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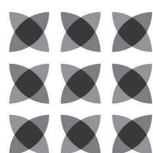
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Outcomes Measurement in the Australian Community Sector: A National Report Card

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The University of Western Australia
Centre for Social Impact



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The Bankwest Foundation has partnered with the Centre for Social Impact at The University of Western Australia (CSI UWA) to undertake a research program **Supporting Development and Growth in the Community Sector in Western Australia**. The aim of the research program is to increase our understanding of the difference community programs make to the lives of Western Australians and what factors enhance the resilience and long-term financial viability of Western Australia's emerging social enterprise sector. Improving the evidence base on the measurement of the outcomes of community programs and of the financial sustainability of Western Australia's social enterprises will support growth and innovation in the community sector and build community resilience.

Outcomes of the research program are delivered through the Bankwest Foundation **Social Impact Series**, through community workshops, forums, and professional development courses. This paper is the tenth paper in the Social Impact Series. The program of research around outcomes measurement in community sector organisations in Western Australia, and now Australia, represents the first major ongoing investigation of outcomes measurement in Australia.

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INTRODUCTION

This is the tenth publication from the Bankwest Foundation Social Impact Series, and the sixth report in the *Measuring Outcomes for Impact in the Western Australia Community Sector* research program. The first report in this research program (Issue #1) explored the international experience of outcomes measurement, while Issue #3, through interviews with key stakeholders, examined the views of organisations operating in the community sector in Western Australia on outcomes measurement. The insights from stakeholder interviews were used, in conjunction with the knowledge obtained about the international experience, to put forward recommendations to improve outcomes measurement practice in Western Australia.

Issues #5 and #6 presented the results of the first *Outcomes Measurement in the Western Australian Community Sector Survey*, undertaken between December 2015 and March 2016. Issue #5 focused on the practice, prevalence and funding of outcomes measurement in the WA community sector, and Issue #6 identified the barriers and challenges to outcomes measurement, and evaluated the overall survey findings in relation to the recommendations CSI UWA put forward for improving outcomes measurement at the end of Issue #3. Issue #8 analysed changes in practice, prevalence and barriers to outcomes measurement in the Western Australian community sector between 2016 and 2017 through comparison of the results of the first *Outcomes Measurement in the Western Australian Community Sector Survey with the second, conducted in 2017, and questioned Are We Heading in the Right Direction?*

In this report, we present the findings of the third and fourth surveys of outcomes measurement in the community sector. This report extends the previous studies by expanding the geographic scope of the study from Western Australia to the whole of Australia, allowing us to provide unique empirical evidence on outcomes measurement across a wide variety of community organisations in the country. The third *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* was conducted from February-May 2018, and the fourth between January and February 2019. Invitations to complete the survey in both years were emailed to every community sector charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC). To our knowledge, this report presents the first analysis of outcomes measurement across the entire Australian community sector.

We examine the understanding and extent of outcomes measurement amongst community sector organisations, the financial, technological and human resources available to facilitate outcomes measurement practice, the degree to which common tools and resources for measurement are utilised, and the barriers faced by organisations in undertaking measurement. In light of the shift towards developing whole-of-government population-level outcomes frameworks in various jurisdictions in Australia and changes to policies around the procurement of community services, we also examine the extent to which organisations are aware of these wider changes with a view to understanding how they are affecting practice. Finally, in order to track progress on outcomes measurement over time, we conduct analyses matching respondent answers in the 2019 survey with their answers to the 2018 survey.

We find that **outcomes measurement practice has decreased between 2018 and 2019**. While three-quarters of respondents in 2018 measured their outcomes, 70% do so in 2019. However, amongst those that measure outcomes achieved, **the extent of measurement increased between 2018 and 2019**. In addition, despite the decrease in outcomes measurement, **the level of effort directed towards outcomes measurement increased** or stayed the same for the vast majority of organisations.

Funding is the largest barrier to outcomes measurement, with the majority of responding organisations identifying a lack of funding as a big barrier to outcomes measurement practice. More generally, organisations reported that there was a paucity of resources available for outcomes measurement, with only a minority of respondents indicating that they had access to common resources that are required for consistent and comprehensive outcomes measurement.

The majority of organisations report that **outcomes measurement is funded from general internal funds**, though outcomes measurement was more extensive for those organisations that did fund outcomes measurement from purpose-specific sources. Responding organisations reported that **funders expect reporting of outcomes much more frequently than they provide funding for outcomes measurement**.



Staff, Board, and client engagement is high, with the majority of respondents in both years reporting that engaging these stakeholders is not a barrier to outcomes measurement practice.

Awareness of State Government outcomes-related initiatives was extremely low, with the majority of organisations not having heard of their respective State Government's policy settings on outcomes measurement or outcomes framework. However, **awareness increased between 2018 and 2019** for most State Government outcomes-related initiatives.

Comparisons between 2018 and 2019 must be interpreted with caution, as only 58 organisations completed the survey in both years. However, the results paint an interesting picture and are largely in line with those when the 2018 and 2019 total samples are compared with each other. As with the overall sample, the proportion of the matched sample that did not measure their outcomes increased between 2018 and 2019. Despite this, there was a small increase in the proportion of organisations in the matched sample that agreed that they measured their outcomes well. The majority of the matched sample funded outcomes measurement from general internal funds.

Research was conducted in compliance with UWA Human Ethics protocol RA/4/1/7233.

SECTION ONE: SAMPLING STRATEGY

This research presents findings from the national rollout in 2018 and 2019 of the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*. The first two rounds of the survey, conducted in 2016 and 2017, were restricted to community organisations operating in Western Australia (see Flatau et al. 2016; Seivwright et al. 2016; Callis et al. 2017 for findings). The 2018 and 2019 surveys expanded the geographic scope to the national level. Accordingly, this report presents the first findings from two annual surveys of the entire Australian community sector; the first large-scale investigation of outcomes measurement in Australian community sector organisations to our knowledge.

The present study employed the same methodology for identifying organisations for participation in the survey as the previous studies, namely, capturing charities in the community sector listed on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Register. The definition of the community sector was operationalised in this context as all ACNC-registered organisations except those whose sole charitable purpose is identified as 'advancing religion', 'preventing or relieving suffering of animals', or 'advancing the natural environment'. This methodology results in a large potential sample as over 40,000 organisations had contact emails registered on the ACNC at the time of study. However, the realistic potential sample is substantially smaller for a number of reasons. First, almost 10,000 duplicate emails were identified, meaning that the same email address was listed for at least two organisations. This immediately reduced the potential sample size by 25%. Upon sending out the survey, a further 1,579 emails failed to reach their destination (due to bounce-backs, typographical errors and the like) in 2018 and 1,607 failed in 2019.

In addition to the aforementioned technical obstacles, there are also factors with regard to the nature of registered organisations and the nature of the ACNC register itself that affect the potential sample size. The ACNC register may not represent the most contemporaneous record of community sector organisations; from 2014 to 2016, close to 12,000 organisations had their charity status revoked by the ACNC (Ramia et al. 2016). Revocation of charitable status occurs due to failure to comply with the ACNC's governance standards, maintain an ABN, remain not-for-profit, or maintain a charitable purpose, or due to engagement in criminal activities, including terrorist activities (ACNC, 2019). Alternatively, organisations can voluntarily deregister. Consequently, the decision to revoke charitable status takes some time and investigation on the part of the ACNC or the organisation, should they choose to voluntarily deregister. As such, at any given time, the register is likely to contain a large number of organisations that are not currently active and are, therefore, not within our sampling frame, namely, community sector organisations that are operational. Further, around 9,000 additional new charities were registered between 2014 and 2016 (Ramia et al. 2016). New organisations will require time to establish their operations (and, potentially, outcomes measurement practices) and thus newly established organisations may not be equipped to answer the survey questions.

With respect to the organisations themselves, 47% of ACNC-registered organisations do not employ any paid staff (Ramia et al. 2016). The absence of paid staff restricts the ability of organisations to engage in discretionary activities such as surveys. The potential sample is further reduced as a result of organisations being wound up or individuals named as organisation contacts no longer being employed by the organisation. The research team received over 100 emails from recipients of the survey request informing us that their organisation had wound up or were in the process of winding up, or had significantly decreased operations, or that they were no longer affiliated with the organisation they were listed with as the contact person. Obviously the total number of potential respondents in this situation is far higher than the 100 people who took the time to email us.

Table 1 below presents information about the sample size and response rates.

Table 1: Sampling strategy and response rate breakdown

	2018	2019
Organisations with email contact details listed	40,127	40,300
Duplicate emails	(6,268)	(7,774)
Email failures	(1,579)	(1607)
Potential sample	32,280	30,919
Number of surveys started	1,264	1,516
Number of surveys completed	390	349
Response rate (survey completions/potential sample)	1.2%	1.1%
Effective response rate (survey completions/survey commencements)	30.9%	23.0%

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

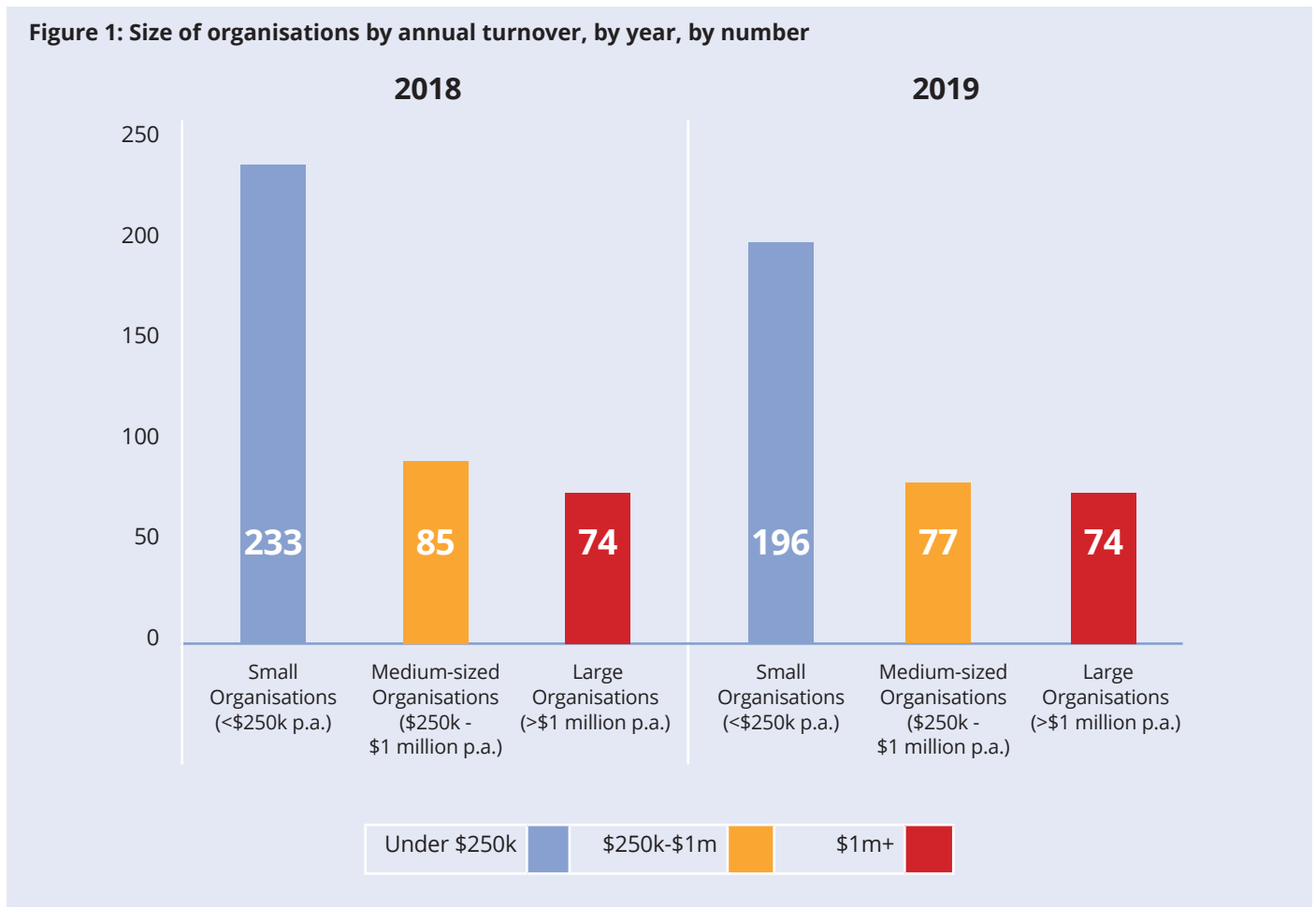
OUR SAMPLE

This section provides a profile of key characteristics of organisations responding to the national *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*, namely, organisational size (by annual turnover), geographic region(s) of operation, and charity subtype. These sample characteristics are presented for both the 2018 and the 2019 samples.

Organisation Size

On the basis of Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission data, at 25th October 2018, small organisations (annual turnover <\$250,000) comprised two-thirds of all ACNC-registered charities, medium-sized organisations (annual turnover between \$250,000 and \$1m) comprised 15%, and large (annual turnover >\$1m) comprised 19% of all registered charities (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, 2018). In terms of organisations that completed the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* in 2018, small organisations accounted for a smaller share of the total sample compared with the national data (58.3% of respondents), while medium-sized organisations accounted for 21.3% of responses to the survey and large organisations 18.5% of the sample. The size of the remaining 2% of organisations could not be identified because they had not yet provided this information to the ACNC. The distribution of organisations in the 2019 sample mirrored the 2018 sample quite closely: 54.9% of respondents were small, 21.6% medium-sized, and 20.7% were large, with 2.8% unable to be identified.

Figure 1, below, provides counts of respondents, by organisational size (annual turnover category), by year. As noted above, the composition of survey respondents in both years in terms of size is roughly comparable to the composition of Australia's charitable sector, defined as ACNC-registered organisations, but smaller organisations are under-represented and medium-sized and large organisations are overrepresented. Importantly, the 2018 and 2019 survey samples are very similar, allowing for meaningful comparison between the results across the two years, disaggregated by size.



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 392 in 2018 and N= 347 in 2019. Excludes 8 and 10 organisations from the 2018 and 2019 samples, respectively, as data pertaining to size was unavailable.

Regions of Operation

The ACNC register identifies the States and Territories in which registered organisations operate. Note that charities can operate in more than one state or territory at any given time. Over two-fifths of charities (41.4%) have operations in New South Wales, 9.4% operate in the Northern Territory, 25.2% operate in Queensland, 11% in Tasmania, 32.3% in Victoria, 19.1% in Western Australia, and 16.4% in South Australia.

Table 2, below provides further information on the region of operation of charities in the survey. In 2018, 21.3% of respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* indicated that they operated solely in New South Wales, 17.8% solely in Victoria, and 17.5% solely in Western Australia. Solely Queensland-operating organisations comprised 10.3% of the sample, followed by South Australia (9.8%), Tasmania (3.5%), and the Northern Territory (1.8%). An additional 8.8% of respondents indicated that they operated in multiple states in Australia, 1.3% indicated that they operated internationally, and 8.3% indicated that they operated both in Australia and internationally.

Table 2: Number of organisations by region of operation, by year.

