

**Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee  
Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

5 November 2018

Dear Committee Secretariat,

I would like to contribute the attached summary of *Transforming Australia: SDG Progress Report* to the Senate Inquiry into the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

*Transforming Australia* is a comprehensive independent report on Australia's progress towards meeting the SDGs. It identifies where Australia is performing well and where it is not on track. It was launched on 5 September 2018 at an event hosted by CEDA. The full report and underlying graphs and data are available as an interactive website at [www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com](http://www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com).

Prepared by the National Sustainable Development Council, of which I am Chair, in partnership with Monash Sustainable Development Institute and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Australia, New Zealand & Pacific, the report draws on many experts from across business, universities and the community sector. It provides a data-driven evidence base to stimulate public conversation about Australia's future. It was supported by Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, Australian Council of Superannuation Investors, HESTA, cbus, IFM and AustralianSuper.

The report examines progress on all 17 Goals, and specifically assesses 86 targets using 144 separate indicators. Where possible, the report seeks to identify whether Australia is on track to meet the targets by 2030. In some cases, it also compares Australia's performance with that of other countries.

The findings of the report show that Australia's progress on achieving the SDGs by 2030 was mixed. About one-third of the indicators were determined to be on track, more than one-third needed improvement or a breakthrough, and one-quarter are off-track or deteriorating. There is strong progress in the areas of health and education, but poor performance in addressing inequality, tackling climate change and housing affordability. The report also highlights key challenges in achieving Australia's economic goals, with relatively low investment in research development and innovation, increasing underemployment, and high levels of household debt.

Please accept this as a supplementary submission to my submission (#121).

Yours sincerely,

Professor John Thwaites  
Chair Monash Sustainable Development Institute

# TRANSFORMING AUSTRALIA: SDG PROGRESS REPORT

[www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com](http://www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com)

Sustainable development holds the promise that we leave future generations with a world better than today's. However, despite our history of strong economic growth, our children and grandchildren face the prospect of being worse off than we are as a result of increasing inequality, environmental degradation and climate change. ***It is time to change.***

## Why are the UN SDGs important to Australia?

The SDGs offer a roadmap for the big challenges Australia faces, a framework on which we can build a more inclusive and sustainable future for all. The National Sustainable Development Council presents this report as an independent, data-driven evidence base to stimulate public conversation about Australia's future.

## How is Australia going?

Australia is a wealthy, healthy and skilled nation, with a dynamic and diverse society. However, we have scope to do better across almost every Sustainable Development Goal. Australia needs to make more rapid progress on climate action and reducing inequalities.

## A changing economy

Australia's industrial structure is not diversifying and innovation investment is low. High employment levels are partly offset by rising underemployment and stagnant wages for many. High household and government debt leaves Australia vulnerable to unexpected changes in interest rates or global conditions.

## A changing society

Despite sustained economic growth and strong gains in health and education, income inequality has not improved. Wealth inequality has worsened. Despite crime generally falling, fear of crime is high and imprisonment rates have risen. With mixed progress in Closing the Gap and Newstart payments below the poverty line, many are left behind.

## A changing environment

Broadly, Australia has been incapable of delivering on the material aspirations of today while protecting and valuing nature for tomorrow. Australia is not taking the actions needed to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius. Rapid population growth in our big cities has raced ahead of infrastructure and services.

## Are we ready for the future?

Achieving the SDGs requires that governments, businesses, researchers and civil society focus on Australia's long-term interests. Meeting big challenges such as climate action and reducing inequalities demands that we step out of our siloes and work together for a better future.

