

# Problem definition guide

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How to identify and articulate the issue  
the taskforce is trying to solve

Many taskforces are established to resolve a problem

An overarching question is a useful way of defining the problem, but we often start with vague questions



A vague question has poorly defined terms and lacks clear boundaries

Who is 'we'?  
Who is the solution for?

What does 'fight' mean?  
Reduce? Eradicate? Prevent?

How can we fight obesity in Australia?

What types of obesity?  
All or just some?

Which areas of Australia?  
Which groups of people?

**Clarity and boundaries**

**Terms aren't clearly defined**

- ✘ Who is addressing the problem?
- ✘ What is 'obese'?
- ✘ What issue or factor of 'obesity'?
- ✘ What do we mean by 'fight'?
- ✘ Who are the solutions for?

**No boundaries for the question**

- ✘ What level of obesity?
- ✘ Where in Australia?
- ✘ Which group/s of people?
- ✘ What time period?

**Goal and purpose**

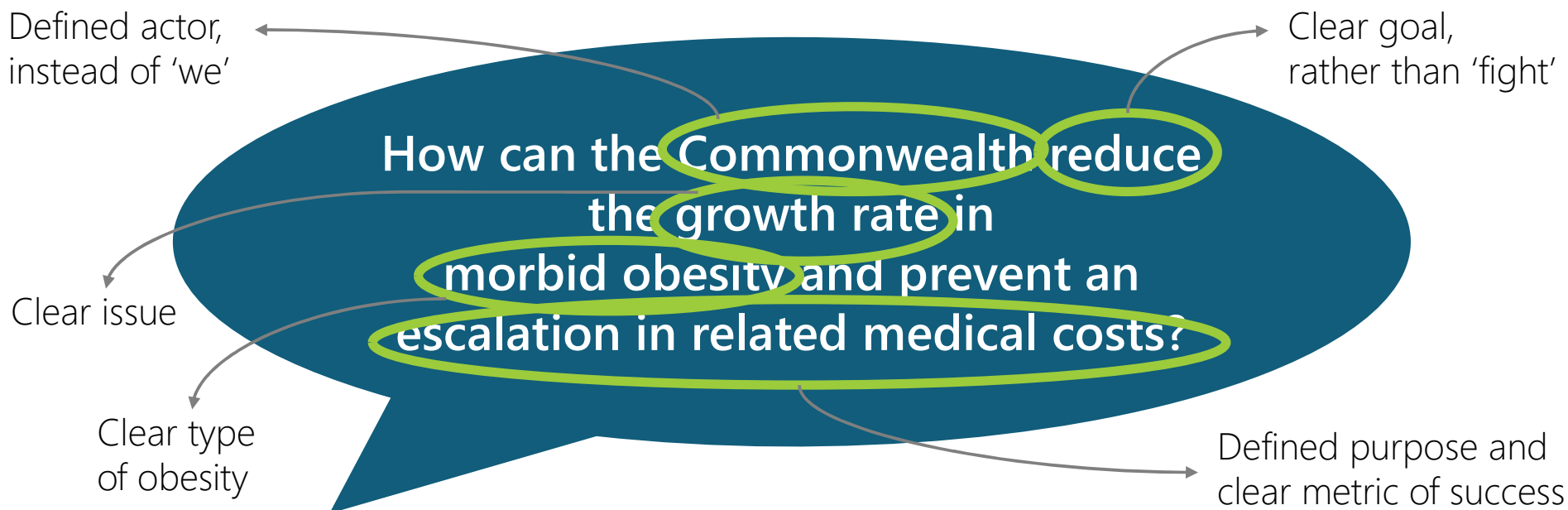
**No clear goal**

- ✘ What should a solution achieve?

**No clear purpose**

- ✘ What does it matter?
- ✘ Why do we care about reaching our goal?
- ✘ Inability to measure results (i.e. growth rate of morbid obesity and consequential medical costs)

Defining the question helps to clarify the intent of your taskforce



Clarity and boundaries	
<p><b>Clarified key terms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ the actor: the Commonwealth</li> <li>✓ the 'issue': the growth rate in morbid obesity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Boundaries for the question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ morbid obesity</li> <li>✓ outcome focused on medical cost dimension only</li> </ul>

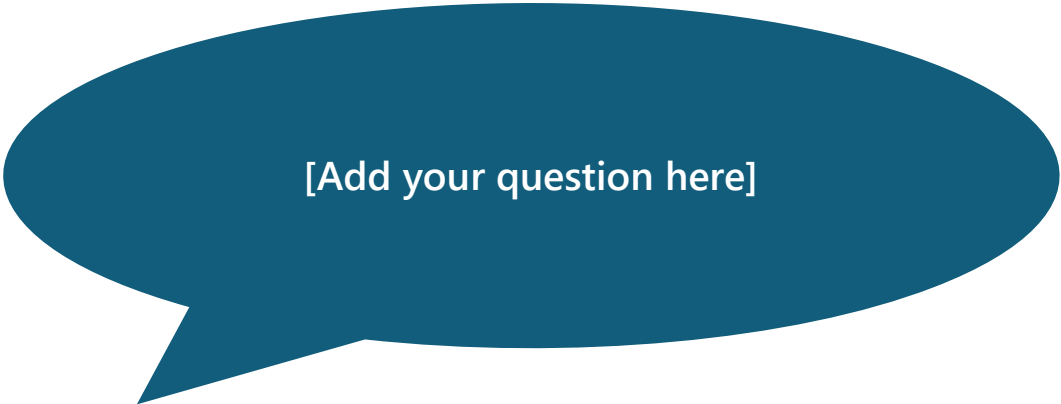
Goal and purpose
<p><b>Clear goal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ reduction in growth rate of morbid obesity</li> </ul> <p><b>Clear purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ to mitigate increasing costs of providing medical services which are linked to morbid obesity</li> <li>✓ ability to measure results (i.e. growth rate of morbid obesity &amp; consequential medical costs)</li> </ul>

TEMPLATE

# Develop a clear question to define your problem

Working out exactly what the problem is that's being addressed helps to identify the end goals of the taskforce.

An overarching question is an effective way of defining the problem as it helps to establish boundaries and narrow the focus of the taskforce. It should be realistic and have a clear goal or purpose, and a metric of success.



Clarity and boundaries	
<b>Clarify key terms</b>	
The actor	[add text here]
The issue	[add text here]
<b>Boundaries for the question</b>	
Specific focus	[add text here]
Time period	[add text here]
Location	[add text here]
Cohorts/groups	[add text here]

Goal and purpose	
<b>Set a clear goal</b>	
What will a solution achieve?	[add text here]
<b>Articulate a clear purpose</b>	
Why does it matter?	[add text here]
Why do we care about reaching the goal?	[add text here]
How will we measure success?	[add text here]