State	2018		2019	
	n	%	n	%
Australian Capital Territory	0	0.0	7	2.0
New South Wales	85	21.3	79	22.1
Northern Territory	7	1.8	6	1.7
Queensland	41	10.3	44	12.3
South Australia	39	9.8	27	7.6
Tasmania	14	3.5	15	4.2
Victoria	71	17.8	61	17.1
Western Australia	70	17.5	53	14.8
Multiple states in Australia	35	8.8	39	10.9
Internationally	5	1.3	4	1.1
In Australia and Internationally	33	8.3	22	6.2
Total	400	100.0	357	100.0

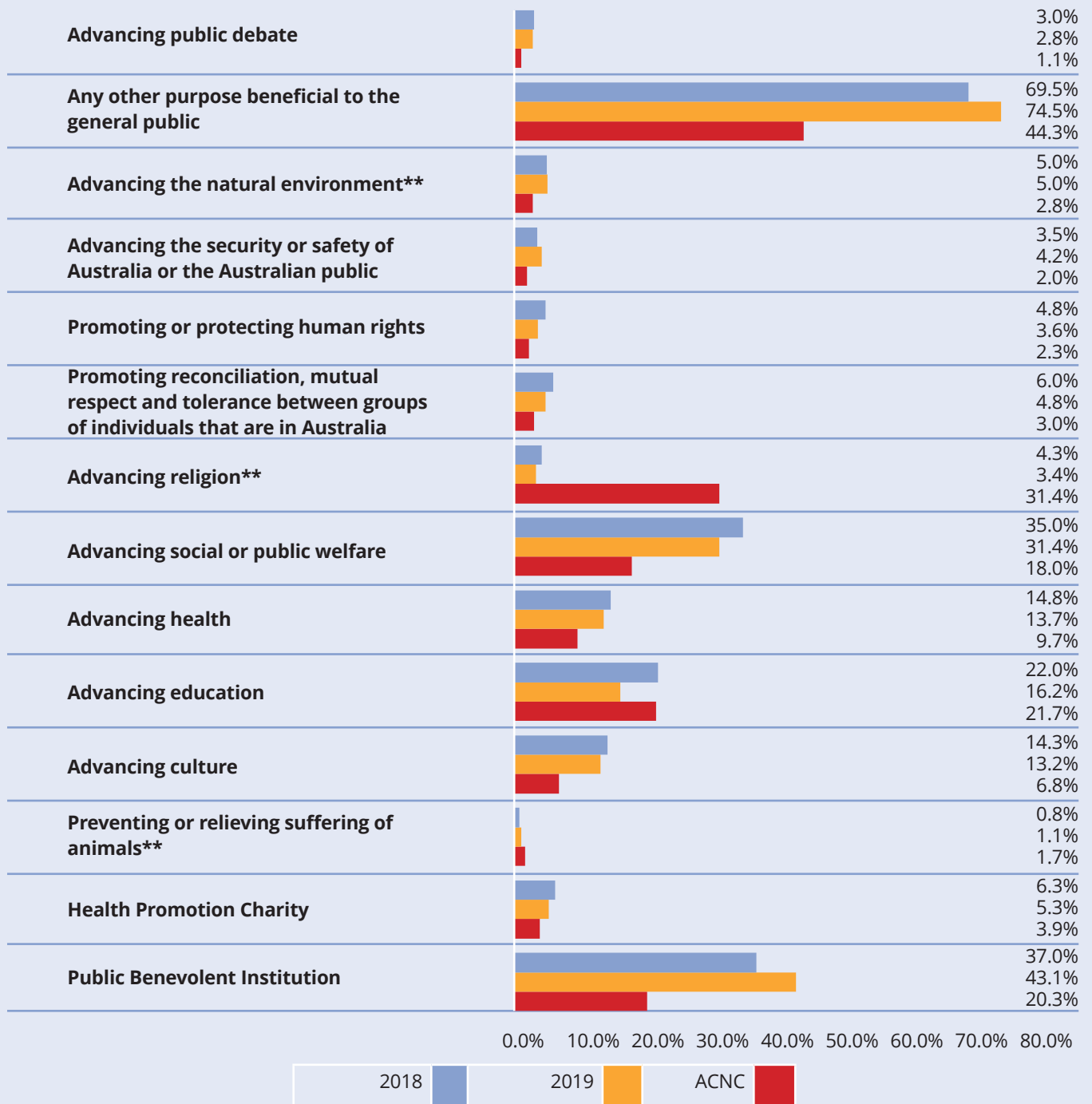
Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Respondents to the 2019 *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* display a similar geographical distribution as that of the 2018 respondents: 22.1% operate solely in New South Wales, 17.1% solely in Victoria, 14.8% solely in Western Australia, 12.3% solely in Queensland, 7.6% solely in South Australia, 4.2% solely in Tasmania, 2.0% solely in the Australian Capital Territory and 1.7% solely in the Northern Territory. Just over 10% operated in multiple states in Australia, 1.1% internationally, and 6.2% in both Australia and abroad.

Interestingly, compared with the entire charitable sector, respondents to the survey were more likely to identify a single State of operation. This may be due to misreading of the question; the question asks respondents to “select as many [regions] as apply”, but this may have been overlooked or misread. Regardless, both the 2018 and 2019 samples provide good geographic representation of charities in Australia.

Charity subtype

Organisations registered with the ACNC are asked to identify which subtype(s) of charities they fall into. There are 14 charity subtypes. Twelve of these charity sub-types reflect the charitable purpose of the organisation such as advancing public debate, or promoting or protecting human rights. The two remaining sub-types are a Public Benevolent Institution, that is, “a charitable institution whose main purpose is to relieve poverty or distress” (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission 2019a), or a Health Promotion Charity, “a charitable institution whose principal activity is to promote the prevention or the control of diseases in human beings” (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission 2019b). Figure 2, below, provides a breakdown of ACNC charities by subtype alongside the breakdown of respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* in 2018 and 2019. These subtypes are not mutually exclusive – an organisation can identify as many purposes as applicable to their operations.

Figure 2: Organisations in each charity subtype category*, by year, percent


Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey.

Note: N= 400 in 2018 and N=357 in 2019

* These categories are not mutually exclusive

**We did not seek responses from charities that operated solely for these purposes

On the basis of the broader ACNC data, as at 25th October 2018, 20.3% of ACNC-registered charities were Public Benevolent Institutions. Almost one third (31.4%) identified their charitable purpose as advancing religion, 21.7% were dedicated to advancing education, and 18.0% to advancing social or public welfare. Just under 10% identified their purpose as advancing health, 6.8% as advancing culture, and 44.3% indicated that their purpose was “Any other purpose beneficial to the general public that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to, or within the spirit of, any of the purposes mentioned in the subtypes above” (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission 2019c).

Examining the charitable purposes of respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*, in both 2018 and 2019 it appears that, relative to the overall ACNC register and across almost all charity subtypes, a greater proportion of our respondents indicate that their purpose falls under each category. In particular, a greater proportion of survey respondents were Public Benevolent Institutions (37.0% and 43.1% in 2018 and 2019 respectively, compared with 20.3% of the overall ACNC register), a greater proportion were dedicated to advancing social or public welfare (35.0% and 31.4% in 2018 and 2019, versus 18.0% overall), and a greater proportion indicated that they fulfilled “Any other purpose beneficial to the general public that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to, or within the spirit of, any of the purposes mentioned in the subtypes above” (69.5% and 74.5% in 2018 and 2019, compared with 44.3% overall).

The overrepresentation of social purpose organisations is not surprising given that the study, though inclusive of the entire charitable sector, is more geared towards organisations delivering human services. Consequently, these organisations are more likely to see how outcomes measurement fits with their operations and thus more likely to respond to the survey. As expected, because our study did not target organisations with a solely religious purpose where outcomes measurement may be seen as less relevant, a smaller proportion of survey respondents in both years – 4.3% in 2018 and 3.4% in 2019 – indicated that advancing religion was one of their charitable purposes, relative to 31.4% of the overall sector. It is important to note, of course, that these categories of charitable purpose are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, it can be said that our samples provide good coverage of the range of charitable purposes that Australian charitable and not-for-profit organisations work across.

SECTION TWO:

THE PREVALENCE OF OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY SECTOR

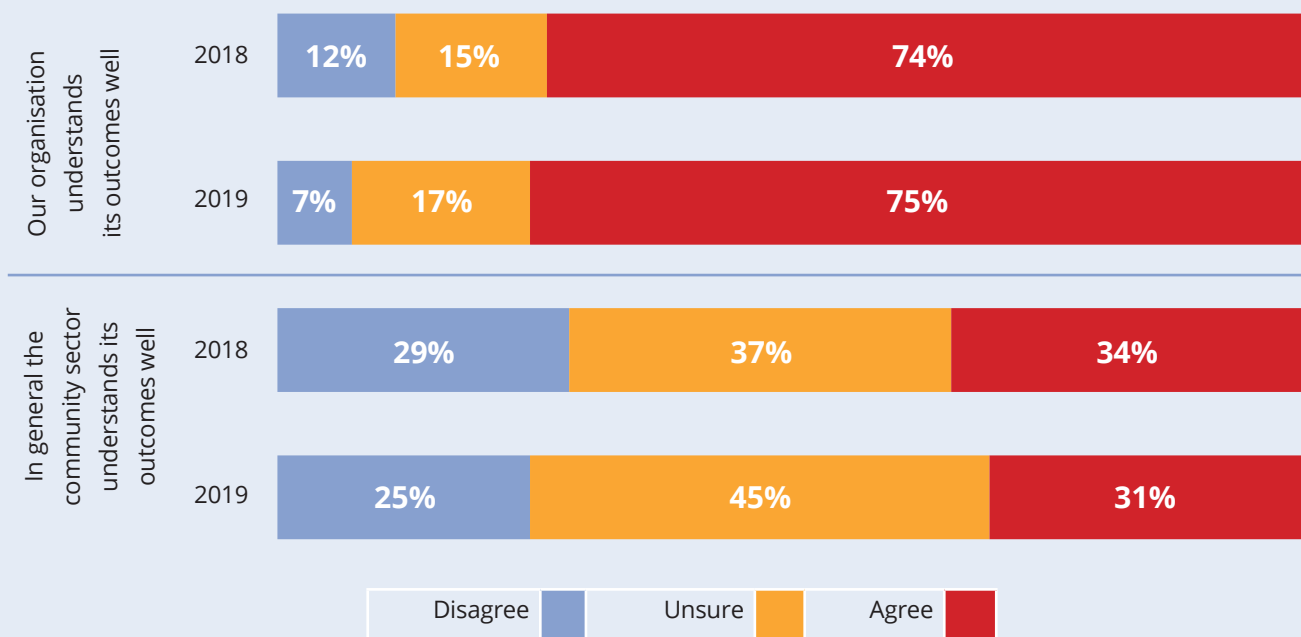
This section examines the prevalence of outcomes measurement in the Australian community sector, beginning with the respondents’ perceptions of their organisation’s understanding of outcomes, and their perceptions of the community sector’s understanding of its outcomes. Then, we present estimates of the proportion of activities for which community organisations’ outcomes are measured, and whether organisations perceive that they are measuring their outcomes well. We then delve deeper into practice, exploring the degree to which effort allocated to outcomes measurement has changed relative to 12 months prior to the time of survey, and the data collection tools employed by community organisations to measure their outcomes.

Understanding of outcomes at the organisational and community sector level

We asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with two statements: (1) “Our organisation understands its outcomes well” and (2) “In general, the community sector understands its outcomes well”. Figure 3, below, depicts the proportion of respondents that agreed, disagreed or were unsure of these two statements. In both 2018 and 2019, roughly three-quarters (74% and 75% in 2018 and 2019, respectively) agreed or strongly agreed that their organisation understood its outcomes well. The proportion of organisations that disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that they did not feel that their organisation understood its outcomes well, decreased from 12% in 2018 to 7% in 2019, and the proportion that were unsure increased by 2%, from 15% in 2018 to 17% in 2019.

In comparison, only about one third of organisations (34% and 31% in 2018 and 2019, respectively) agreed or strongly agreed that the community sector understood its outcomes well. Notably, a large proportion (37% in 2018 and 45% in 2019) were unsure whether the sector understood its outcomes well. There was a decrease between 2018 and 2019 in the proportion of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the community sector understood its outcomes well. We interpret the result as suggesting one of two things. First, that organisations are unsure whether the community sector has a common understanding of what outcomes it wants to achieve and is measuring how well it is achieving these outcomes. Second, it may reflect that organisations are unsure that the community sector has good shared sector practice with respect to outcomes measurement or is not communicating well about outcomes measurement, for example sharing best practice and learnings. While these results concerning community sector outcomes are understandable given a competitive funding environment and the investment required for effective outcomes measurement, they do suggest a need for greater collective understanding and measurement and points to an area of improvement in outcomes measurement practice in the future. The engagement of community sector organisations and peaks in the development of human services outcomes measurement frameworks at the state/territory level and their subsequent engagement in measurement and reporting would have a significant impact on organisations' views about community sector understanding of its outcomes. We return to this subject in later sections.

Figure 3: Understanding of outcomes achieved at the organisational level and the community sector level, by year, percent



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 400 in 2018 and N=357 in 2019

Do community sector organisations measure outcomes?

Figure 4, below, depicts the extent of outcomes measurement among organisations that responded to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*. In 2018, 75.5% of organisations reported that they measured their outcomes. This decreased to 70.6% of organisations in 2019. Decreases in outcomes measurement were evident across all three organisational size categories: (from 70.8% in 2018 to 64.8% in 2019 for small organisations, 75.3% to 71.4% for medium-sized organisations, and 89.2% to 81.8% for large organisations).

