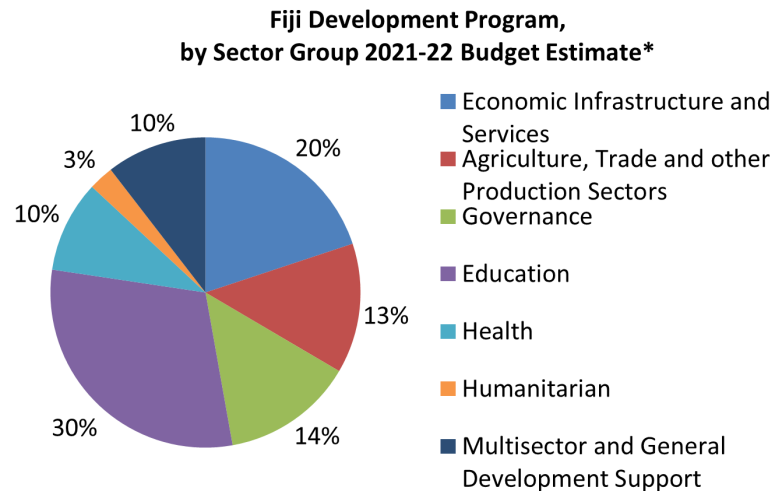


2021-22 FIJI DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

The COVID-19 Development Response Plan for Fiji has been extended through 2022-23. In 2022-23, the Fiji program will focus on Fiji's ongoing economic recovery from COVID-19 and our partnerships in the health, education, skills, infrastructure, security and justice sectors, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable people including women, girls and people with disability.

Program Budget	2021-22 Budget Estimate \$m*
Bilateral	40.0
Regional	31.3
Global	4.7
Other Govt. Departments	5.3
Total ODA	81.2



*Actual expenditure is expected to be available in early 2023. Due to rounding, totals may not match the sum of components.

Our development program to Fiji contributes towards achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals:




The 2021-22 Fiji Development Program Progress Report summarises implementation progress of the Australia – Fiji COVID-19 Development Response Plan and highlights program results.

CONTEXT

Australia and Fiji share a strong and enduring bilateral relationship underpinned by the *Fiji-Australia Vuvale Partnership*. Australia is Fiji's largest bilateral development assistance donor. Australian base Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations to Fiji have remained stable over the past two years, with supplementary ODA provided for COVID-19 fiscal support and cyclone response. Australia's development program supports our shared ambition to build a Pacific region that is strategically secure, socially and economically stable, and politically sovereign.

Fiji continues to battle waves of COVID-19 infections, without the severity of the April-August 2021 Delta outbreak. At the end of the reporting period, Fiji had recorded a cumulative total of 65,713 COVID-19 cases and 878 deaths since the first case in March 2020 (Hopkins/OWID data). Rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine has been a Government of Fiji (GoF) priority. Fiji's national vaccination program commenced on 10 March 2021 and has been enabled in large part by Australia's ongoing delivery of vaccines. **As of 1 September 2022, GoF reported that 100 per cent of Fiji's eligible adult population had been vaccinated with one dose and 95.2 per cent had received two doses.** As of 1 September, GoF reported that 48,842 children aged 12-17 years had received two doses.

Fiji's economy was severely impacted by COVID-19. With its reliance on tourism (an estimated 40 per cent of GDP), Fiji's real GDP contracted by around 21.3 per cent between 2019 and 2021. Fiji's net budget deficit grew to 11.1 per cent of GDP in 2020-21 and is projected to be 13.8 per cent in 2021-22. Fiji's debt increased from 38 per cent of GDP pre-pandemic to an estimated 89.4 per cent of GDP at the end of July 2022.



