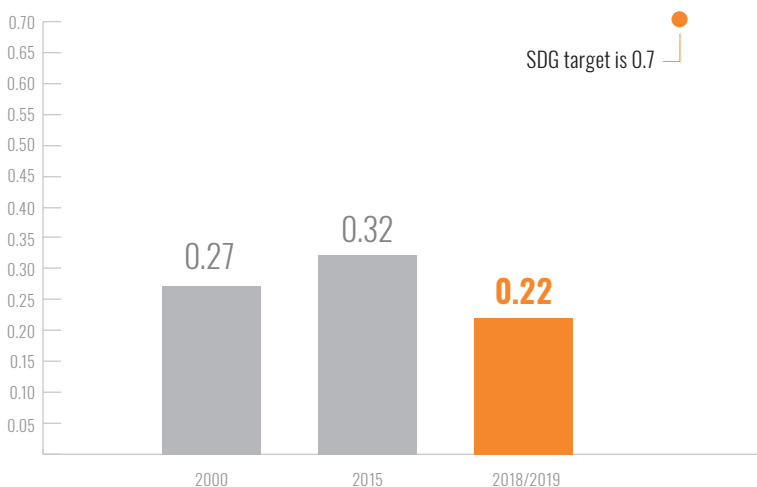
Australia's prison population is rising rapidly



SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assaults are increasing

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY



NET OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IS **DECREASING**

COVID-19: POSSIBLE IMPACTS



PEOPLE ARE TURNING TO GOVERNMENT AT THIS TIME, WITH LEVELS OF TRUST SEEN TO BE INCREASING

How do we collectively use the opportunity of trust in decision-makers to reset?

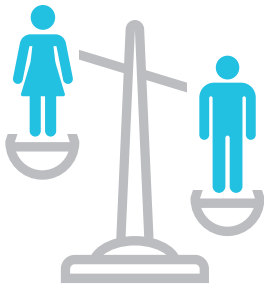


Are we going to continue turning inward or look to increase our global responsibility?



LEAVE NO-ONE BEHIND

GENDER EQUALITY

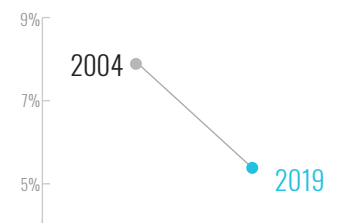


13.9% GENDER PAY GAP

There is still significant gender pay gap and domestic work gap

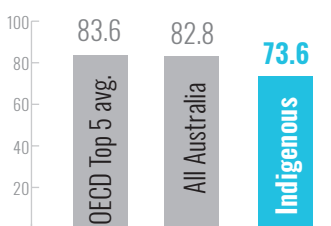
INEQUALITY

WEALTH INEQUALITY IS GETTING WORSE



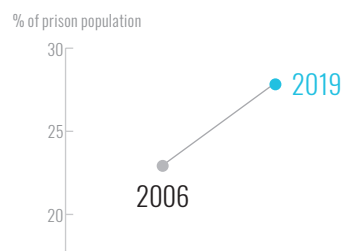
Share of wealth of bottom 40%

INDIGENOUS EQUALITY



LIFE EXPECTANCY

The life expectancy gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians is not closing fast enough



INCARCERATION

Incarceration rate of Indigenous Australians is increasing

COVID-19: POSSIBLE IMPACTS



COVID HAS BROUGHT THE SYSTEMIC ISSUES FACING WOMEN TO THE FORE (FAMILY VIOLENCE, DOMESTIC WORK, PAY GAP)

Will we take action on these issues now?

COVID has highlighted, and in some cases, exacerbated, levels of inequality

Will we build back with a focus on Leaving No-One Behind, ensuring a base level of security is put in place?

POVERTY

13.1%

The poverty rate has remained relatively stable since 2000 but breakthrough is needed to achieve the SDG target of halving the poverty rate by 2030

HOMELESSNESS



Homelessness in Australia continues to increase

DASHBOARD RESULTS (CONDENSED)

ASSESSMENT OF TRENDS

● On track

>90% of the desired rate of change (compound annual growth rate or CAGR) to meet the target.

● Needs improvement

Current value is better than target value, but trend >0% in wrong direction OR 50–90% of the desired rate of change (CAGR) to meet target.

● Breakthrough needed

0-50% of desired rate of change (CAGR).

● Off track

Current value is worse than target value and observed rate of change (CAGR) >0% in wrong direction.

ASSESSMENT OF COVID-19 IMPACTS

↗ ↘ Mainly positive impact

→ Mixed impact

↗ ↘ Mainly negative impact

— Impact limited or unclear

KEY

*: No 2030 Target. Benchmark used instead of target.

#: Short term trend used in this instance

INDICATOR	LATEST VALUE (~2018/9)	2030 TARGET	LONG-TERM TREND (CAGR)	COVID IMPACT
SDG 1: End Poverty				
1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line of 50% of median equivalent income (%)	13.1	6.4	●	↗
1.3.NEW Adequacy of welfare payments compared to the poverty line (baseline = single person without children including housing benefits) (%)	68	100	●	↗
1.4.NEW Households able to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important (%)	80.0	>90	●	→
SDG 2: Food & Agriculture				
2.2.2.ALT Prevalence of obesity, proportion of obese persons (body mass index >=30) (%)	31.3	<10	●	—
SDG 3: Good Health & Well-being				
3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate (per 100,000 population)	12.1	8.5	●	—
3.4.NEW1 Proportion of persons with high/very high psychological distress (18 years and over) (%)	13.0	7.9	●	↗
3.4.NEW2 Average life expectancy (total population; both sexes) (years)	82.8	83.6	●	—
3.4.NEW3 Indigenous life expectancy (both sexes) (years)	73.6	83.6	●	—
3.5.2 Harmful use of alcohol - alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol (L)	9.5	8.6	●	→