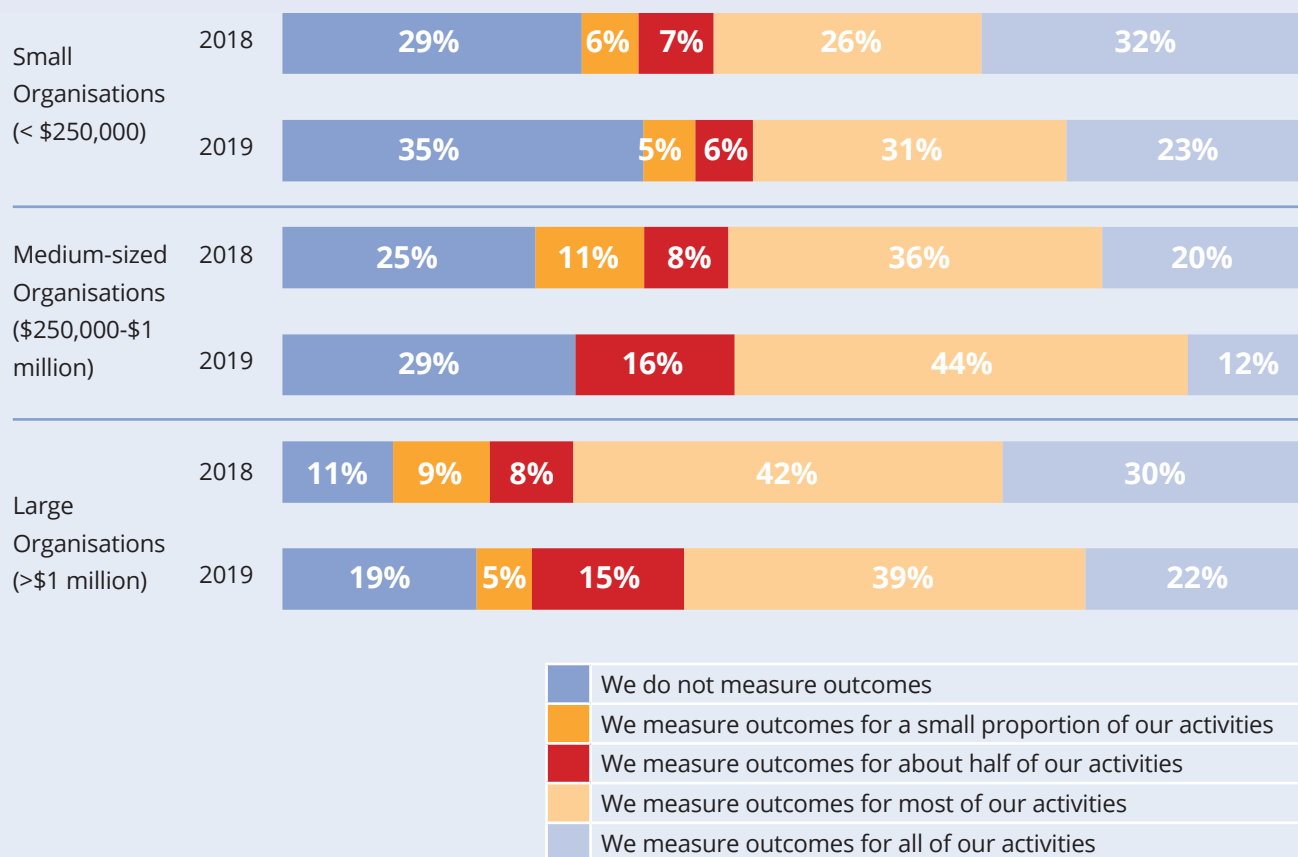
The decrease in the percentage of organisations measuring their outcomes is consistent with what we found in our previous work amongst Western Australian organisations between 2016 and 2017 (Flatau, Adams and Seiwright, 2016; Seiwright et al.

2016; Callis, Flatau and Seivwright, 2017). It could be that ‘new’ respondents to the survey (i.e. those that only completed the survey in the latter year) complete the survey because of a relatively new interest in outcomes measurement, and thus their practice is still emerging. Alternatively, funding for measurement may be tightening and/or other barriers to measurement may be increasing; funding of outcomes measurement will be explored in Section 4 of this report and barriers to outcomes measurement practice will be explored in Section 5.

While the proportion of organisations that did not measure outcomes increased between 2018 and 2019, organisations that did measure their outcomes were more likely to do so for all or most of their activities (rather than for a small proportion or about half of activities). Amongst large organisations that measured their outcomes, 80.3% in 2018 and 75.0% in 2019 measured for all or most of their activities; 75.0% and 78.2% of medium-sized organisations that engaged in outcomes measurement in 2018 and 2019, respectively, measured for all or most of their activities; and 81.8% and 83.5% of small organisations that measured their outcomes in 2018 and 2019, respectively, measured for all or most of their activities.

That organisations that measure their outcomes tend to do so extensively is consistent with findings in our previous reports based on Western Australia data (Flatau, Adams and Seivwright, 2016; Seivwright et al. 2016; Callis, Flatau and Seivwright, 2017). The findings may indicate that outcomes measurement practice has quite high barriers to entry – that it is a steep learning curve that requires investment of time and financial resources. However, once this barrier has been overcome, practice is readily transferred across all activities. Again, Sections 4 and 5 of this report will examine funding and barriers to practice more extensively.

Figure 4: Proportion of activities for which outcomes are measured , by organisation size, by year, percent



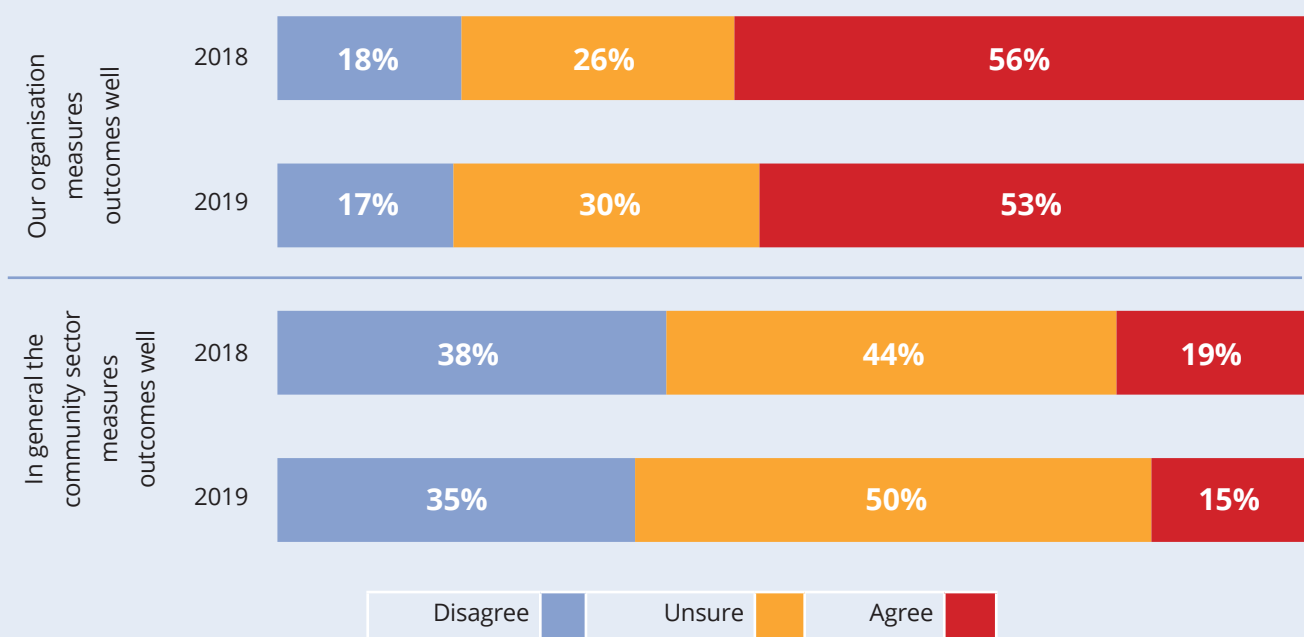
Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 392 in 2018 and N= 347 in 2018. Excludes 8 and 10 organisations from the 2018 and 2019 samples, respectively, as data pertaining to size was unavailable.

In a similar vein to the question of organisational and sectoral *understanding* of outcomes, we posed two questions about the *effectiveness* of their outcomes measurement to respondents that engaged in outcomes measurement: (1) “Our organisation measures its outcomes well”, and (2) “In general, the community sector measures its outcomes well”. While roughly three quarters of respondents in both 2018 and 2019 agreed or strongly agreed that they *understood* their outcomes well, only 56% and 53% in 2018 and 2019, respectively, agreed or strongly agreed that their organisation *measured* its outcomes well. Twenty-six percent of respondents in 2018 were unsure and 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their organisation measured its outcomes well. Thirty percent of organisations in 2019 were unsure, and 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they measured their outcomes well. Therefore, there was relative stability in perceptions of measurement effectiveness amongst responding organisations between 2018 and 2019. The lack of certainty about the quality of outcomes measurement within organisations indicates that there is substantial opportunity for the building of capacity and confidence in outcomes measurement practice. This will be discussed further in the final section of this report.

An examination of respondents’ perceptions of outcomes measurement effectiveness across the community sector, revealed that there was a great deal of uncertainty about community sector outcomes measurement effectiveness. Forty-four percent of respondents in 2018 and 50% in 2019 were unsure as to whether the community sector measured its outcomes well, while only 19% and 15% in 2018 and 2019, respectively, agreed or strongly agreed that the community sector did measure its outcomes well. Over one third of respondents in both years (38% in 2018 and 35% in 2019) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the community sector measured its outcomes well. As with the low certainty of the sector’s understanding of its outcomes, the similar findings regarding the effectiveness of the sector’s outcomes measurement may indicate that community sector organisations are not engaging with each other about outcomes measurement. The sharing of best practice is an effective means of improving outcomes measurement practice across the charitable sector. The final section of this report will present a rationale and strategic imperative for the sharing of learnings and best practice amongst community sector organisations, as well as some suggestions for facilitating this sharing.

Figure 5: Perceptions of measurement effectiveness at the organisational and the community sector level, by year, percent



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

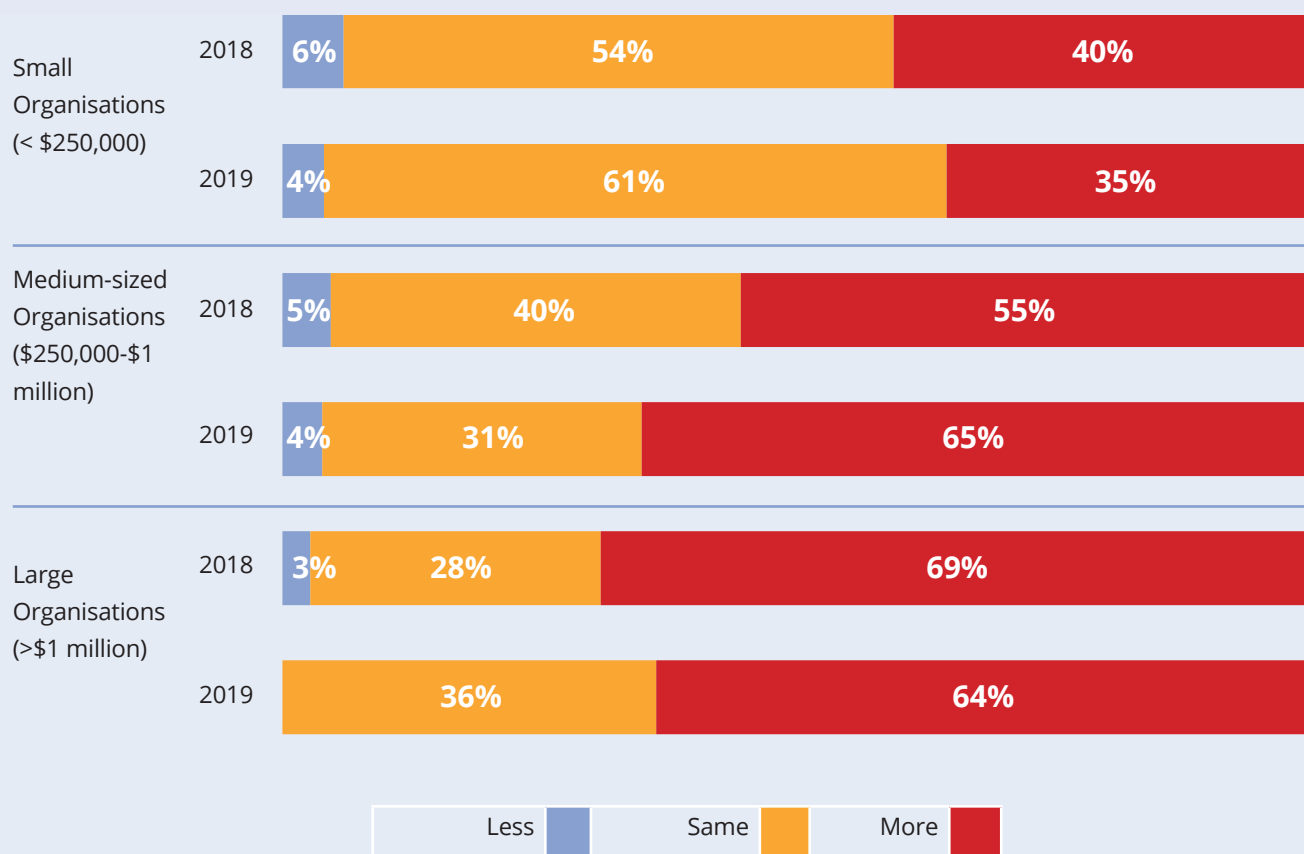
Note: Perception of own organisation’s outcomes measurement effectiveness was only asked to those that reported that they measured outcomes N= 302 in 2018 and N= 252 in 2019. Perception of the community was asked to the whole sample N= 400 in 2018 and N=357 in 2019.

Is outcomes measurement becoming more common?

Figure 6, below, outlines the changes in the level of effort put into outcomes measurement over the last 12 months reported by respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*, by size of organisation. In 2018 and 2019, the majority of large organisations (68.9% and 66.5%, respectively), reported that they were dedicating more effort to outcomes measurement at the time of survey relative to 12 months prior. Notably, in 2019, no large organisations indicated that they were dedicating less effort to outcomes measurement relative to 12 months prior; similarly, in 2018, only a very small proportion (2.7%) of large organisations reported dedicating less effort to outcomes measurement relative to 12 months prior.

The results across medium-sized organisations were comparable to large organisations: a greater proportion of medium-sized organisations reported allocating more effort to outcomes measurement in 2019 (64.9%) than 2018 (55.3%), and low proportions of medium-sized organisations (4.7% in 2018 and 3.9% in 2019) indicated that they were dedicating less effort to outcomes measurement than 12 months prior. The majority of small organisations (53.6% in 2018 and 60.7% in 2019) dedicated the same amount of effort to outcomes measurement compared to 12 months prior. Hearteningly, as with medium-sized and large organisations, a very small number of small organisations reported a reduced amount of effort to outcomes measurement relative to the year prior: 6.0% in 2018, and 4.1% in 2019.

Figure 6: Change in effort towards outcomes measurement in the past year, by organisation size, by year, percent



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 392 in 2018 and N = 347 in 2019. Excludes 8 and 10 organisations from the 2018 and 2019 samples, respectively, as data pertaining to size was unavailable.

These results indicate that, among organisations that measure their outcomes, outcomes practice is embedded, with the level of effort put towards outcomes measurement remaining stable or increasing compared to 12 months prior. Medium-sized organisations were more likely to have increased their effort, while the level of effort put into outcomes measurement by the majority of small organisations remained the same relative to the 12 months prior. In both years, relative to small organisations, a greater proportion of large and medium-sized organisations reported dedicating more effort towards outcomes measurement than the year prior to the survey. This may reflect the overall higher levels of resources relevant to outcomes measurement available to medium-sized and large organisations, such as funding, human capital, and technology. The tools and resources for outcomes measurement used by organisations will now be discussed.

What tools and resources are community organisations using for outcomes measurement?

Table 3, below, outlines the frequency with which organisations that measure their outcomes utilise a variety of data collection tools. Case studies, interviews, and customer satisfaction surveys were the most commonly utilised tools, with over 40% of responding organisations reporting in both 2018 and 2019 that these tools were used more than once per year. Interestingly, the proportion of organisations using these tools decreased between 2018 and 2019, while the proportion of organisations using valuation data and publicly available data increased.

The least commonly used outcomes measurement tools were longitudinal questionnaires, standardised sector tools that assess change, administrative data (e.g., hospital admissions, public housing tenancies, justice contacts) held by other organisations, and standardised government tools, with 63-70% of organisations reporting in both years that they never employ these methods. Further, with the exception of administrative data held by other organisations, the proportion of organisations reporting that they never used these methods increased between 2018 and 2019.

