

# “Measuring Up”

Improving Health Systems Performance in OECD Countries



## Counting and accounting for public health program performance in a Federal system



**Jan Bennett**

**Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care**

**Australia**

**[jan.bennett@dfat.gov.au](mailto:jan.bennett@dfat.gov.au)**



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# Introduction

- Australia - 50,000 years in 2 minutes
- Public Health Outcome Funding Agreements - the theory and the practice
- Population health performance monitoring and accountability - some concluding observations

# Australia and its health system

- Australia is a large and largely uninhabited continent
- Occupied for more than 50,000 years
- Colonised by Britain a little over 200 years ago
- Federation of 6 states, 2 Territories, 1 Federal government - only 100 years of Federation
- The states were there first!



# Australia and its health system

- Important Commonwealth powers in S51 include:
  - (vii) lighthouses, lightships, beacons and buoys
  - (x) fisheries
  - (xxxiv) railway construction

# Australia and Its Health System

- The Federal Government has a broad policy leadership and financing role
- The States and Territories are largely responsible for the delivery of public sector health services.
- Most Federally funded services are delivered through the States, through other providers, or directly as subsidies to individuals.

# Population Health Outcome Funding Agreements - background

- Separate agreement between Federal government and each State/Territory
- 8 population health programs – HIV, National drug strategy, breast & cervical cancer, immunisation
- First agreements were for 2 years 97-99
- Current agreements are five years 99-04
- Outline arrangements in respect of funding
- Set out agreed program outcomes and performance required of States against those outcomes

# Population Health Outcome Funding Agreements - objectives

- Performance reporting objectives
  - simplification of program reporting
  - technical credibility of indicators/ measures
  - reports open to public scrutiny
  - flexibility in program delivery
- Increased accountability by States for program expenditure of Commonwealth funds

# Population Health Outcome Funding Agreements - outline

- Performance reporting framework
  - shared outcome indicators
  - consistent State performance indicators
  - individual State performance indicators
- Suite of indicators; not all reported annually
- Equity indicators
- Quality indicators

# Population Health Outcome Funding Agreements - outline

- Shared indicators are reported by Commonwealth
- Higher level outcomes ; joint responsibility of the Federal government, State governments and other sectors.
  - mortality due to breast cancer in target age
  - % of Australians who are regular smokers
  - number diagnoses of newly acquired HIV

# Population Health Outcome Funding Agreements - outline

Annual performance requirements for State governments

- BreastScreen Australia

<b>Performance requirement</b>	<b>Target or reporting requirement</b>
Provide data annually to AIHW against 5 national indicators	Assurance that complete and timely reports were supplied
Increased percentage of women aged 50-69 participate in screening biennially	Progress towards 70 per cent participation rate
Take steps to improve screening among Aboriginal women	Report on steps taken and provide any data

# Population Health Outcome Funding Agreements - performance reporting

- States prepare annual performance report
- Period of validation by Commonwealth – including seeking further information, clarification and negotiation with State
- Individual State Reports “accepted” and posted on internet
- Commonwealth prepares National Overview report including report against shared indicators and snapshots from State reports

# **Population Health Outcome Funding Agreements :**

**How are they measuring up?**

# How are PHOFA measuring up

- Funding objectives – probably OK
- Performance objectives - challenges remain
  - measuring performance common; use in policy or program design less common
  - technical challenges : what to measure; how; when
  - how to build the right incentives for accurate reporting

# How are PHOFA measuring up

- Accountability objectives - more challenges
  - performance monitoring in population health has multiple purposes of which accountability is only one
  - in a federal system is there anyone out there who is accountable
    - for health system inputs; or
    - social & behavioral determinants
  - public & political accountability

# Population health performance monitoring and accountability - some concluding observations

- The flow of more accurate or interesting financial or health outcome information to the public or policy makers will not automatically change anything

# Population health performance monitoring and accountability - some concluding observations

You cant always get what you want,  
You cant always get what you want,  
But if you try some time  
You just might find  
You get what you need.

Mick Jagger & Keith Richard