

## 2025 Australia Awards in Indonesia (AAI) Program Mid-Term Review

### Management Response

#### Summary of Management Response

- a. **General:** DFAT welcomes the comprehensive Australia Awards in Indonesia (AAI) Mid-Term Review, which provides valuable insights and recommendations. These findings will inform and guide DFAT's future scholarship program.

We are pleased with the report's positive assessment, notably that *'Overall, AAI is a well-established and highly regarded program that is performing well'*.

DFAT's response to the high-priority recommendations includes the following:

- b. **Relevance:** DFAT acknowledges the finding that AAI is highly relevant to the needs and priorities of both governments. We agree to continue to enhance the program's relevance through close cooperation and coordination across DFAT teams, ensuring strong alignment with both the Australian and Indonesian Government's priorities outlined in the Plan of Action for the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2025-2029).
- c. **Effectiveness:** DFAT agrees with the finding that AAI is effective in delivering activities across the awards cycle and achieving program outcomes. We appreciate the high levels of satisfaction reported by awardees and alumni. To build on this success and address areas for improvement, DFAT will:
- refine the Split-Site Masters Program (SSMP) to enhance its outcomes
  - explore opportunities to broaden collaboration with the Indonesian Government to expand program offerings
  - enhance Pre-Departure Training (PDT) to better prepare awardees
  - strengthen on-award enrichment and linkages activities to maximise program impact
  - review and adjust the Contribution to Living Expenses (CLE) to ensure it adequately supports awardees' needs.
- d. **GEDSI and Climate Change:** DFAT acknowledges AAI's strong performance in advancing inclusive development, particularly through the effective integration of GEDSI. With more developed guidance on cross-cutting priorities of GEDSI and climate change, AAI will further enhance its approach. In addition, DFAT will:
- conduct detailed analysis to mainstream climate change into the program
  - conduct detailed analysis on GEDSI requirements to inform support for Equity Target Groups (ETGs)
  - strengthen awardee support through a comprehensive strategy for managing psychosocial and mental health, in conjunction with the Australia Awards Global Program.

**CRITERIA: RELEVANCE**

No.	Focus - Priority	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Timeframe
1	Strategic – Medium	Continue and strengthen coordination and consultation with Consulates General and DFAT Canberra Indonesia Branch to ensure strong program alignment with Government of Australia strategic policies.	Agree. DFAT will enhance coordination through internal coordination measures between the Australian Embassy Jakarta, Australian Consulates General Bali, Makassar and Surabaya and DFAT Indonesia Branch.	Ongoing
2	Strategic – Medium	Review and assess the current thematic spread of awardees and their fields of study to develop a more focused and targeted selection in line with the Australia-Indonesia Development Partnership Plan 2024–2028 and in consultation with relevant branches in the Embassy, Consulates General and DFAT Canberra.	Agree. The program has a range of modalities that offer a broad range of fields of study which align with the priorities of both the Government of Australia (GoA) and the Government of Indonesia (GoI), outlined in the Plan of Action for the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2025-2029), as well as the Australia-Indonesia Development Partnership Plan (2024-2028). The original Investment Design specified that the program should target a diverse range of scholars representing a broad range of socio-economic and thematic backgrounds. Additionally, specific scholarship programs, such as the G20, LPDP-Australia Awards Scholarship (AAS), Nusantara Scholarships and the forthcoming Garuda Scholarships, enable more targeted support and focused options. Future ad-hoc scholarships should be carefully designed to ensure alignment with program priorities and effectiveness, building on lessons learned from existing initiatives. Congruent with recommendation 3, AAI will develop a framework for supporting a thematic spread and seek Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) input into updates to this framework to ensure it remains relevant. Post will consult with relevant DFAT teams to review and optimise the thematic distribution of scholarships for better alignment and impact.	Ongoing