Table 3: Methods for measuring outcomes, by frequency of use, by year, per cent

	Never		Once per year or less		More than once per year	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Longitudinal questionnaires	65.2	69.0	23.5	19.8	11.3	11.1
Standardised sector tools that assess change	63.6	69.4	21.2	16.3	15.2	14.3
Valuation data	66.6	64.3	17.9	16.3	15.6	19.4
Administrative data held by other organisations	69.9	69.4	15.2	16.7	14.9	13.9
Standardised questionnaires	48.0	53.2	26.8	25.0	25.2	21.8
Standardised government tools	61.6	63.5	24.2	18.3	14.2	18.3
Standardised funder tools	55.3	57.1	24.8	21.8	19.9	21.0
Questionnaires designed by your organisation	28.8	29.0	32.8	31.0	38.4	40.1
Case studies	31.5	33.3	28.5	23.8	40.1	42.9
Interviews	22.8	22.6	32.5	34.5	44.7	42.9
Customer or user satisfaction surveys	20.9	19.4	29.5	35.3	49.7	45.2
Publicly available data	46.7	42.5	31.8	31.7	21.5	25.8

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

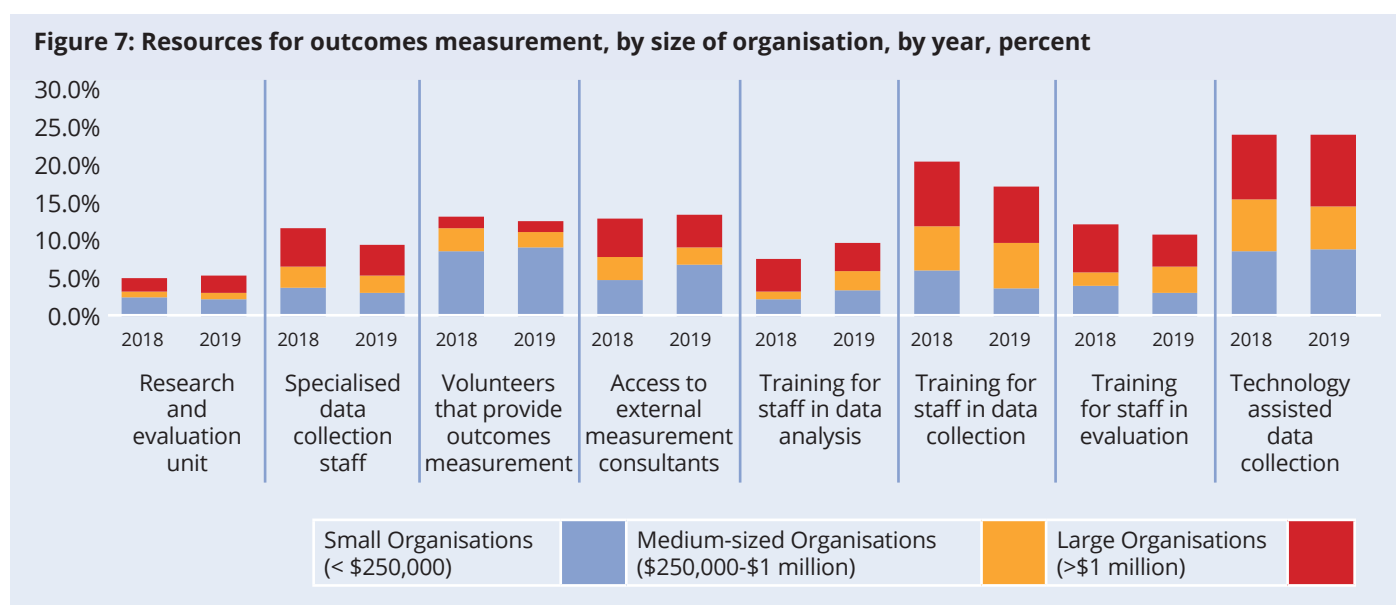
Note: N = 302 in 2018 and N = 252 in 2019. Excludes those who reported that they do not measure outcomes.

Overall, the results indicate that client-centred tools, such as interviews, client satisfaction surveys, and case studies, are the most commonly used amongst community sector organisations. This is not surprising given that survey respondents were largely organisations in the human services sector. However, longitudinal data, standardised tools, and administrative data are important methods for capturing the full impact of an intervention over time. Longitudinal survey data and linked

administrative data provide critical information on the journeys followed by clients of community organisations before and after support and so provide vital information on the impact of support and the cost-effectiveness of social programs. Such data are fundamental to establishing a counterfactual (what outcomes would likely have been achieved in the absence of the organisation's program/s or service/s). Counterfactuals, in turn, reveal the differential impact of a given program or service relative to no intervention, or alternative interventions. Consequently, mature and comprehensive outcomes measurement and evaluation practice requires utilisation of these methods. The low use of these methods represents a key area of policy concern and for capacity development and infrastructure funding to enhance learning and development in community sector organisations.

We asked respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* to indicate whether they had access to a range of resources for outcomes measurement. Figure 7, below, outlines the proportion of the samples in each year that indicated that they had access to each type of resource. Overall, for each resource, a minority of organisations indicated that they had access to them. Only 5.0% of organisations in 2018 and 5.3% in 2019 reported that they had a research and evaluation unit; 7.5% of organisations in 2018 and 9.5% in 2019 indicated that they had access to training for staff in data analysis; and 11.5% of organisations in 2018 and 9.2% in 2019 indicated that they had specialised data collection staff. The very low proportions of organisations reporting access to these resources may be related, such that training for staff in data analysis may not be indicated if there are not staff for whom research and evaluation, or data collection, is a primary role. Regardless, these are core resources for outcomes measurement that are not present for the majority of responding organisations, indicating a significant gap in capacity.

The most commonly available resources, though still only available to a minority of respondents, were technology-assisted data collection (available to 23.8% of organisations in 2018 and 23.5% in 2019), and training for staff in data collection (available to 20.3% of organisations in 2018 and 16.8% in 2019). This may be reflective of minimum data collection requirements stipulated in many funding contracts. For example, the federal Department of Social Services requires that data be input into their Data Exchange (DEX) portal for many of their funded programs, and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare requires that Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) submit client data to the SHS Collection on a monthly basis. Funders that have minimum data reporting requirements, particularly if the data needs to be recorded in a standardised format and/or stored in a centralised database, often provide the technology (e.g. portal, website, computer software) and sometimes offer training for use of said technology. This explanation is supported by the higher proportion of medium-sized and large organisations reporting access to technology-assisted data collection and training for staff in data collection relative to other resources for outcomes measurement, as larger organisations are more likely to hold contracts with large funders that are more likely to have minimum data requirements. Funding of outcomes measurement will be discussed in Section 4 of this report.



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N = 392 in 2018 and N = 347 in 2019. Excludes 8 and 10 organisations from the 2018 and 2019 samples, respectively, as data pertaining to size was unavailable.



Mirroring previous results from the Western Australian *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* (Flatau, Adams and Seiwright, 2016; Seiwright et al. 2016; Callis, Flatau and Seiwright, 2017), reasonably large proportions of organisations (13.3% in 2018 and 12.7% in 2019) indicated that volunteers were used for outcomes measurement. Where the findings about resources that community sector organisations nationally have for outcomes measurement do deviate from the study of Western Australian organisations, is the extent to which small organisations report access to these resources for outcomes measurement. The Western Australian study found that medium-sized and large organisations were statistically significantly more likely than small organisations to report access to a range of resources for outcomes measurement (Callis, Flatau and Seiwright, 2017). In both the 2018 and 2019 national surveys, small organisations accounted for an almost equal or majority proportion of the respondents that reported access to resources for outcomes measurement.

The larger number of small organisations in the 2018 and 2019 national samples reporting access to resources may be explained by the larger skew of the overall national sample towards smaller organisations, compared with the 2016 and 2017 Western Australian samples. Alternatively, as our surveys were explicitly on the topic of outcomes measurement, the small organisations that chose to dedicate their time to completing the survey/s may be those that are more engaged with outcomes measurement practice and thus have greater access to the resources required for measurement. It is important, however, to note that, irrespective of size, a very small number of organisations reported access to resources for outcomes measurement. This suggests that there is significant room for investment in organisations to improve practice. A constrained and uncertain funding environment is a common concern for many community sector organisations, particularly with regard to outcomes measurement (Adams et al. 2015). Therefore, investment in building capacity for outcomes measurement needs to be bilateral, involving both funders and community organisations. We will discuss the funding of outcomes measurement in Section 4 of this report.

SECTION THREE:

PURPOSE OF OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

This section looks at how organisations are using their findings from outcomes measurement, as well as their outcomes reporting practices. We examine the extent to which outcomes data are used for different purposes, both internally and externally, and where organisations are reporting their outcomes and whether these reports are made available to the public.

Using outcomes data

Previous iterations of the *Outcomes Measurement in the Western Australian Community Sector Survey* asked specifically about the importance of reasons for measuring outcomes (e.g., “to improve services and programs”, “for planning and strategy” etc.). The proportions of organisations that considered each reason to be important was consistent between the 2016 and 2017 surveys (Callis, Flatau and Seiwright, 2017). In order to capture practical use of outcomes measurement findings, the focus of the question in the 2018 and 2019 national surveys was shifted to examine the frequency, rather than the importance. Organisations were asked the question “How frequently does your organisation use findings on outcomes and outcomes measurement for the following purposes?” and were presented with the list of potential uses of outcomes data in the table following (Table 4).

Table 4: Extent to which findings on outcomes and outcomes measurement are used for different purposes, by frequency, by year, percent.

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
To improve the outcomes achieved by the organisation	2018	5.3	6.6	18.5	33.4	36.1
	2019	4.8	4.4	25.0	38.1	27.8
To plan future programs	2018	6.6	6.0	23.8	40.1	23.5
	2019	5.6	3.6	26.6	42.9	21.4
To change program design or operations	2018	11.3	7.0	28.8	33.4	19.5
	2019	6.0	6.7	34.9	36.9	15.5
To get additional funding	2018	12.9	9.6	24.2	32.5	20.9
	2019	9.5	9.5	31.7	32.5	16.7
To improve outreach and public relations	2018	13.9	15.2	33.1	21.5	16.2
	2019	11.5	13.9	28.6	30.6	15.5
To make decisions about resource allocation	2018	16.6	11.9	25.8	26.5	19.2
	2019	11.5	10.3	26.6	32.9	18.7
To report to funders	2018	16	6.0	18.5	25.5	34.4
	2019	15.1	4.4	18.3	27.8	34.5
To respond to questions or criticisms about programs	2018	18.2	16.9	31.8	17.2	15.9
	2019	13.1	17.9	29.4	26.6	13.1
To design an ongoing monitoring and evaluation process	2018	22.5	14.9	25.2	22.5	14.9
	2019	12.3	18.7	28.2	28.2	12.7
To promote programs to potential clients	2018	20.2	14.9	25.5	25.2	14.2
	2019	15.5	20.6	23.4	25.8	14.7
To train staff	2018	28.1	17.5	21.5	20.5	12.3
	2019	23.8	12.7	26.2	24.6	12.7
To gain staff support for outcomes measurement	2018	31.8	14.2	23.5	17.2	13.2
	2019	25.4	16.7	24.6	22.2	11.1

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N = 302 in 2018 and N = 252 in 2019. Excludes those who reported that they do not measure outcomes.

As can be seen in Table 4, the reported frequency with which organisations used outcomes measurement for the different purposes was fairly consistent between the 2018 and 2019 surveys. In both 2018 and 2019, outcomes measurement was most frequently used to improve the outcomes achieved by the organisation, to plan future programs, and to report to funders, with over 60% of organisations reporting that they “often” or “always” used outcomes measurement for these purposes. Other than the reduction in those reporting that they “always” used outcomes to improve the outcomes achieved by the organisation (36.1% and 27.8% in 2018 and 2019, respectively), there were no notable differences between the two years.

Our findings suggest that outcomes measurement is most commonly used for both internal organizational reasons such as organisational and program development, more effective resource allocation within the organisation and to support funding applications as well to meet funders’ needs for outcomes reporting. There appears to be a much weaker link between outcomes measurement and staff development and to provide information to prospective clients and consumers. To gain staff support for outcomes measurement and to train staff were consistently the least frequently used purposes across both years. This may be because internal engagement with outcomes measurement is already high and therefore the data and findings are not a useful means for obtaining buy-in. Alternatively, it may be that organisations do not see their (general staff) as being primarily engaged in or interested in outcomes measurement and primarily concerned with service delivery and the “end goal” (outcome) for clients and consumers. Developing a culture of outcomes measurement among staff is an important ingredient of effective outcomes measurement by organisations.

Reporting outcomes data

In addition to whether organisations are measuring their outcomes, we also examined whether they were reporting them to the outside world. Overall, 82.5% in 2018 and 82.1% in 2019 of respondents reported their outcomes in some form of publicly available medium. This included: annual reports, the ACNC Annual Information Statement (AIS), the organisation’s website, newsletters, internal and external evaluation reports, and separate outcomes reports. As can be seen in Table 5, the most common outlet to report outcomes was the annual report. Results were fairly consistent between the 2018 and 2019 responses, across all outcomes reporting outlets.

Interestingly, only half of the organisations that measured their outcomes said that they reported outcomes in their ACNC AIS, despite there being a specific section for the “description of charity’s activities and outcomes” on the statement. The *2018 ACNC Annual Information Statement Guide* recommends that organisations include information about how their activities and outcomes achieved their aims and purpose (ACNC, 2019d). It is surprising that even though these organisations have measured their outcomes, only half of them are actually reporting them in a report where they are specifically asked to do so, and where potential funders and donors are likely to look for them. It is possible that there may be some confusion as to what the AIS actually refers to, as 8-9% of respondents stated that their AIS was not publicly available, even though all AISs are available on the ACNC. These results were consistent across the 2018 and 2019 surveys.

There was a slight increase in the reporting of outcomes in a dedicated outcomes report between 2018 and 2019 (12.6% and 16.7% of those that measure outcomes, respectively). This suggests that the reporting of outcomes is maturing in practice, such that purpose-specific reports are increasingly warranted.

Table 5: Outcomes reported in publicly available media, by type, by year.

		Outcomes reported		Outcomes not reported in this outlet
		Publicly	Privately	
Annual report	2018	61.9	14.6	23.5
	2019	55.2	17.9	27.0
ACNC Annual Information Statement	2018	41.4	7.9	50.7
	2019	40.9	9.1	50.0
Website	2018	37.4	5.0	57.6
	2019	33.3	3.2	63.5
Newsletter	2018	32.8	7.9	59.3
	2019	35.3	7.5	57.1
Internal evaluation reports	2018	6.0	35.8	58.3
	2019	11.9	31.0	57.1
External evaluation reports	2018	7.9	7.0	85.1
	2019	5.2	8.7	86.1
A separate outcomes report	2018	4.0	8.6	87.4
	2019	6.3	10.3	83.3

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 302 in 2018 and N = 252 in 2019. Excludes those who reported that they do not measure outcomes.

SECTION FOUR: FUNDERS AND OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

This section looks at the relationships between funders, funding, and outcomes measurement practice in community sector organisations. We examine how outcomes measurement is funded, and how funding source relates to the extent of activities for which outcomes are measured. We also look at the proportion of an organisation's budget spent on outcomes measurement, and how often different types of funders expect outcomes to be reported, how often different types of funders provide funding for outcomes measurement, and how often funders and community sector organisations work together to set outcomes.