In October 2022, the Reserve Bank of Fiji forecast economic growth of 15.6 per cent in 2022. Since borders reopened in December 2021, Australians have made up over 60 per cent of Fiji's total visitor arrivals. **Fiji is aiming for 85 per cent of pre-pandemic visitor arrivals by 2023.**

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Health Security

Australia is Fiji's largest public health partner and responded to Fiji's most acute health priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic through substantial health support, including **over 1.5 million vaccine doses, as well as medical equipment, consumables and technical assistance.** Australia has committed \$16.9 million (2020-23) for COVID-19 vaccine access in Fiji, including delivery support and vaccine procurement, drawing on Australia's Regional COVID-19 Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative (VAHSI).


In addition to deploying an Australian Medical Assistance Team (AusMAT) in June 2021, Australia deployed two further AusMAT teams with embedded New Zealand health specialists between July and September 2021. A four-person deployment by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and a two-nurse National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) team built on the work of the AusMAT deployments and worked alongside Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services staff and frontline health workers, with a **focus on infection prevention and control, training and public health support.** The NCCTRC also provided **epidemiological support through remote technical assistance to inform GoF planning and its approach to outbreak response.** Australia supported Fiji's Centre for Disease Control to enhance and strengthen testing and tracing capabilities, including through the recruitment of laboratory staff, and procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), testing and medical supplies. During the reporting period, Australia provided **more than 69,000 pieces of equipment, medical supplies and PPE to support Fiji's COVID-19 response, and respond to the leptospirosis, typhoid, dengue and diarrhoea outbreak following category one Tropical Cyclone Cody** (January 2022).

Stability

Guided by GoF's long-term reform and COVID-19 response priorities, Australia provided support to strengthen national policies and institutions, including the national social protection system, gender equality and education.

Following the adoption of Fiji's Financial Management Amendment Act in July 2021, which introduced key reforms, through a partnership with the Asian Development Bank, Australia funded **technical advisers to work with the Ministry of Economy on implementation of Fiji's public financial management reforms,** including on project appraisal, procurement, fiscal transparency, financial instructions and gender responsive budgeting.

In the reporting period, Australia's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program supported the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (\$1.5 million) to **boost counselling services available to women facing domestic violence.** The Centre saw both an increase in new clients and those seeking repeat counselling sessions. Additionally, Australia supported the Women's Fund Fiji (WFF) (formerly Fiji Women's Fund) (\$1.68 million) to fund **women's groups, gender non-conforming communities, including those with disabilities, networks and organisations** in Fiji to respond to the 2021 second wave of COVID-19, which devastated many Fijian lives. The COVID-19 surge resulted in reduced services for women, girls and gender nonconforming communities as well as increased risks of domestic violence. Sexual reproductive health and rights providers had limited access to communities in the Northern Division, for example, due to community-imposed lockdowns. Partners working in peacebuilding reported increased economic, social and political uncertainty driven by mass unemployment. Men, women and children in overcrowded households suffered significant food shortages and insecurity. With support from WFF, grantee partners adapted, repositioned and continued to support their communities, and the Fund continues to learn and adapt.



Through Australia's \$35.8 million Fiji Education Program (2017-24), Australia is supporting Fiji's Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts' strategic priorities including **revision and rollout of literacy and numeracy curricula for both primary and secondary schools; inclusive education** including review of Fiji's Special and Inclusive Education Policy; teacher training and civil service and systems reforms in the education sector. In the reporting period, the Fiji Education Management Information System continued to be an effective and efficient tool, including for managing Fiji's system of school grants, attendance, and reporting on gender and social inclusion. It reported a **230 per cent increase in the number of verified students with disabilities attending school during the period**. Following interruptions to face-to-face learning due to the pandemic, students were supported on their return to school with the provision of school lunches.

Under the bilateral health program, Australia funded the **recruitment of 20 health inspectors at the Nadi International Airport Border Health Unit**, assisting Fiji's focus on reopening borders safely and boosting biosecurity measures. The 2021-22 high risk weather season did not see major cyclones in Fiji. Australia supported Fiji (\$176,000) to send humanitarian supplies and officials to carry out air and water quality assessments in Eastern Division after the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai underwater volcano eruption impacted islands in Fiji's Lau group. Australia's assistance was commensurate with the scale of impacts and targeted to local needs based on consultation with GoF.