In partnership with:

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SDSN  
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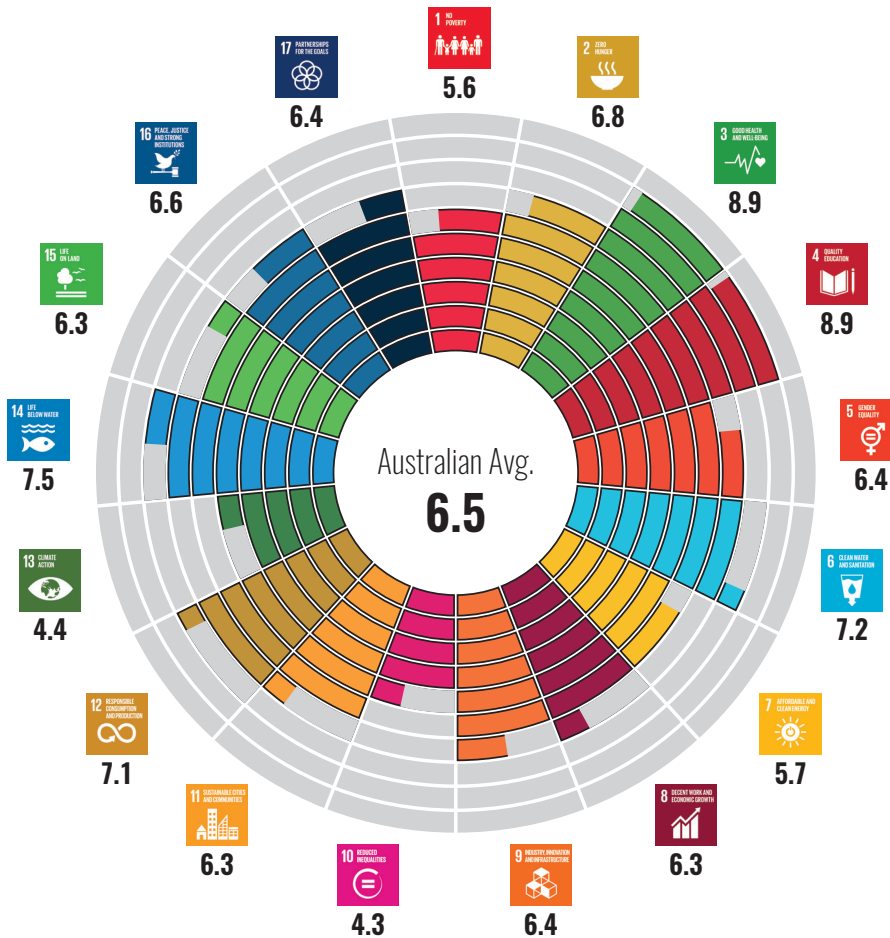
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## AGGREGATED RESULTS



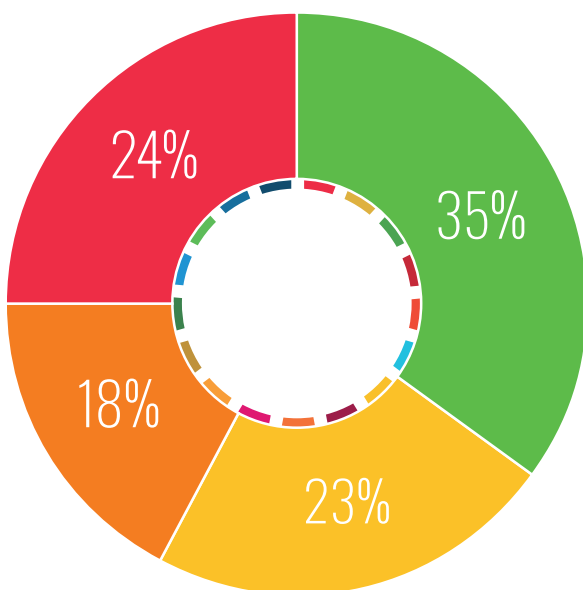
### THE AGGREGATED RESULTS SUMMARISE HOW AUSTRALIA PERFORMS ACROSS EACH OF THE 17 GOALS

A score out of a maximum of 10 points is calculated for each goal based on an aggregation of the results from the dashboard assessment. The method allocates a score to each indicator based on the results from the traffic light assessment and then calculates an average score for each goal.

The aggregated results highlight that Australia is progressing well on goals relating to health and wellbeing (goal 3) and quality education (goal 4), while progress is lagging behind on goals relating to reduced inequalities (goal 10) and climate action (goal 13). Across all goals, Australia has an average score of 6.5.