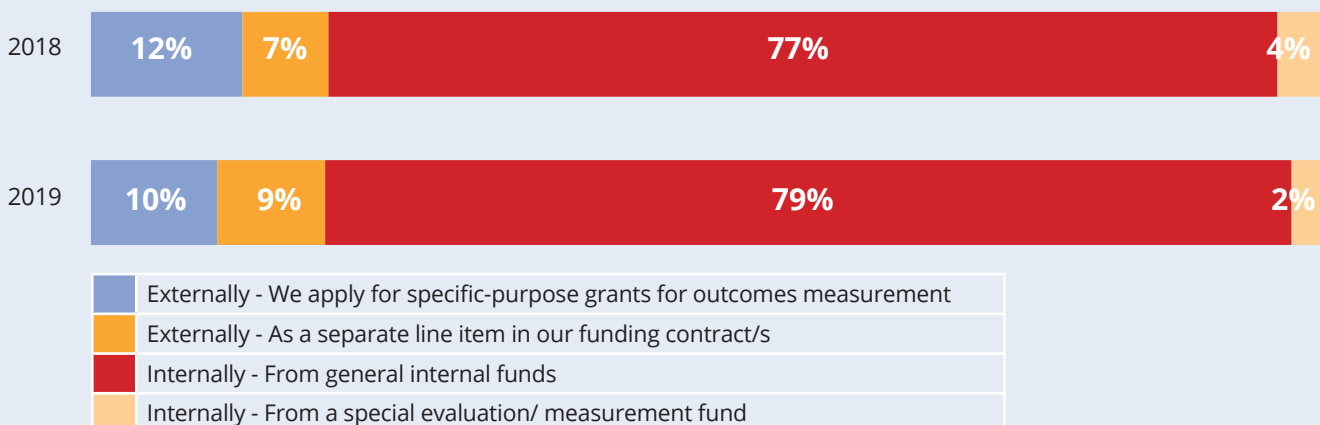
Funding outcomes measurement

In the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* we asked respondents: "In general, how do you usually fund outcomes measurement?" Respondents were required to choose one from the following options:

- 1) Externally - We apply for specific purpose grants for outcomes measurement.
- 2) Externally - As a separate line item in our funding contract/s
- 3) Internally - From general internal funds
- 4) Internally - From a special evaluation/measurement fund.

Figure 8, below, depicts the proportion of organisations that fund outcomes measurement from each of the aforementioned sources. As with previous studies in the Western Australian context (Flatau, Adams and Seivwright, 2016; Seivwright et al. 2016; Callis, Flatau and Seivwright, 2017), results from both the 2018 and 2019 national *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Surveys* find that outcomes measurement is overwhelmingly (for 77.2% and 78.6% of organisations in 2018 and 2019, respectively) funded from general internal organisational funds. In both the Western Australian and national studies, purpose-specific outcomes measurement grants were more common sources of funding for outcomes measurement than line items in funding contracts (12.3% and 10.3% of organisations in 2018 and 2019 respectively funded outcomes measurement from purpose-specific grants, versus 7.0% of organisations in 2018 and 8.7% in 2019 that funded from line items in contracts). This may indicate that funders of programs and services may not appreciate the cost to organisations of outcomes measurement, and are less willing to include budget for measurement in funding contracts. Community sector organisations may not have considered including a line item for measurement in tenders, instead (understandably) focusing on program or service design and delivery when applying for funding. Alternatively, our qualitative research in the study suggests that organisations that included line items for outcomes measurement in budgets believed that that would put them at a competitive disadvantage (Adams et al. 2015)

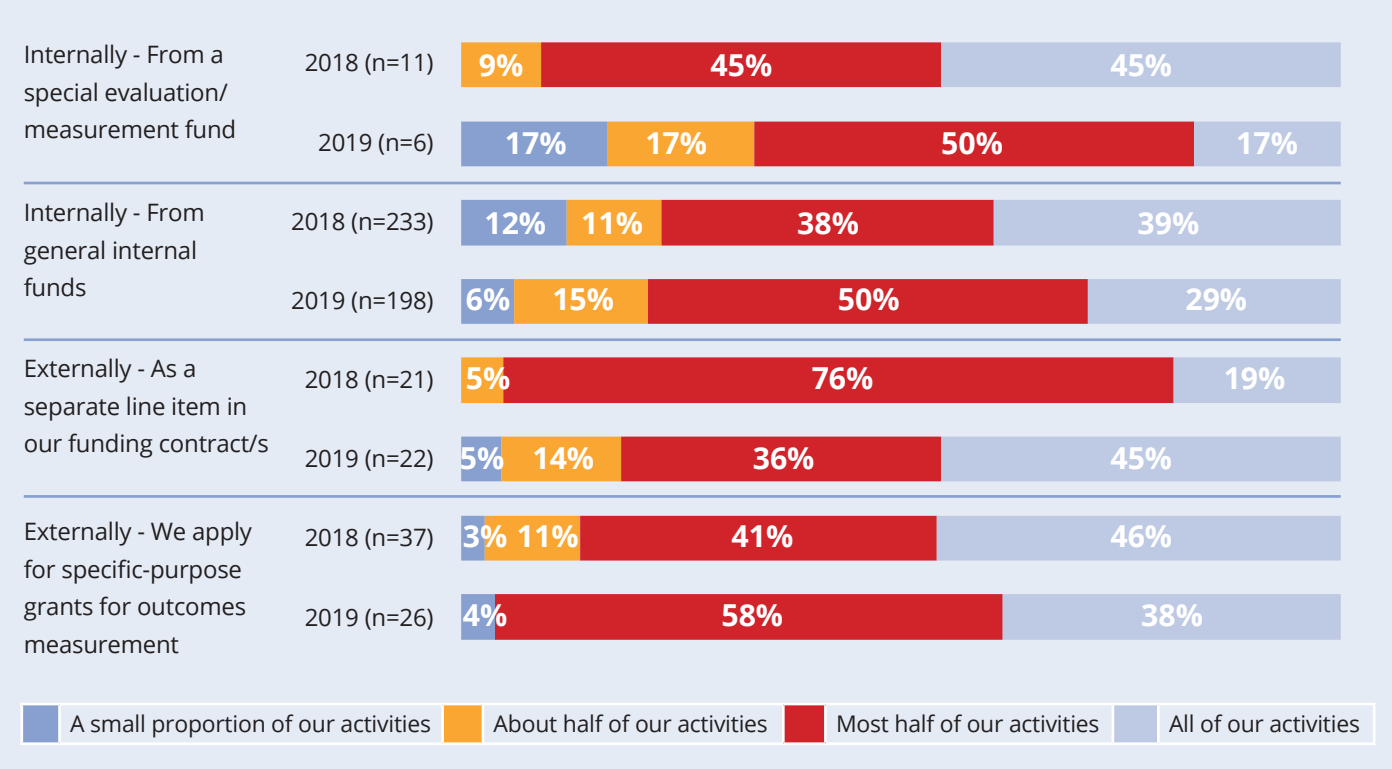
Figure 8: Funding outcomes measurement, by year, percent.



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.
 Note: N= 302 in 2018 and N = 252 in 2019. Excludes those who reported that they do not measure outcomes.

Figure 9 illustrates the extent of activities for which outcomes are measured, by the source of funding for outcomes measurement. These results must be interpreted with caution due to the variation in sample size between the different funding sources (i.e., that the majority of respondents fund from general internal funds). However, those organisations that funded outcomes measurement from external, purpose-specific grants were more likely to measure for all or most of their activities. With the exception of those organisations that funded outcomes measurement from general internal funds, the proportion of organisations that measured outcomes for only a small proportion of activities increased between 2018 and 2019. Simultaneously, the proportion of organisations reporting funding outcomes from a source other than general internal funds (i.e., they funded from a special internal evaluation or measurement fund, purpose-specific grants, or line items in funding contracts) also decreased between 2018 and 2019. When these results are considered together, it may be that external or purpose-specific sources of funding for outcomes measurement have become less available overall, and, where they are available, have reduced in amount or scope of funding available.

Figure 9: Funding outcomes measurement, by the extent of outcomes measurement, by year, percent.

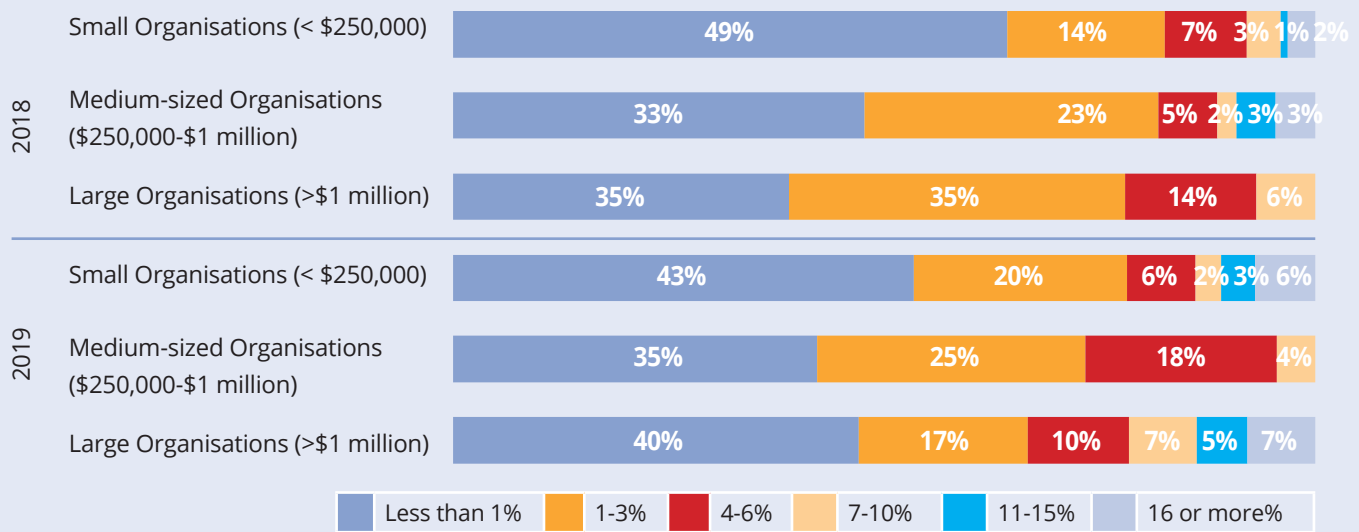


Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 302 in 2018 and N = 252 in 2019. Excludes those who reported that they do not measure outcomes.

Figure 10 outlines the proportion of the budget that organisations spent on outcomes measurement, by organisation size, in 2018 and 2019. The most common response of organisations to the question on funding is that they spent less than 1% of their budget on outcomes measurement. However, there is a clear relationship between organisation size and the amount of budget dedicated to measurement. The majority of small organisations in both years (64.3% in 2018 and 53.5% in 2019) spent less than 1% of their budget on outcomes measurement. A large proportion of medium-sized organisations (47.7% and 42.2% in 2018 and 2019, respectively) also dedicated less than 1% of their budget to outcomes measurement, while 39.0% of large organisations in 2018 and 47.0% in 2019 spent less than 1% of their budget on outcomes measurement. Among medium-sized organisations, the reduction in the proportion of respondents spending less than 1% of their budget on outcomes measurement between 2018 and 2019 is mostly noticed in an increase in the proportion of medium-sized organisations spending 4-6% of their budget, from 6.8% of organisations in 2018 to 22.2% in 2019. Interestingly, the budget allocation to outcomes measurement of large organisations in 2019 is distributed across the various categories: 47.0% spent less than 1%, 19.6% spent 1-3% of their total budget, 11.8% spent 4-6%, 7.8% of large organisations spent 7-10% of their total budget, 5.9% spent 11-15% and 7.8% spent 16% or more.

Figure 10: The proportion of budget spent on outcomes measurement, by organisation size, by year, percent



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey.

Note: N= 295 in 2018 and N = 242 in 2019. Excludes those who reported that they do not measure outcomes. Excludes 8 and 10 organisations from the 2018 and 2019 samples, respectively, as data pertaining to size was unavailable.

The generally low proportion of budget spent on outcomes measurement may reflect a constrained funding environment, which is cited by community organisations as a common barrier to outcomes measurement practice (Adams et al. 2015; Seivwright et al. 2016; Callis, Flatau and Seivwright, 2017). It is certainly not reflective of the low cost of outcomes measurement. General guidelines stipulate that 5-20% of program costs should be allocated to a program evaluation (Program Evaluation Unit, 2015), and program evaluations do not typically include longitudinal or linked data components, nor do they assess an organisation's overall outcomes. Again, this indicates an opportunity for investment in organisations and in the sector overall to build capability and develop mechanisms for sharing best practice.

Outcomes measurement and the funding of community organisations

As outcomes measurement has been driven in part by funders, it is important for comparison purposes as well as a general understanding of the outcomes measurement landscape to understand the expectations of funders of community sector organisations around setting and reporting outcomes.

Table 6, below, outlines the frequency with which respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Surveys* reported that particular funders required reporting on outcomes. Institutional philanthropy and foundations, State Government, and Federal Government funders were the most likely to require outcomes reporting 'often' or 'all the time' and, accordingly, the least likely to 'never' require reporting on outcomes. Large private donors, on the other hand, required reporting on outcomes with the lowest frequency, with only 29.7% of organisations in receipt of this type of funding in 2018, and 21.0% in 2019 indicating that they were required to report on outcomes 'often' or 'all the time', and 33.8% in 2018 and 43.5% in 2019 stating that they 'never' had to report outcomes to large private donors. Responding organisations also reported that corporate funders had relatively low outcomes reporting requirements, with around 37% of organisations in receipt of corporate funding indicating in both years that corporate funders required reporting on outcomes 'often' or 'all the time', and 36.8% in 2018 and 44.4% in 2019 indicated that they 'rarely' or 'sometimes' had to report outcomes to their corporate funders.

Interestingly, there appears to be a decrease in funder demands of outcomes reporting across the board, with the exception of corporate funders. The proportion of organisations reporting that they were required to report outcomes 'often' or 'all the time' decreased for every type of funder (except corporate funders, for whom the proportion of organisations in receipt of this funding that reported that they were required to report on outcomes 'often' or 'all the time' increased very slightly by 0.2%). The

decrease was particularly evident amongst institutional philanthropy and foundations, with a decrease of 11.8%, from 71.2% of survey respondents in 2018 to 58.8% in 2019 indicating that outcomes reporting was required 'often' or 'all the time', though similar decreases were present for State Government grants and contracts (from 74.4% of organisations in 2018 to 55.8% in 2019) and Federal Government grants and contracts (from 65.4% of organisations in 2018 to 51.9% in 2019).

For most types of funders, the majority of the shift from organisations required to report outcomes 'often' or 'all the time' is into the 'rarely' or 'sometimes' category, meaning that outcomes reporting requirements are not ceasing altogether, but instead reducing in frequency. This may indicate the stage at which funding contracts are at. For example, an organisation in receipt of a 'new' contract for a program or service may not yet have reported on outcomes, and thus perceive the reporting requirements to be low. Alternatively, and more pessimistically, it may reflect a decreased interest from funders in outcomes. Alternatively again, it may reflect efficiencies in the outcomes reporting relationship arising from better understanding and policy, such as the introduction of outcomes frameworks. The awareness and impact of policy on outcomes measurement practice will be discussed in Section 6 of this report.