Economic recovery

Australia continued to support Fiji through the economic challenges caused by COVID-19, addressing fiscal needs and promoting private sector recovery.

Under the regional Pacific COVID-19 Response Package, Australia provided **\$85 million in budget support for economic, social and climate resilience reforms** in 2021-22. This enabled Fiji to maintain expenditure in critical sectors, strengthened Fiji's fiscal position and debt profile and better positioned Fiji's economy for recovery. Australia's budget support **incentivised the implementation of agreed reforms and underpinned policy dialogue between Australia and Fiji on areas including public financial management; inclusive fiscal and social policies for community resilience; and strengthening the enabling environment for private sector recovery**. Fiji has consistently met our budget support reform indicators, reflecting a strong political commitment to the reform agenda. Australia's assistance was aligned with the ADB (USD150 million), Japanese International Cooperation Agency (10 billion Yen) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's (USD50 million) lending operations.

Australia's partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) worked with GoF to support its economic development priorities of **improving small-medium enterprise performance, building Fiji's international trade competitiveness, and stimulating inclusive private sector-led growth**. The partnership focuses on creating concrete opportunities for inclusive, sustainable private investment in support of medium-term economic growth through targeted advisory interventions. Key deliverables in the reporting period included **public-private partnerships in the health and housing sectors**. The partnership also assisted GoF to adopt a new Investment Law by supporting the **drafting of a new Investment Policy Statement and the final legislation, which was adopted by the Fiji Parliament in April 2022**. The new law is intended to reduce direct compliance costs by simplifying foreign investment regulations. The Australian-funded Market Development Facility supported the **maintenance of supply chains by partnering with seven private sector companies** on projects ranging from strengthening agricultural logistics systems and connecting more effectively with export markets, enabling innovative approaches to food security through seed production and supply, and commissioning research to help build success in Australia's Kava Pilot.

ANNEX 1: PROGRESS AGAINST COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE PLAN RESULTS INDICATORS

Health Security

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
New or improved therapeutics, diagnostics, vaccines or additional equipment, to which Australia has contributed, are accessible in Fiji	More than 1.4 million COVID-19 vaccine doses delivered (as at September 2021). COVID-19 testing equipment, hospital and medical supplies, therapeutics and PPE valued at over \$4.5 million.
Strengthened Fijian health system including preparedness for health emergencies at Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWM)	AusMAT assisted 16 hospitals and clinics to improve Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) practices, trained 830 health care workers, conducted 116 IPC education sessions and 75 clinical education sessions over July-September 2021. A deployment by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and two National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre nurses built on the AusMAT work and provided epidemiological analysis to GoF.
Increased efficiency of procurement processes to ensure consistent supply of medicines and other health commodities	Supported the procurement of medical supplies and lab consumables for Fiji's Centre for Disease Control. Implementation of the mSupply pharmacy logistics management platform and Tupaia for supply chain strengthening through Beyond Essential Systems has enabled CWM and other health facilities to coordinate PPE stocks and delivery.
Women and men, girls and boys are provided with emergency assistance in conflict and crisis situations, such as major cyclones	The Fiji COVID-19 Humanitarian Response and Post Humanitarian Fund supported 4,772 households (2,692 – 57%) in Western Division with emergency food rations during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak in 2021. 4,590 beneficiaries (no gender disaggregated data available) were provided with support in emergency shelters following Tropical Cyclone Cody in January 2022.

Stability

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Numbers reached with new or improved social protection programs, including remote communities	Developing and planning reform work to improve Fiji's social assistance system to support the most vulnerable populations.
More women and girl survivors of violence in Fiji receive services such as counselling	7238 women and girls received counselling assistance from Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. 781 women and girls received counselling services (child counselling and GBV counselling) from Medical Services Pacific.
Number of additional girls and boys enrolled in school	In 2021-22 the Fiji Education Program focused on education quality (particularly literacy and numeracy curriculum development).