● On track ● Needs Improvement ● Breakthrough Needed ● Off track ● Not Assessed

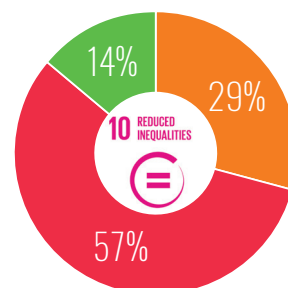
### ALL GOALS



### TOP 2 GOALS



### BOTTOM 2 GOALS



## DASHBOARD RESULTS

This area contains a summary dashboard for SDG targets and indicators assessed through [Australia's SDG Progress Report](#). The report assesses 86 targets and 144 indicators across all 17 goals. Each indicator is assessed for progress in achieving the goals and allocated an appropriate traffic light symbol:

● On track ● Needs Improvement ● Breakthrough Needed ● Off track ● Not Assessed

TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
<b>SDG 1: End Poverty</b>				
1.2	1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line of 50% of median equivalent income (%)	11.7	↘	●
1.2	1.2.2.ALT Social Exclusion and experience of multiple disadvantages (% deep exclusion)	5.3	↘	●
1.3	1.3.1 Proportion of unemployed receiving unemployment benefits (%)	52.7	↘	●
1.3	1.3.NEW Adequacy of welfare payments (ratio of single recipient to 50% median income poverty line)	0.73	↘	●
<b>SDG 2: Food &amp; Agriculture</b>				
2.1	2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population based on the FIES (%)	2.8	—	●
2.1	2.1.2.ALT Proportion of households that went without meals due to financial stress (%)	2.8	↘	●
2.2	2.2.2.ALT Prevalence of obesity: proportion of obese persons (body mass index >=30) (%)	27.5	↗	●
2.3	2.3.1.ALT Cereal yield (kg/ha)	2137.1	↗	●
2.4	2.4.1.ALT1 Average use of nitrogen, phosphate and potash per area of cropland (kg/ha)	—	—	●
2.4	2.4.1.ALT2 Soil organic carbon (t/ha)	29.7	—	●
2.5	2.5.1 Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium or long-term conservation facilities	221,780	↗	●
2.a	2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditure (score)	0.24	↔	●
2.b	2.b.1 Producer support estimate (% gross farm receipts)	1.95	↘	●
<b>SDG 3: Good Health &amp; Well-being</b>				
3.1	3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	6	↘	●
3.2	3.2.1 Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	3.8	↘	●
3.3	3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections (per 1,000 uninfected population)	0.1	↔	●
3.3	3.3.4.ALT1 Hepatitis B notification rate (per 100,000 population)	24.7	↘	●
3.3	3.3.4.ALT2 Hepatitis C notification rate (per 100,000 population)	41.2	↘	●

TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
3.4	3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (per 100,000 population)	8.9	↘	●
3.4	3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate (per 100,000 population)	11.8	↘	●
3.4	3.4.NEW1 Psychological distress, proportion of persons with high/very high psychological distress (%)	11.8	↘	●
3.4	3.4.NEW2 Life expectancy at birth (years)	82.5	↗	●
3.5	3.5.2 Annual per capita alcohol consumption (aged 15 years and older) in litres of pure alcohol (litres of pure alcohol)	9.7	↘	●
3.6	3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries (per 100,000 population)	5.1	↘	●
3.7	3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group (per 1,000)	12.6	↘	●
3.a	3.a.1 Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older (% population, 15 and over)	14.7	↘	●
3.c	3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution (density of physicians per 1,000 population)	3.4	↗	●
<b>SDG 4: Quality Education</b>				
4.1	4.1.NEW PISA results for reading, mathematics and science (result, mathematics)	510	↘	●
4.2	4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial wellbeing (% developmentally vulnerable in 2 or more domains)	11.1	↘	●
4.2	4.2.2.ALT Expenditure on all early childhood educational institutions as a proportion of GDP (%)	0.52	—	●
4.3	4.3.1.ALT Vocational and higher education qualifications, by gender and age (% persons age 25–64 with tertiary education)	43.7	↗	●
4.4	4.4.1.ALT Collaborative problem-solving skills (PISA scale)	531	—	●
4.5	4.5.1 Parity indices for education indicators [low to high socio-economic parity in mathematics, 1 = parity]	0.71	—	●
4.6	4.6.1.ALT Adult literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology rich environments [% adults scoring at proficiency level 2 or above in problem solving as baseline]	38	—	●

TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
SDG 5: Gender Equality				
5.1	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex (yes/no)	Yes	↔	●
5.2	5.2.1 Proportion of 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	↘	●
5.4	5.4.1.ALT Mean time spent on house work and care work, by sex (female to male ratio, 1 = parity)	1.7	↘	●
5.5	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	28.7	↗	●
5.5	5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	36.2	↗	●
5.5	5.5.NEW1 Average superannuation balance at retirement age (% gender gap)	42.0	↘	●
5.5	5.5.NEW2 Full-time average weekly earnings (% gender pay gap)	15.3	↘	●
SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation				
6.1	6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	99.9	↔	●
6.1	6.1.NEW Water affordability (ratio of water and sewage index to CPI, 1 = parity)	1.6	↗	●
6.2	6.2.1.ALT Proportion of urban water supply customers receiving sewerage services (%)	93.2	↘	●
6.3	6.3.1.ALT Proportion of wastewater safely treated (% tertiary level or higher in urban Australia)	52.4	↗	●
6.4	6.4.1.ALT1 Water consumption per capita (m³ per capita)	629.4	↘	●
6.4	6.4.1.ALT2 Water consumption and gross domestic product (water productivity, \$real GDP/ m³)	102.9	↗	●
6.4	6.4.1.ALT3 Agricultural consumption of water and gross value added by irrigated agricultural production (water efficiency, L/ \$real GVIAP)	628.4	↘	●
6.5	6.5.1.ALT Coverage of water plans in Australia as % of total water resources (%)	—	—	●
6.6	6.6.1.ALT Total abundance of waterbirds in Eastern Australia (number)	188,688	↘	●
6.a	6.a.1 Amount of water and sanitation-related official development assistance (ODA) as % of total ODA (%)	1.2	↘	●

TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy				
7.1	7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity (%)	100	↔	●
7.1	7.1.NEW1 Energy affordability (ratio electricity price index to CPI, 1 = parity)	1.9	↗	●
7.1	7.1.NEW2 Electricity costs and median household disposable income (% median income)	3.9	↗	●
7.2	7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (%)	7.5	↗	●
7.2	7.2.1.ALT Renewable energy share in electricity (%)	14.8	↗	●
7.2	7.2.NEW Net energy supply, use and exports (PJ)	—	—	●
7.3	7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP (MJ/USD)	5.2	↘	●
7.3	7.3.NEW Energy productivity rate of improvement (index 2000 = 100)	130.0	↗	●
SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth				
8.1	8.1.NEW1 Real net national disposable income per capita (\$)	13,961.3	↗	●
8.1	8.1.NEW2 Government net debt as % GDP (%)	18.4	↗	●
8.1	8.1.NEW3 Household debt as % GDP (%)	121.9	↗	●
8.2	8.2.NEW Change in multifactor productivity over time (index)	101.0	↗	●
8.4	8.4.1 Material footprint per capita (t/capita)	42.7	↗	●
8.4	8.4.NEW Selected Socio-Economic and Environmental Measures (index)	—	—	●
8.5	8.5.1.ALT Annual real growth rate in average weekly earnings (cumulative % change)	23.7	↗	●
8.5	8.5.2 Unemployment rate, both sexes (%)	5.7	↘	●
8.5	8.5.2.ALT Underemployment rate, both sexes (%)	8.6	↗	●
8.5	8.5.NEW1 Employment to population ratio (%)	61.1	↗	●
8.5	8.5.NEW2 Long-term unemployment rate, both sexes (%)	24.4	↗	●
8.6	8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (%)	11.4	↔	●
8.10	8.10.1 Number of commercial bank branches and ATMs (ATMs per 100,000 adults)	164.8	↗	●



TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure				
9.1	9.1.NEW1 Public infrastructure investment: value of construction work done for the public sector as proportion of GDP (%)	1.69	↗	●
9.1	9.1.NEW2 Logistics performance index (score, 1–5)	3.75	↔	●
9.2	9.2.1 Manufacturing value added per capita (\$ 2017/capita)	4012.3	—	●
9.4	9.4.1 CO2 emission per unit of value added (kg CO2-e per USD)	0.36	↘	●
9.5	9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP (%)	1.9	↗	●
9.5	9.5.2.ALT1 Investment in knowledge-based capital, as a proportion of GDP (%)	2.55	↘	●
9.5	9.5.2.ALT2 Mobility patterns of international students (number of international students per 100 national students)	18.16	—	●
9.b	9.b.1 Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added (%)	28.2	—	●
9.b	9.b.1.ALT Economic complexity index (index value)	-0.59	—	●
9,b	9.b.NEW Percentage of higher education expenditure on R&D (HERD) financed by industry (%)	5.05	↘	●
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities				
10.1	10.1.1 Growth rates of household income among the bottom 40% of the population and the total population (ratio of the compound annual growth rate of bottom 40% to total population)	1.0	↗	●
10.1	10.1.NEW1 Gini coefficient income (number 0–1)	0.32	↔	●
10.1	10.1.NEW2 Palma income ratio (ratio)	1.24	↔	●
10.1	10.1.NEW3 Household net worth and share of total net worth, by quintiles (% share of net worth for first and second quintiles)	4.4	↘	●
10.2	10.2.NEW Share of income and share of wealth held by different quintiles (ratio of wealth of top 10% to bottom 40%)	10.0	↗	●
10.4	10.4.1 Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers (%)	52.3	↘	●
10.5	10.5.1 Financial Soundness Indicators (% non-performing loans to total gross loans)	0.89	↗	●
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities				
11.1	11.1.NEW1 Household financial stress: % households unable to pay mortgage or rent on time (%)	4.6	↔	●

TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
11.1	11.1.NEW2 Housing affordability (ratio of established house price compared with household disposable income)	1.52	↗	●
11.1	11.1.NEW3 Homelessness: clients of specialist homelessness services (per 10,000 estimated resident population)	119.1	↗	●
11.2	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport (%)	Melb: 72 Syd: 45.7 Bris: 54	—	●
11.2	11.2.NEW Method of travel to work — public transport, walk or cycle (%)	15.2	↗	●
11.3	11.3.NEW Urban population density (average for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth)	23.6	—	●
11.5	11.5.2 Total damages attributed to disasters as % of GDP (%)	0.15	↘	●
11.6	11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in cities (ug/m³)	5.2	↘	●
11.7	11.7.1.ALT1 Percentage of area in cities that is greenspace (%)	—	—	●
11.7	11.7.1.ALT2 Dwellings in cities with access to greenspace (%)	—	—	●
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production				
12.2	12.2.2 Domestic material consumption per capita (t/capita)	37.7	↘	●
12.3	12.3.1.ALT Total annual food waste generated per capita (kg/capita)	224.1	—	●
12.4	12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita (kg/capita)	297.9	↗	●
12.5	12.5.1.ALT Municipal waste recycling rate, national (%)	42	↗	●
12.5	12.5.NEW Non-recycled municipal solid waste per capita (kg/person/day)	1.32	—	●
12.6	12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports (% ASX200 listed companies submitting reports ranked as moderate or better)	72	↗	●
12.c	12.c.1.ALT Total fossil fuel support (% of total tax revenue)	1.89	↘	●
SDG 13: Climate Action				
13.1	13.1.1 Number of persons directly affected by disasters (per 100,000 population)	99.5	↗	●
13.2	13.2.NEW1 Greenhouse gas emissions (Mt CO2-e)	550.2	↔	●
13.2	13.2.NEW2 Greenhouse gas emissions per capita (t CO2-e)	22.5	↘	●
13.2	13.2.NEW3 Greenhouse gas emissions per unit GDP (kg/\$AU real GDP)	0.33	↘	●

TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
<b>SDG 14: Life Below Water</b>				
14.1	14.1.1.ALT Ocean Health Index – Clean Waters (score, 0–100)	81	↘	●
14.2	14.2.NEW Ocean biodiversity: Great Barrier Reef hard coral cover (mean %)	13.9	↘	●
14.4	14.4.1.ALT Status of Australian fish stocks (% of stocks assessed as sustainable)	86.2	↗	●
14.5	14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas (%)	40.7	↗	●
<b>SDG 15: Life on Land</b>				
15.1	15.1.1 Total forest area (million ha)	109.7	↘	●
15.1	15.1.2 (Terrestrial) Proportion of important sites for terrestrial biodiversity that are covered by protected areas (%)	53.2	↗	●
15.1	15.1.2 (Freshwater) Proportion of important sites for freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas (%)	34.8	↗	●
15.2	15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management [ratio of annual harvest from native forests versus sustainable yields as baseline]	0.82	↘	●
15.5	15.5.1 Red List Index (score, 0–1)	0.83	↘	●
15.a	15.a.1 Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (% ODA)	6.3	↗	●
<b>SDG 16: Trust, Safety &amp; Strong Institutions</b>				
16.1	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide (per 100,000 population)	0.98	↘	●
16.1	16.1.3 Proportion of population experienced any violence (sexual or physical) in the last 12 months (%)	3.9	↘	●
16.1	16.1.4.ALT Proportion of the population who feel safe walking alone at night (%)	68.5	↗	●
16.1	16.1.NEW1 Incidence of personal crimes: recorded crime rates (% household break-in victimisation rate)	2.5	↘	●
16.1	16.1.NEW2 Experience of sexual harassment in last 12 months (proportion of population, %)	13.4	↘	●
16.2	16.2.3.ALT Victims of sexual assault [per 100,000 population]	88	↗	●
16.3	16.3.NEW Prison population (per 100,000 population)	207.5	↗	●

TARGET	INDICATOR	VALUE	TREND	RATING
16.5	16.5.1.ALT Corruption Perception Index (score, 0–100)	79	↘	●
16.6	16.6.NEW1 Levels of trust: Edelman Trust Index (average trust in institutions; %)	40	↔	●
16.6	16.6.NEW2 Rates of participation in civic engagement activities (% volunteer work)	30.9	↘	●
16.6	16.6.NEW3 Proportion of persons who feel they are able to have a say within the community on important issues (% all or most of the time)	24.6	↘	●
16.6	16.6.NEW4 Government Effectiveness ranking (Worldwide Governance Indicators, percentile)	92.3	↘	●
16.7	16.7.2.ALT1 Average governance score (Worldwide Governance Indicators, percentile)	92.4	↘	●
16.7	16.7.2.ALT2 Voter turnout and informal voting (% voter turnout House of Representatives)	91.0	↘	●
<b>SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals</b>				
17.1	17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP (%)	34.3	↘	●
17.1	17.1.1.ALT Total government revenue and expenses (Commonwealth) (ratio of revenue to expenses)	0.93	↘	●
17.1	17.1.NEW1 Government Health and Education spending (% GDP)	14.3	↗	●
17.1	17.1.NEW2 Estimated government revenue lost due to tax avoidance (% GDP)	0.41	—	●
17.1	17.1.NEW3 Environmental tax revenue (\$m)	29,883	↗	●
17.2	17.2.1 Net official development assistance (ODA) as a percentage of OECD-DAC donors' GNI, by donor (%)	0.22	↘	●
17.8	17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet (%)	84.6	↗	●
17.8	17.8.NEW Broadband internet connections, speeds and volume of data downloaded	—	—	●
17.14	17.14.1 Mechanism in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development (yes/somewhat/no)	Somewhat (<50%)	—	●
17.16	17.16.1 Reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the SDGs (yes/somewhat/no)	Somewhat (<50%)	—	●

## FIND OUT MORE

Visit [www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com](http://www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com) to view the full report.