Table 6: The extent to which reporting on outcomes is required, by type of funder, by year, per cent

		Never	Rarely/ Sometimes	Often/ All of the time
Large private donations	2019 (n=62)	43.5	35.5	21.0
	2018 (n=74)	33.8	36.5	29.7
Federal government grants and contacts	2019 (n=104)	13.5	34.6	51.9
	2018 (n=127)	11.0	23.6	65.4
State government grants and contacts	2019 (n=163)	11.7	32.5	55.8
	2018 (n=156)	7.7	17.9	74.4
Institutional philanthropy and foundations	2019 (n=34)	11.8	29.4	58.8
	2018 (n=66)	6.1	22.7	71.2
Corporate funding	2019 (n=27)	18.5	44.4	37.0
	2018 (n=38)	26.3	36.8	36.8

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. The values of n listed refer to the number of organisations receiving a specific source of funding.

Table 7: Provides funding for outcomes measurement, by type of funder, by year, per cent

		Never	Rarely/ Sometimes	Often/ All of the time
Large private donations	2019 (n=62)	82.3	16.1	1.6
	2018 (n=74)	81.1	17.6	1.4
Federal government grants and contacts	2019 (n=104)	56.7	26.0	17.3
	2018 (n=127)	49.6	32.3	18.1
State government grants and contacts	2019 (n=163)	47.9	32.5	19.6
	2018 (n=156)	42.9	37.8	19.2
Institutional philanthropy and foundations	2019 (n=34)	64.7	29.4	5.9
	2018 (n=66)	50.0	39.4	10.6
Corporate funding	2019 (n=27)	63.0	33.3	3.7
	2018 (n=38)	68.4	23.7	7.9

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. The values of n listed refer to the number of organisations receiving a specific source of funding.

Table 7, on previous page, outlines the frequency with which responding organisations received funding for outcomes measurement from each type of funder. Overall, funding for outcomes measurement is low irrespective of the funding source. While State Government funders frequently expected reporting on outcomes (with 74.4% of organisations in 2018 and 55.8% in 2019 indicated that reporting on outcomes was expected ‘often’ or ‘all the time’), only 19.2% of organisations in receipt of State Government funding in 2018 and 19.6% in 2019 reported that they received direct funding for outcomes measurement from State government sources ‘often’ or ‘all the time’. Similarly, only 18.1% of organisations in receipt of Federal Government grants and contracts in 2018, and 17.3% in 2019, reported receiving funding for outcomes measurement ‘often’ or ‘all the time’. Direct institutional philanthropy or foundation funding for outcomes measurement appears to be at lower levels than State/Federal funding; only 10.6% of organisations receiving institutional philanthropy or foundation funding in 2018, and 5.9% in 2019, reported receiving direct funding for outcomes measurement. This compares with 71.2% of organisations in 2018, and 58.8% in 2019 reporting that institutional philanthropy or foundation funded projects expected reporting on outcomes ‘often’ or ‘all the time’. To sum up, there is a marked gap between expectations for reporting on outcomes measurement and the direct funding of outcomes measurement.

Table 8: Extent to which funders and services work together to set outcomes, by funder type, by year, per cent

		Never	Rarely/ Sometimes	Often/ All of the time
Large private donations	2019 (n=62)	53.2	27.4	19.4
	2018 (n=74)	48.6	36.5	14.9
Federal government grants and contacts	2019 (n=104)	45.2	35.6	19.2
	2018 (n=127)	37.8	35.4	26.8
State government grants and contacts	2019 (n=163)	31.9	44.8	23.3
	2018 (n=156)	21.8	44.9	33.3
Institutional philanthropy and foundations	2019 (n=34)	38.2	38.2	23.5
	2018 (n=66)	36.4	48.5	15.2
Corporate funding	2019 (n=27)	33.3	48.1	18.5
	2018 (n=38)	42.1	39.5	18.4

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. The values of n listed refer to the number of organisations receiving a specific source of funding.

As depicted in Table 8 above, funders and community organisations generally never, rarely/sometimes set outcomes together and only around a quarter of organisations report that often or always funders and organisations work together to set outcomes. Interestingly, setting outcomes together occurs more frequently than funding of outcomes measurement. The proportion of organisations in receipt of institutional philanthropy or foundation funding that reported setting outcomes with the funder ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ increased from 14.9% in 2018 to 19.4% in 2019. A similar increase (from 15.2% in 2018 to 23.5% in 2019) was observed in recipients of large private donations. The proportion of organisations setting outcomes with their corporate funders ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ remained stable (18.4% in 2018 and 18.5% in 2019), while proportions for both State and Federal Government funders decreased – from 33.3% of organisations in receipt of State Government funding reporting that they set outcomes with said funder ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ in 2018 to 23.3% in 2019, and 26.8% of Federal Government funding recipients setting outcomes with said funder ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ in 2018 to 19.2% in 2019. The decrease in outcomes setting amongst government funders may reflect the introduction of outcomes frameworks or procurement policies, such that the setting of program-specific outcomes is no longer necessary because desired outcomes are articulated by the funder during the procurement stage. Awareness of government policy will be explored in Section 6.

Table 9: Extent to which milestone funding payments contingent on achievement of outcomes, by funder type, by year, per cent

		Never	Rarely/ Sometimes	Often/ All of the time
Large private donations	2019 (n=62)	62.9	33.9	3.2
	2018 (n=74)	58.1	25.7	16.2
Federal government grants and contacts	2019 (n=104)	39.4	18.3	42.3
	2018 (n=127)	28.3	28.3	43.3
State government grants and contacts	2019 (n=163)	30.7	23.9	45.4
	2018 (n=156)	22.4	35.3	42.3
Institutional philanthropy and foundations	2019 (n=34)	41.2	38.2	20.6
	2018 (n=66)	42.4	28.8	28.8
Corporate funding	2019 (n=27)	37.0	51.9	11.1
	2018 (n=38)	42.1	42.1	15.8

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. The values of n listed refer to the number of organisations receiving a specific source of funding.

Finally, Table 9 above outlines the extent to which each type of funder provides milestone funding payments that are contingent on achievement of outcomes. This addresses the question of whether outcomes-based commissioning or payments by results is used in procurement processes. While we ask about the extent to which payments are linked to the achievement of outcomes we did not further investigate the extent to which up-front payments on signing of contracts which are not linked to outcomes achieved are also made. The proportion of organisations in receipt of State and Federal government contracts and grants that ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ had milestone payments contingent on outcomes remained relatively stable between 2018 and 2019 (42.3% of State Government grant recipients in 2018 and 45.4% in 2019; 43.3% of Federal Government grant recipients in 2018 and 42.3% in 2019). The proportion of organisations reporting that they ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ had milestone payments contingent on funding decreased for those receiving large private donations, institutional philanthropy or foundation funding, and corporate funding.

In sum, there is variation in the extent to which funders expect reporting of outcomes, fund outcomes measurement, and set outcomes collaboratively. Relative to the proportions of organisations that report that funders fund outcomes measurement, larger proportions of organisations report that funders expect outcomes to be reported frequently. Further, a reasonably large proportion of organisations, particularly those in receipt of State and Federal Government funding, report that their contracts involve milestone payments that are contingent on the achievement of specified outcomes. This may indicate that community organisations are in a rather difficult position whereby they are required to report on outcomes in order to receive funding, yet the cost of measuring the outcomes upon which they have to report is not covered by the funding.

With regard to changes between 2018 and 2019, expectations of funders in terms of the frequency with which community organisations are required to report on outcomes decreased overall, and funding for outcomes measurement also decreased. The proportion of organisations receiving income from non-government funders that reported that said funders set outcomes with them increased, while collaborative setting of outcomes between community organisations and government funders decreased. Overall, it appears that funders do not provide support for outcomes measurement that is commensurate with their expectations regarding the reporting of outcomes. This may present a barrier to outcomes measurement practice for community organisations. The next section of this report will discuss barriers.

SECTION FIVE:

BARRIERS TO OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

This section examines attitudinal and logistical barriers to outcomes measurement. Previous research in this series, undertaken in the Western Australian context, found that although the enthusiasm for outcomes measurement was present, barriers, particularly around funding, prevented practice from flourishing (Adams et al. 2015; Seivwright et al. 2016; Callis, Flatau and Seivwright, 2017). This section first examines the extent to which respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Surveys* agree with negative sentiments about outcomes measurement. It then looks at the extent to which common barriers to outcomes measurement create obstacles for organisational outcomes measurement practice.

Sentiments about outcomes measurement

In order to assess how respondents feel about the value of outcomes measurement, we asked them to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following (negative) statements on outcomes measurement:

- The public isn't interested in our organisation measuring outcomes
- You don't need outcomes measurement to know that your approach is working
- Outcomes measurement takes away resources that could be better spent elsewhere
- Data collection interferes with our relationships with clients

Table 8, below, outlines the proportions of organisations that agree, disagree or are neutral about these statements, by year, and by the size of the organisation. There was a clear relationship between organisational size and the level of agreement with these negative sentiments, such that, for each statement, small organisations were more likely than large organisations to agree. This was most evident with respect to the statement "The public is not interested in our organisation measuring outcomes", to which 40.8% of small organisations in 2019 agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 17.6% of large organisations. There was a similar gap between small and large organisations that agreed with the statement "You don't need outcomes measurement to know that your approach is working" – 32.1% of small organisations agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 8.1% of large organisations.

The differences in sentiments between organisations of different sizes were also present in terms of the changes in the proportions that agreed or strongly agreed between 2018 and 2019. While the proportion of small organisations that indicated agreement with each statement increased between 2018 and 2019, the proportion of large organisations that agreed with each statement decreased between 2018 and 2019, with the exception of "Outcomes measurement takes away resources that could be better spent elsewhere", to which 10.8% of large organisations agreed or strongly agreed in 2018, and 17.6% agreed or strongly agreed in 2019. This may be indicative of a widening gap between small and large organisations in terms of outcomes measurement attitudes and practice and the importance of an evidence based culture.

The results for medium-sized organisations were mixed: a larger proportion of medium sized than small organisations in both years agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Data collection interferes with our relationships with clients", and a larger proportion of medium-sized than small organisations agreed or strongly agreed that "Outcomes measurement takes away resources that could be better spent elsewhere" in 2018, though a smaller proportion of medium-sized than small organisations agreed or strongly agreed with this statement in 2019. Overall, however, the level of agreement with these negative sentiments about outcomes measurement decreased with organisational size, indicating that larger organisations are more positive about the purpose and practice of outcomes measurement.

Table 10: Sentiments about outcomes measurement, by organisational size, by year, per cent

		Small organisations (< \$250,000 p.a.)			Medium-sized organisations (\$250,000 - \$1 Million p.a.)			Large organisations (>\$1 Million p.a.)		
		Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
The public isn't interested in our organisation measuring outcomes	2018	29.6	34.3	36.1	49.4	24.7	25.9	44.6	33.8	21.6
	2019	28.6	30.6	40.8	37.7	28.6	33.8	50.0	32.4	17.6
You don't need outcomes measurement to know that your approach is working	2018	44.2	24.0	31.8	56.5	23.5	20.0	62.2	17.6	20.3
	2019	35.7	32.1	32.1	51.9	29.9	18.2	63.5	28.4	8.1
Outcomes measurement takes away resources that could be better spent elsewhere	2018	36.9	42.1	21.0	50.6	25.9	23.5	52.7	36.5	10.8
	2019	38.8	36.7	24.5	46.8	31.2	22.1	43.2	39.2	17.6
Data collection interferes with our relationships with clients	2018	40.8	43.8	15.5	47.1	35.3	17.6	55.4	31.1	13.5
	2019	41.3	42.9	15.8	44.2	37.7	18.2	59.5	29.7	10.8

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N = 392 in 2018 and N = 347 in 2019. Excludes 8 and 10 organisations from the 2018 and 2019 samples, respectively, as data pertaining to size was unavailable.

Barriers to outcomes measurement

Table 11, below, outlines the proportion of organisations that report that common obstacles to outcomes measurement are ‘not a barrier’, a ‘small barrier’, or a ‘big barrier’ for their organisation. A lack of funding was reported as a big barrier to outcomes measurement by the majority of respondents in both years – 56.0% in 2018, and 60.1% in 2019. While only 33.9% of organisations in 2018 and 31.5% in 2019 reported that a lack of staff *skills* were a big barrier to outcomes measurement, a lack of staff *capacity* was reported by 38.7% of organisations in 2018 and 44.7% of organisations in 2019 as a big barrier to outcomes measurement.

The majority of respondents reported that “Lack of support from the Board” and “Engaging staff” were not a barrier to outcomes measurement in both years, indicating that internal support for outcomes measurement is strong in principle. Almost half of responding organisations (48.2% in 2018 and 48.9% in 2019) reported that “Participation of clients/beneficiaries” was not a barrier to outcomes measurement.

For the remainder of the barriers identified, fairly even proportions of organisations reported that they were ‘not a barrier’, a ‘small barrier’, and a ‘big barrier’. This indicates that outside the major funding obstacle to outcomes measurement there is variation in the experience of organisations in measuring their outcomes, and potentially variation in the maturity of outcomes measurement practice within organisations. It almost certainly indicates that, in terms of capacity building, there exists a range of different needs and areas in which learning and development should be targeted.

Table 11: Barriers to outcomes measurement, by year.

	Not a barrier		Small barrier		Big barrier	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Lack of staff skills	28.1	27.0	37.9	41.6	33.9	31.5
Lack of funding	20.9	18.0	23.1	21.9	56.0	60.1
Varying funder requirements	35.2	33.7	37.2	34.3	27.6	32.0
Lack of support from the Board	76.1	80.1	17.6	15.7	6.3	4.2
Engaging staff	58.5	57.0	28.9	28.9	12.6	14.0
Participation of clients/beneficiaries	48.2	48.9	38.9	37.4	12.8	13.8
Lack of established tools	29.1	32.9	36.9	32.0	33.9	35.1
Lack of staff capacity	25.4	28.1	35.9	27.2	38.7	44.7
Measuring outcomes across different services	39.9	39.9	38.4	34.6	21.6	25.6
Lack of access to non-financial resources	31.2	33.4	41.2	34.6	27.6	32.0
Attribution	31.2	34.8	43.0	36.5	25.9	28.7

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 398 in 2018 and N=356 in 2019. Excludes those who did not complete this question.

SECTION SIX:

AWARENESS AND IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

There has been a recent shift in focus across State and Commonwealth Governments towards outcomes measurement. This has included the development of whole-of-government or whole-of-sector outcomes frameworks, outcomes-based procurement, collection of minimum data, and the shift to individualised funding. This section outlines a range of policies introduced, by state. Respondents that identified State Government as a source of funding were asked with which State Government they had the most contracts, and were then asked whether they were aware of that State’s policy. We also sought to understand how the policy had affected practice amongst organisations that were aware of it. However, as we will elaborate, awareness of policy was too low across the board to report the perceived impact of policy on organisations in a meaningful way.



New South Wales

The New South Wales (NSW) State Government introduced the Human Services Outcomes Framework in 2017 with the objectives of developing a common understanding across government agencies and community sector organisations, supporting an outcomes focus across human services, develop consistency in measurement and evaluation, and encouraging collaboration and shared learning (NSW Government, 2017). The Framework articulates the outcomes that the NSW Government seeks to achieve for the people of NSW through the human services it funds and delivers.