INDICATOR	LATEST VALUE (~2018/9)	2030 TARGET	LONG-TERM TREND	COVID IMPACT
SDG 4: Quality Education				
4.2.1 Proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable in 2 or more domains (physical, social, emotional, language, communication) (%)	11.0	5.6	●	↗
4.3.1.ALT Proportion of persons aged 25-64 with a tertiary education (%)	45.7	50.6	●	↗
4.5.1 Low to high socio-economic parity in mathematics (ratio, parity = 1)	0.71	0.82	●	↘
SDG 5: Gender Equality				
5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months (%)	2.3	<0.1	●	↗
5.4.1.ALT Mean time spent on housework and care, by gender, persons aged 15-64, (gender parity = 1)	1.67	<1.05	●	↗
5.5.NEW Gender pay gap in full-time average weekly earnings of women and men (%)	13.9	<5	●	→
SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation				
6.1.NEW Average weekly expenditure on water, sewerage and wastewater as a share of household disposable income (all households) (%)	2.17	<3*	●	—
6.4.1.ALT Water consumption per capita (m ³)	703.1	653	●	—
SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy				
7.1.NEW Average weekly expenditure on electricity as a share of household disposable income (all households) (%)	3.31	<3*	●	↗
7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (%)	9.6	30	●	—
7.2.1.ALT Renewable energy share in electricity (%)	19.8	55	●	—
7.3.NEW Energy productivity rate of improvement (index 2000=100)	135.0	212	●	—
7.3.NEW2 Residential total final energy consumption per capita (GJ)	18.23	9.5	●	↗
SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth				
8.1.NEW1 Real net national disposable income per capita (\$)	60.2K	66.4K	●	↘
8.1.NEW2 Government net debt as share of GDP (%)	19.2	47.9*	●	↗
8.1.NEW3 Household debt as share of GDP (%)	119.5	67.3*	●	→
8.5.1.ALT Annual real growth in average weekly earnings (index 2000=100, both sexes)	130.7	155.3	●	→
8.5.2 Unemployment rate (%)	5.2	5	●	↗
8.5.2.ALT Underemployment rate (%)	8.3	6.3	●	↗

INDICATOR	LATEST VALUE (~2018/9)	2030 TARGET	LONG-TERM TREND	COVID IMPACT
8.5.NEW1 Employment to population ratio (%)	62.5	65.9	●	↘
8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (%)	11.8	5.91	●	↗
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure				
9.1.NEW Value of construction work done for the public sector as proportion of GDP (%)	1.85	2.23	●	—
9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP (%)	1.79	2.4	●	↘
9.5.2ALT Investment in knowledge-based capital as share of GDP (%)	2.53	3.96	●	↘
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities				
10.1.1 Growth rates of household income among the bottom 40% of the population compared to the total population (ratio, 1=parity)	0.99	>1	●	→
10.1.NEW1 Gini coefficient (equivalised net worth)	0.62	0.52	●	↗
10.1.NEW2 Share of household net worth of first and second quintiles (%)	5.4	8.16	●	↘
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities				
11.1.NEW1 Lower income renter households paying more than 30% of income on housing costs (%)	43.1	31.9	●	↗
11.1.NEW2 Housing costs as a proportion of gross household income (%)	13.9	12.0	●	↗
11.1.NEW3 Homelessness – clients of specialist homelessness services (per 10,000 population)	116.2	92.5	●#	↗
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production				
12.2.1 Material footprint per capita (t)	43.1	25.3	●	↘
12.5.NEW Non-recycled municipal solid waste per capita (kg)	559.3	365	●	—
12.6.1 Share of ASX200 listed companies submitting sustainability reports ranked as moderate or better (%)	75.5	100	●	—
SDG 13: Climate Action				
13.1.1 Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters (per 100,000 population, 3-year avg)	54.9	17.8	●	↗
13.2.2 Total greenhouse gas emissions (Mt CO ₂ -e)	531.2	307.1	●	↘
SDG 14: Life Below Water				
14.2.NEW Ocean biodiversity: Great Barrier Reef mean hard coral cover (mean value, 3-year avg)	16.9	24.1	●	—
SDG 15: Life on Land				
15.1.1. Total forest area (million ha)	134.0	138.1	●	—
15.5.1 Red List Index (score 0-1)	0.82	0.9	●	—

INDICATOR	LATEST VALUE (~2018/9)	2030 TARGET	LONG-TERM TREND	COVID IMPACT
SDG 16: Trust, Safety & Strong Institutions				
16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide (per 100,000 population)	0.89	0.85	●	—
16.1.4.ALT Proportion of the population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live (%)	64.3	80	●	—
16.2.3.ALT Victims of sexual assault (per 100,000 population)	106.0	46.1	●	—
16.3.NEW Prison population (per 100,000 people)	218.6	99	●	—
16.6.NEW1 Levels of Trust - Edelman Trust Index (mass population, %)	46	>60	●	↗
16.6.NEW2 Proportion of persons (aged 18 and over) who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in the last 12 months (%)	28.8	35.9	●	—
SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals				
17.2.1 Net official development assistance (ODA) as share of Gross National Income (GNI) (%)	0.22	0.7	●	—
17.8.1 Internet users per 100 inhabitants	86.6	98.2	●	↗
17.8.NEW Broadband internet speeds (broadband connections >24Mbps)	65.5	100	●#	—

Project Team

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2020 Update

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Visit www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com to view the full report