Number of verified students with disabilities in FEMIS – Fiji Education Management Information System	715 (previous period 215).
Evidence Australian support has improved border control measures	20 health inspectors recruited for the Nadi International Airport Border Health Unit.
Evidence of strengthened and effective coordination during disaster responses (including across CSOs and Government)	In response to TC Cody (January 2022): Supported Fiji’s National Disaster Management Office deliver food rations to 10,120 people (5,019 women). Supplied rainwater harvesting systems for 18 health centres to prevent the spread of leptospirosis, typhoid, dengue and diarrhoea.

Economic Recovery

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Examples of Australian-funded technical advice in stimulus measures and longer-term economic recovery policy and planning, including for infrastructure	Partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) supported Fiji to improve small-medium enterprise performance, building Fiji's international trade competitiveness, and stimulating inclusive private sector-led growth. IFC supported GoF to draft a new Investment Policy Statement and finalise legislation, adopted in April 2022. The new law will reduce direct compliance costs by simplifying foreign investment regulations.
Australian budget support, aligned with other development finance, supports the Government of Fiji to maintain macroeconomic stability and achieve PFM milestones	\$85 million budget support (almost 7 per cent of total domestic revenue) in 2021-22 incentivised the implementation of agreed reforms, as set out in the Fiji Budget Support Program reform matrix agreed in November 2021: (i) improving public financial management for fiscal resilience; (ii) implementing inclusive fiscal and social policies for community resilience and (iii) strengthening the enabling environment for resilient private sector recovery.
Number of women entrepreneurs provided with financial and/or business development services	319 women accessed financial/business development services. Including: financial and business development advice to 227 women entrepreneurs; social media promotion for 35 women-run Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); and support for access to new sales channels for 17 women-led MSMEs. 594 women entrepreneurs supported with financial and/or business development services through the bilateral gender programs, and Women’s Fund Fiji-supported Rise Beyond the Reef and Women Entrepreneurs Business Council.
Examples of partnering, with private sector and others, to ensure supply lines are open	Connected kava exporters with export market opportunities through the development of an agriculture logistics system with Courier Documents Parcels Services. Assessments confirmed the service has helped reduce the processors’ procurement lead time from up to three days, to as little as one day or less.



Number of Awards in each intake focused on skills supporting health systems and services, economic management and public sector reform	Twenty-three Australia Awards (14 women) offered for Intake 2022 in the priority areas of: health systems and services (19), economic management (1) and public sector reform (3).
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ANNEX 2: INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
Fiji Program Support Facility Investment duration: 2016-25; Budget: \$154.4m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	4	4	3
Fiji Program Support Facility: Fiji Health Program Investment duration: 2017-24; Budget: \$35.0m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	4	4	3
Fiji Program Support Facility: Fiji Education Program Investment duration: 2017-24; Budget: \$40.0m	2022	4	3	3
	2021	4	4	3
Pacific Women Fiji Country Plan Investment duration: 2014-25; Budget: \$33.1m	2022	5	4	4
	2021	5	4	5
Inclusive Economic Growth (Market Development Facility) Investment duration: 2017-27; Budget: \$27.7m	2022	4	5	4
	2021	4	5	5
Fiji-Australia Institutional Partnerships Program Investment duration: 2019-25; Budget: \$14.5m	2022	5	5	4
	2021	n/a	n/a	n/a

FINAL INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
Supporting Private Sector Development in Fiji Investment duration: 2016-21; Budget: \$15.1m	2022 FIMR	3	3	3
	2021 IMR	4	4	4

HUMANITARIAN INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
Fiji COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Investment duration: 2021-22; Budget: \$5.2m	2022 HIMR	5	5	4
	2021	n/a	n/a	n/a

Definitions of rating scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)

6 = Very good; satisfies criteria in all areas.

5 = Good; satisfies criteria in almost all areas.

4 = Adequate; on balance, satisfies criteria; does not fail in any major area.

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)

3 = Less than adequate; on balance does not satisfy criteria and/or fails in at least one major area.

2 = Poor; does not satisfy criteria in major areas.

1 = Very poor; does not satisfy criteria in many major area.