The seven outcome domains and accompanying intent statements of the NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework are as follows:

Education & Skills – All people in NSW are able to learn, contribute and achieve

Economic – All people in NSW are able to contribute to, and benefit from, our economy

Health – All people in NSW are able to live a healthy life

Home – All people in NSW are able to have a safe and affordable place to live

Safety – All people in NSW are able to be safe

Empowerment – All people and communities in NSW are able to contribute to decision making that affects them and live fulfilling lives

Social & Community – All people in NSW are able to participate and feel culturally and socially connected.

Source: NSW Government (2017)

The Framework also drills down into finer detail of desired outcomes and indicators of outcomes underneath each ‘headline’ outcome domain, though it is noted that these are subject to change over time in response to the NSW Premier’s and State Priorities. Though reporting against the Framework is not (yet) mandatory for human service delivery agencies, the Framework is intended to complement budgetary reforms that see budget allocations tied to the outcomes of the Framework. Consequently, we expect awareness of the Framework to be high amongst community sector organisations with State Government contracts in NSW, and for the Framework to have impacted outcomes measurement practice.

In 2018 and 2019, 42 and 46 organisations, respectively, reported that the majority of their State Government contracts were held with the NSW Government. However, only 19.0% in 2018 and 32.6% in 2019 were familiar with the NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework. Delving any deeper into the impact of the Framework based on the responses of 8 and 15 organisations is not feasible.

Victoria

The Victorian State Government is undergoing what it terms ‘outcomes reform’. While the NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework specifies particular domains, statements of intent, outcomes and indicators, the Victorian State Government has introduced the Victorian Government Outcomes Architecture. The Architecture provides a shared language and outlines how success can be measured across all funded services. It is conceptualised as a hierarchical pyramid comprised of the following elements:

Measuring delivery forms the base or foundation of the pyramid, and involves inputs – the resources put into an activity such as programs or services, activities – the actual program or service delivered, and outputs – measures of the program or service delivered, such as number of clients served.

Measuring success is the next section of the Architecture, comprising outcome measures – quantification of the extent of change achieved, outcome indicators – the nature and direction of the intended change, and outcomes – the desired ultimate end-state for individuals, families or communities.

Describing success tops the Architecture, with domains – the areas of wellbeing in which the desired change should be seen, and vision – the aspirational goal.

Source: Victorian State Government (2017)

By identifying the fundamental elements required to measure outcomes and impact, the Victorian Government aims to establish an approach to measurement that is uniform and broad in scope (i.e. applicable to all government functions), yet flexible enough to ensure that it can be applied across government. The Architecture has been used as the basis for outcomes frameworks in key policy areas, including Family Violence, Public Health and Wellbeing, Gender Equality, Primary Prevention Strategy, Mental Health Strategy, La Trobe Valley, Regional Partnerships, Plan Melbourne, State Disability Plan, Aboriginal Affairs, Multicultural Affairs, Community Resilience and Public Engagement and Partnership (Victorian Government, 2017).

The overarching aim of the Architecture is to foster a collaborative, unified Public Sector that works in parallel to achieve desired outcomes for the people of Victoria. Thirty-seven organisations in 2018 and 31 organisations in 2019 indicated that the majority of their State Government contracts were held with the Victorian State government. In 2018, a mere 10.8% of these organisations indicated that they were familiar with the Architecture, though in 2019 this more than doubled to 22.6%.

Queensland

The Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors has implemented the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) across its human services delivery agreements, as well those funded and/or delivered under the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. The development of the HSQF is an ongoing iterative process, with the latest version to date released on 1st February 2019. The HSQF is intentionally flexible, and has been adapted by Queensland Health and the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works for relevant services under their respective portfolios.

The HSQF is intended to ensure quality of and confidence in services for service users, clarity and reduced bureaucracy for service providers, and streamlined monitoring and evaluation and improved accountability for government. The HSQF includes a set of quality standards (the Human Services Quality Standards), mechanisms through which to assess the performance of service providers against the Standards, and a continuous improvement framework.

With regard to demonstrating performance against the standards, service providers that are involved with direct service delivery to vulnerable populations are required to be independently certified by a body accredited by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand within 18 months of signing a service agreement with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors or approval as a registered provider under the National Disability Insurance Agency, or other notification. The Department also allows organisations to apply to have their accreditation under different, approved quality assurance standards, and these are evaluated on a case by case basis. Lower intensity or non-direct service providers are able to self-assess against the Standards. The domains and associated aims of the Standards are as follows:

Governance and Management: Sound governance and management systems that maximise outcomes of stakeholders.

Service Access: Sound eligibility, entry and exit processes facilitate access to services on the basis of relative need and available resources.

Responding to Individual Need: The assessed needs of the individual are being appropriately addressed and responded to within resource capacity.

Safety, Wellbeing and Rights: The safety, wellbeing and human and legal rights of people using services are protected and promoted.

Feedback, Complaints and Appeals: Effective feedback, complaints and appeals processes that lead to improvements in service delivery.

Human Resources: Effective human resource management systems, including recruitment, induction and supervisory process, result in quality service provision.

Source: Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (2019)

Of the 22 organisations in 2018 and 29 organisations in 2019 that reported that the majority of their State Government Contracts were held with the Queensland Government were familiar with the HSQF, 68.2% in 2018 and 51.7% in 2019 were familiar with the HSQF, making it the best-known State Government Framework amongst its funding recipients. Unfortunately, however, the low sample size once again renders further analysis infeasible.



South Australia

The South Australian Department of Human Services (formerly the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion) has implemented the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) for community organisations with the objective of facilitating continuous improvement and quality service delivery. Community organisations can undertake external assessments to achieve internationally recognised accreditation under the International Society for Quality in Health and Social Care.

Similar to the Queensland Human Services Quality Framework, the ASES reflect a set of principles for the delivery of services by community organisations. Specifically, the ASES principles are:

Customer focused: The rights of consumers are respected and considered, and their satisfaction with services is measured, and their complaints and concerns are addressed.

Clear direction with accountability: There is strong governance, clear identification of outcomes, and robust outcomes measurement.

Continuous learning and innovation: There are mechanisms for integrating continuous improvement within organisations.

Valuing people and diversity: Staff, customers and partners are supported to learn and translate learning into organisational processes.

Collaborative work practices: Organisations work to strengthen and develop their relationships with staff, customers, partners and other stakeholders.

Evidence based decision making: Strong evaluation practices are implemented, along with effective risk management and clear development of rationale in service planning and delivery.

Social, environmental and ethical responsibility: There is value added to the community, and the community's needs and expectations are addressed.

Source: [South Australian Department for Communities and Social Inclusion \(2011\)](#)

In 2017/18, there were 119 accredited service providers in South Australia, and 104 organisations underwent ASES assessments. Surveys undertaken by the South Australian Department of Human Services indicate that 91% of organisations find ASES to be a valuable tool.

Nineteen organisations in 2018 and 14 in 2019 indicated that the majority of their State Government contracts were held with the South Australian Government. Amongst these, 52.6% in 2018 and 28.6% in 2019 were aware of the Australian Service Excellence Standards.

Western Australia

In 2011, the Western Australian Government implemented the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy (DCSPP). The DCSPP, updated in October 2018, establishes principles and behaviours for collaboration between the public and community sectors with the joint commitment to improve outcomes for Western Australians. While the focus is on processes that build the relationships between the public and community sectors, the core premise of this relationship is for both sectors to ensure an outcomes focus. Accordingly, the first stage of community service procurement, planning, involves identification of the desired community outcome, and stakeholder engagement to conduct needs analysis, research and data collection (Government of Western Australia, 2018).

In updating the DCSPP, the WA State Government proposed three expected amendments: a minimum three month notice period prior to the cessation of service agreements, standard five year funding terms, and streamlined funding extensions through Service Agreement Variations. These amendments have largely been implemented in the DCSPP update, though funding extension processes are a little less formal than the proposition appeared; community service agencies that have Preferred Service Provider status are able to engage on an ongoing basis with their government funder(s) regarding service

delivery and funding levels, and can engage in direct negotiation for further funding.

Of the 36 organisations in 2018 that indicated that the majority of their State Government contracts were held with the Western Australian Government, 52.8% were familiar with the DCSPP, an increase from the results in the 2017 survey (Callis, Flatau and Seiwright, 2017), though the larger sample size in previous, Western Australia-focused reports must be noted. In 2019, 30 organisations indicated that they held most of their State Government contracts with the Western Australian Government, and 56.7% were familiar with the DCSPP.

Parallel with the updated DCSPP, the WA Government has formed the Supporting Communities Outcomes Framework Working Group (OFWG). The OFWG, comprised of representatives from the public and community sectors, as well as universities, is developing a framework that captures the domains of wellbeing that services funded and/or delivered by government aim to improve, and conceptualises the desired improvements. Given that the work of the OFWG is yet to be completed and an Outcomes Framework published we would not expect that awareness would necessarily be particularly high despite engagement work by the Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS). Nevertheless, 36.1% of community sector organisations that held most of their State Government contracts with the Western Australian Government were familiar with the whole-of-government outcomes framework. In 2019, this had increased to 40%.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services has two outcomes-focused initiatives: the Human Services Dashboard and the Joined Up Human Services Project (Joined Up). The Human Services Dashboard visually presents headline statistics about the Human Services system with the objective of increased transparency. The statistics are updated quarterly and include but are not limited to: the number of applications for public housing, the average time to house priority clients, the number of children in out-of-home care, and the number of people waiting for disability supported accommodation (Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services, 2019).

Only 7 organisations in 2018 and 8 organisations in 2019 indicated that the majority of their State Government contracts were held with the Tasmanian State Government. Notably, however, the majority (75%) in 2019 reported contributing data to the Human Services Dashboard (compared with 14.3% in 2018).

Joined Up is a series of pilot projects that aim to coordinate and streamline the delivery of services delivered across government and community organisations. The effectiveness of the pilot projects will be evaluated to determine the viability and sustainability of an integrated human services system, assess whether a joined up system can improve the health and wellbeing of communities, clients, and their families and carers, and derive learnings that can be applied to further rollouts and scaling up of a joined up system. The five pilot projects, aimed at different components of a connected service system are:

A place based initiative: A collaboration of services in the Huon Valley to increase their connections and improve cooperation and communication across services in the area.

A person based initiative: A Lead Support Coordination Service, a streamlined client coordination service whereby a 'lead' agency takes responsibility for coordinating the journeys through the human services system for individuals and families with multiple and complex needs.

A service improvement initiative: The assignment of a client-centred lead coordinator for young people aged 15-17 years who are homeless and at further risk of harm. The aim is to intervene with families earlier to prevent the need for statutory intervention and/or the lifelong impacts of exposure to unsafe living conditions and risky behaviour.

A system based initiative: An initiative to scope and test the security and usefulness of an electronic information sharing system for supporting client coordination. The ability of the system to inform future service planning and meet reporting and evaluation requirements will also be tested.

Privacy and information sharing initiative: A review of information sharing practices, and how barriers to the sharing of important client information between services while protecting the rights and privacy of clients.

Source: [Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services](#)



Joined Up commenced in 2015, with preliminary research, data analysis and community consultation. Phase 2 involved detailed scoping, planning and development of the aforementioned initiatives. The project is currently in Phase 3, an 18-month implementation and evaluation of the initiatives, and Phase 4, the implementation of a new service system informed by the findings from the initiatives, will begin in July 2019. Only a minority of the small number of organisations that held most of their State Government Contracts with the Tasmanian State Government were familiar with the Joined Up Human Services project (14.3% in 2018 and 25.0% in 2019).

Summary

In sum, there have been shifts toward a greater focus on outcomes and outcomes measurement particularly in terms of the establishment of Outcomes Frameworks by most State Governments in Australia in the funding and delivery of services. The nature of these shifts vary; Queensland's Human Services Quality Framework and South Australia's implementation of the Australian Service Excellence Standard provide governance principles for the delivery of community services, while the New South Wales Human Services Outcomes Framework identified domains and desired outcomes for the people of New South Wales, against which the State Budget will be allocated. The Western Australian Government is taking a policy approach with regard to community services procurement, encouraging public and community sector collaboration and end-user engagement in the planning and procurement of community services, as well as developing a whole-of-government outcomes framework in a similar vein to the NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework.

Different still, the Victorian Government Outcomes Architecture outlines the core elements of outcomes measurement, with the intention of providing a foundation upon which the Government's key priorities and strategies can build their respective outcomes frameworks. Finally, the Tasmanian Government is aiming for transparency with its Human Services Dashboard, which presents headline administrative statistics, as well as engaging in an iterative piloting and evaluation process, not dissimilar to the federal Department of Social Services Try, Test and Learn Fund, with the aim of developing and scaling a Joined Up Human Services sector.

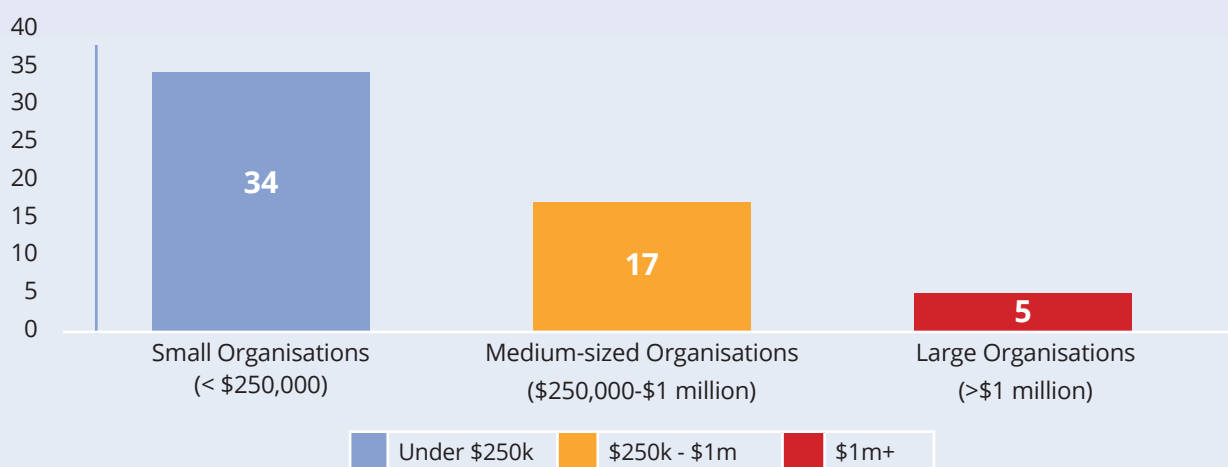
Overall, awareness of these initiatives amongst community sector organisations that hold contracts with each respective State Government is quite low though in the case of Western Australia the process is still to be completed. These initiatives are recent, so it may be that awareness is still spreading – this conjecture is supported by increases between 2018 and 2019 in the proportions of organisations reporting familiarity (with the exceptions of the Queensland HSQF and South Australian ASES). Another potential explanation may be that the initiatives are government-level, that is, though they are intended to apply to all relevant government-funded services, they are implemented at the government-level, thus an organisation may not know that the outcomes reporting requirements stipulated in their funding contracts arise from a particular policy or framework.

Finally, the low sample size (relative to the amount of community sector organisations that each State Government awards contracts to) may also explain the results, meaning that awareness may be higher if all community sector organisations completed the survey. Unfortunately, the low sample sizes restrict the level of interpretation of other questions on State Government policies and frameworks; each respondent with awareness of the respective policy or framework was asked to indicate the degree to which said policy or framework had improved various facets of outcomes measurement practice. Hopefully, future waves of the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* will attract a larger sized sample, and a greater proportion of said sample will be familiar with these State Government initiatives so that further analyses can be presented.

SECTION SEVEN: LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS

This section presents analysis of the matched sample, that is, organisations that completed the Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey in both 2018 and 2019. This enables us to comment on changes over time with regard to understanding of outcomes, measurement of outcomes, the degree of effort invested into outcomes measurement, perceived effectiveness of outcomes measurement, and funding of outcomes measurement. It must be noted that a relatively small number of organisations (58) answered the survey in both years, and results must, therefore, be interpreted with caution such that we cannot make conclusive statements about practice in the sector overall. However, the results do paint an interesting picture of the organisations that chose to respond to the survey in both years.

Figure 11: Number of organisations by level of annual turnover among organisations in the matched 2018-2019 sample



Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 56. Excludes 2 organisations as data pertaining to size was unavailable.

As can be seen in Figure 11, the matched sample captured a good distribution of small, medium-sized and large organisations, based on the ACNC annual turnover categories. The distribution also roughly matches that of the overall samples in that it is skewed towards small organisations, though large organisations are slightly underrepresented. There may be also a tendency for organisations that completed the survey in both years to also be more committed to outcomes measurement.

Understanding of Outcomes

Table 13 compares the degree to which organisations agreed with the statement “Our organisation understands its outcomes well” in 2019 with how they responded in 2018. The proportion of organisations that reported that they agreed with statement that they understood their outcomes well increased from 79.3% in 2018 to 84.5% in 2019. Interestingly, 13.8% of respondents from the matched sample disagreed with the statement in 2018, but none did in 2019. The proportion of organisations that were unsure about their level of understanding of their outcomes increased from 6.9% in 2018 to 15.5% in 2019. Overall, however, those respondents that completed the survey in both years reported high levels of confidence in their organisation’s understanding of its outcomes.

Table 13: Understanding of outcomes, among organisations in the matched 2018-2019 sample, per cent

		2018			Total	
		Our organisation understands its outcomes well				
		Disagree	Unsure	Agree		
2019	Our organisation understands its outcomes well	Disagree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Unsure	6.9	1.7	6.9	15.5
		Agree	6.9	5.2	72.4	84.5
Total			13.8	6.9	79.3	100.0

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Western Australian Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 58.

Outcomes Measurement

Despite the purported confidence in understanding of outcomes, the proportion of the matched sample that measured their outcomes decreased from 75.9% in 2018 to 67.2% in 2019, mirroring the change in the main sample. Table 14 compares the extent to which organisations measured their outcomes in 2019 with the extent of measurement reported in the 2018 survey. The extent of measurement amongst the matched sample has also decreased: 43.1% of the matched sample reported that they measured outcomes for all activities in 2018, decreasing to 27.6% in 2019. In addition to the increase in organisations that did not measure at all, the remainder of the decrease in extent can be observed in the proportion of organisations that measured for about half of their activities, which increased from 1.7% in 2018 to 10.3% in 2019. This may reflect the decrease in resources available for outcomes measurement that was reflected in the results of the main sample.

Table 14: Extent of outcomes measurement among organisations in the matched 2018-2019 sample, per cent

		2018					Total
		We do not measure outcomes	We measure outcomes for a small proportion of our activities	We measure outcomes for about half of our activities	We measure outcomes for most of our activities	We measure outcomes for all of our activities	
2019	We do not measure outcomes	13.8	3.4	0.0	5.2	10.3	32.8
	We measure outcomes for a small proportion of our activities	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.7	0.0	3.4
	We measure outcomes for about half of our activities	0.0	1.7	1.7	3.4	3.4	10.3
	We measure outcomes for most of our activities	6.9	0.0	0.0	10.3	8.6	25.9
	We measure outcomes for all of our activities	3.4	0.0	0.0	3.4	20.7	27.6
Total		24.1	6.9	1.7	24.1	43.1	100.0

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 58.

Despite the decrease in the extent of measurement among the matched sample, the majority (55.2%) of organisations reported that their level of effort towards outcomes measurement had remained the same over the last 12 months, while 39.7% reported an increase in effort for outcomes measurement, and only 5.2% decreased their effort relative to the year prior.

Table 15: Change in effort towards outcomes measurement in the past year among organisations in the matched 2018-2019 sample, per cent

		2018			Total
		Less effort	Same effort	More effort	
2019	Less effort	3.4	1.7	0.0	5.2
	Same effort	6.9	36.2	12.1	55.2
	More effort	0.0	6.9	32.8	39.7
Total		10.3	44.8	44.8	100.0

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 58.

Table 16 combines the results from two questions in the Survey 1) whether organisations measured their outcomes at all and 2) how well organisations believed they measured their outcomes. Findings were compared for the same community sector organisations across the two years of the study. As evident from Table 16, across the two years, the majority of organisations stayed in the same 'cell location' with respect to their perception of the effectiveness of outcomes measurement. For example, 13.8% of the matched sample did not measure outcomes in both years, and 29.3% in both years agreed that they measured their outcomes well. Of those that were unsure in 2018, 6.9% did not measure their outcomes in 2019, 5.2% disagreed that they measured their outcomes well in 2019, and 6.9% agreed that they did measure their outcomes well in 2019. One of the important shifts that did occur between the two years in the matched sample was the higher proportion of organisations in 2019 that did not measure their outcomes (32.8%) as compared with 2018 (24.1%).

Table 16: Quality of measurement, among organisations in the matched 2018-2019 sample, per cent

		2018				Total	
		Did not measure outcomes	Our organisation measures its outcomes well				
			Disagree	Unsure	Agree		
2019	Does not measure outcomes	13.8	6.9	6.9	5.2	32.8	
	Our organisation measures its outcomes well	Disagree	0.0	1.7	5.2	1.7	8.6
		Unsure	6.9	3.4	3.4	3.4	17.2
		Agree	3.4	1.7	6.9	29.3	41.4
Total		24.1	13.8	22.4	39.7	100.0	

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National *Outcomes Measurement in the Western Australian Community Sector Survey*.

Note: N= 58.

Overall, the matched sample reported mixed findings on the quality of their outcomes measurement. The proportion that felt they understood their outcomes well increased, while the level of effort dedicated to outcomes measurement largely remained the same. Similarly, the proportion of organisations that did not measure their outcomes increased, but the proportion that felt they measured well stayed stable, increasing only slightly. This may indicate that practice is still emerging across the sector; understanding is increasing, but extent and quality of measurement varies. This variation may be a function of internal or external resource allocation. We now examine responses on the funding of outcomes measurement amongst the matched sample.

Funding Outcomes Measurement

Table 17, below, identifies sources of funding for outcomes measurement in the matched longitudinal sample. As with the main sample, the majority of the longitudinal sample (53.4%) report that funding for outcomes measurement in 2019 is sourced from general internal funds. This is a decrease from 58.6% in 2018, though that decrease is wholly accounted for by the increase between 2018 and 2019 in those organisations that do not measure outcomes at all. Overall, as with the main sample, there is a need for purpose-specific funding of outcomes measurement to ensure consistent and comprehensive practice.

Table 17: Funding of outcomes measurement, among organisations in the matched 2018-2019 sample, per cent

		2018					Total	
		Did not measure outcomes	In general, how do you usually fund or resource your outcomes measurement?					
			Externally - We apply for specific-purpose grants for outcomes measurement	Externally - As a separate line item in our funding contract/s	Internally - From general internal funds	Internally - From a special evaluation/ measurement fund		
2019	Did not measure outcomes	13.8	1.7	0.0	17.2	0.0	32.8	
	In general, how do you usually fund or resource your outcomes measurement?	Externally - We apply for specific-purpose grants for outcomes measurement	3.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2
		Externally - As a separate line item in our funding contract/s	0.0	1.7	1.7	3.4	0.0	6.9
		Internally - From general internal funds	6.9	5.2	3.4	36.2	1.7	53.4
		Internally - From a special evaluation/ measurement fund	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.7
	Total	24.1	10.3	5.2	58.6	1.7	100.0	

Source: Centre for Social Impact, UWA National Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey.

Note: N= 58.

NEXT STEPS

This study sheds light on outcomes measurement practice across the Australian community sector, presenting findings from two iterations of the national *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey*. We find that prevalence of outcomes measurement is actually lower in the 2019 sample than the 2018 sample. We observed a similar decrease between results of the 2016 and 2017 surveys, which were conducted in the Western Australian context. This may be explained by 'new' respondents to the survey (those that only completed it in 2019) completing the survey due to a relatively new interest in outcomes measurement, thus their practice is still developing.

Despite the overall decrease in the prevalence of outcomes measurement, the majority of medium-sized and large organisations report greater effort being put towards outcomes measurement in the past year, and the majority of small organisations reported dedicating the same level of effort to outcomes measurement between 2018 and 2019. The use of a variety of data collection methods remained quite stable, albeit low: there were no methods that the majority of organisations used more than once per year, though the majority reported never using several methods, namely, longitudinal questionnaires, standardised sector tools, valuation data, administrative data, standardised questionnaires, standardised government tools, and standardised funder tools. This indicates significant room for learning and development with regard to outcomes measurement in the Australian community sector.

Previous reports put forward 10 recommendations for improving outcomes measurement practice in Western Australia:

1. Full funding for outcomes measurement in contracts
2. Capacity and infrastructure for data collection and reporting
3. Sharing best practice
4. Guidance on using tools and methods
5. Greater recognition of client/consumer outcomes in funding contracts
6. Standard language and concepts
7. Eliminating differences in reporting between funders
8. Collaborative projects with shared outcomes
9. Open data from government
10. Increased external reporting requirements of outcomes

The results of the first two national *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Survey* indicate that, in the main, these recommendations apply to the national landscape. The overwhelming proportion of organisations that measure their outcomes that fund outcomes measurement from general internal funds in both years, paired with the disparity between the frequency with which funders expect outcomes to be reported and the frequency with which they fund them, indicates that full funding for outcomes measurement in contracts would be a welcome policy change among community organisations nationally. Further, the increased extent of activities for which outcomes are measured when outcomes measurement is funded from purpose-specific sources (internal or external), indicates that adoption of this recommendation would increase the extent and quality of practice.

The divide between the (high) proportion of respondents that agree that their organisation understands and measures its outcomes well, relative to the (low) proportion that agree that the sector understands and measures its outcomes well suggests that the sharing of best practice is lacking and there is an overall lack of coordination in the community sector and on the part of government on the achievement at the population level of outcomes. The increased emphasis on co-design processes and joint community sector and government engagement around the development and implementation of outcomes measurement frameworks is likely to have an impact on the existing state of affairs.

In light of the small minority of organisations in both years that report access to common resources for outcomes measurement, such as a research and evaluation unit, training for staff in data collection, analysis or evaluation, specialised data collection staff, and external measurement consultants, it appears that community organisations in Australia would benefit greatly from pooling their scarce resources and sharing best practice with regard to outcomes measurement.

We observed a deal variation amongst respondents to the *Outcomes Measurement in the Community Sector Surveys*. This variation is perhaps most clearly evident with regard to organisations encountering common barriers to outcomes measurement.



While a lack of funding was reported by the majority of responding organisations as a major barrier, involving staff, the Board and clients in outcomes measurement did not present barriers to the majority of respondents in either year. Further, roughly even proportions of organisations fell into each category – ‘not a barrier’, a ‘small barrier’, and a ‘big barrier’ – for the majority of barriers, for example attribution, lack of staff skills, and measuring outcomes across different services. This indicates varying types and levels of practice, suggesting that any efforts to build capacity in the sector through learning and organisational development will need to adapt to different levels of outcomes measurement practice.

In addition, in terms of the outcomes measurement methodologies utilised by responding organisations, use of publicly available data and standardised government tools increased between 2018 and 2019, though it must be noted that it was still a small minority of respondents using these methods.

Therefore, in sum, while the results indicate that the Australian community sector would benefit from the implementation of the recommendations we put forward for Western Australia, there is greater variation in practice amongst community sector organisations nationally relative to those in Western Australia. This is to be expected, as increasing the geographic scope to the national level increases the variety of funders and, in the case of government funders, the applicable policies and procedures, and it also introduces subtle cultural and contextual variables that affect service delivery and, consequently, outcomes measurement practice. There is also the matter of sheer scale: the larger the sample frame, the more variety in the types of organisations and their respective outcomes measurement practice. Consequently, capacity building needs to be targeted at these different levels of maturity with regards to outcomes measurement practice, so that each organisation has the opportunity to increase their capacity without reinventing the wheel or spending their scarce time and money on learning what they already know.

We also conducted analyses matching respondent answers in the 2019 survey with their answers to the 2018 survey in order to track progress on outcomes measurement over time. We find that, despite the sample generally reporting the same level or greater effort towards outcomes, one third of our matched longitudinal sample did not measure outcomes in 2019, an increase from one quarter in 2018. As with the overall sample, we find that the majority of the longitudinal sample fund outcomes from general internal funds.

Robust and rigorous outcomes measurement is essential to the community sector demonstrating its value to funders, clients, and members of society that are not directly affected by their services. Arguably more importantly, however, is the importance of outcomes measurement to designing and implementing programs that deliver positive outcomes for people in need and society generally. If we do not measure the difference we are making, we are missing opportunities to enhance that difference, such as through better program design or convincing funders to continue funding a program or service. We also miss opportunities to understand the how and why of positive outcomes: why was this initiative successful, and how can these key success factors be applied to different initiatives? It is also important to note that, regardless of how well intentioned, an initiative could have inadvertent negative effects. If outcomes are not measured, an initiative that has a net negative impact may continue and, conversely, a positive initiative may cease because its positive impact is not demonstrated.

Though we acknowledge that several factors need to be considered in order for outcomes measurement practice to grow and develop, we believe that understanding and accepting fundamental importance of outcomes measurement to the overall goal and ethos of the community sector is the first step. This understanding must be on the part of both organisations and funders, to pave the way for adequate resources to be allocated to outcomes measurement practice. Investment, both financial and non-financial (people, time), from funders and organisations is required in order to develop practice. As outlined in this report, there are several areas in which there are clear gaps in practice that learning and organisational development can begin to fill.

The Centre for Social Impact at The University of Western Australia (CSI UWA) seeks to contribute to outcomes measurement in the community sector not only through research but in translating this research into practice and working directly to increase the capacity of the sector to measure outcomes. In this vein, we have developed an Outcomes Measurement Course, a two-day course that outlines the fundamentals of outcomes measurement. With the support of Bankwest Foundation scholarships administered through the Australian Scholarships Foundation to attendees, three Outcomes Measurement Courses ran over 2018 in Perth, with 75 attendees from the not-for-profit, government, and corporate sectors. The Outcomes Measurement Course will continue in 2019, with optional additional modules on Outcomes Frameworks and Evaluation. We also hope to develop and host online tools for outcomes measurement that will be accessible beyond Western Australia, as well as develop an online version of the Outcomes Measurement Course targeted at regional and rural-based organisations and tackling the urban versus regional divide in terms of the resources available and approach required for outcomes measurement.

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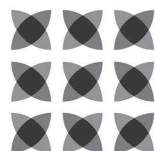
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