No.	Focus - Priority	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Timeframe
3	Strategic – High	Ensure that new Government of Australia policies, strategies, and requirements on overseas development assistance are integrated in the next phase of AAI (2026–2030), particularly indicators on climate change in line with new DFAT requirements.	<p>Agree.</p> <p>AAI will undertake a strategic and operational refinement to ensure alignment with the updated Government of Australia (GoA) policies, strategies and requirements. Alignment with Government of Indonesia (GoI) strategic policies will also be strengthened, ensuring strong alignment with both Governments' priorities outlined in the Plan of Action for the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2025-2029).</p> <p>Linked to recommendation 18, this will include undertaking an analysis to mainstream climate change into the program and refining GEDSI objectives, including indicators, programming and reporting, across all AAI program modalities.</p>	July-Dec 2025

## CRITERIA: EFFECTIVENESS

No.	Focus – Priority	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Timeframe
4	Operational – Medium	Maintain the Joint Selection Team (JST) but provide additional guidance to Team members on how to apply an intersectional approach when considering candidates from Equity Target Groups and Equity Target Provinces	Agree. Enhancing the JST's intersectional approach will be part of a comprehensive refinement of GEDSI approach and effective targeting of Equity Target Groups (ETGs). This is to ensure fairness and inclusivity of the selection process enabling equal opportunities for ETGs to participate and succeed.	To be applied immediately for the upcoming JST in July 2025 for the Masters and PhD 2026 Intake. To be continuously refined and improved for each subsequent JST panel.
5	Strategic – Medium	Undertake a comprehensive review of the current Split Site Masters Program approach and explore alternative or additional approaches.	Partially Agree. A comprehensive review is not considered necessary at this stage, as significant work has already gone into reviewing the program. AAI will conduct additional studies/ reviews to supplement existing data to support refinement of the SSMP. DFAT will work with the Indonesian Ministry of State (SetNeg), which leads the coordination of SSMP with Indonesian government organizations, to enhance effectiveness/overall impact and relevance of the SSMP.	AAI will develop refinements to the SSMP model concurrently with the rollout of SSMP cohort 10 from July 2025. Refinements will be in place and ready to be applied for the rollout of SSMP cohort 11 in mid-2026.
6	Strategic – Medium	Explore further co-funding opportunities with the Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) and new opportunities with state-owned enterprises to close emerging funding gaps from Government of Indonesia agencies.	Agree. DFAT will explore further opportunities to broaden partnerships with LPDP.	Dialogue will commence with LPDP immediately as per recommendation 5 above.
7	Strategic – Medium	Document learnings from the Nusantara pilot and consider similar approaches as potential new AAI modalities in line with specific Government of Australia and Government of Indonesia priority areas such as climate change.	Agree and completed. The learnings from Nusantara pilot have been documented and will inform the design and implementation of future pilot scholarship initiatives. (also addressed in recommendation 2)	NA
8	Strategic – Low	Advocate for annual indexation of Contribution to Living Expenses for all Australia Awards awardees globally.	Agree. This recommendation has been provided to the Australia Awards Global program for consideration.	Ongoing

No.	Focus – Priority	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Timeframe
9	Operational – High	Explore opportunities to increase the on-award enrichment and linkages activities, with a focus on internships, work placements and exposure to Australian work environments, and expanding the ILLA program, with a focus on schools rather than universities.	<p>Agree.</p> <p>AAI has a rolling annual Enrichment and Linkages Plan built into the program Annual Plan. AAI will incorporate the MTR findings and this recommendation into the next iteration of the Enrichment and Linkages Plan to enhance the experience of Indonesian scholars in Australia. The Plan will provide range of strategic options for on-award activities for scholars under different modalities.</p>	<p>Design and planning work to be conducted in preparation of the AAI Annual Plan 2025-26.</p> <p>Delivery of these activities will be from Nov 2025 onwards and ongoing through the next phase.</p>
10	Operational – Medium	Review and revise the content and duration of pre-departure training (PDT) with the objective of improving effectiveness for awardees	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The program will explore refining the PDT program ensuring optimal support and preparation for scholars before their departure. The program will refine the PDT program by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating the effectiveness of 2025 short-PDT pilot cohort, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, including strengthening GEDSI and PSEAH components.</li> <li>Exploring flexible PDT options including options for duration that cater to the diverse needs of scholars, potentially including customised or modular training approaches including hybrid mechanisms.</li> </ul>	<p>July-Sept 2025, in preparation for the PDT season for the cohort of scholars to be selected under the Masters and PhD 2026 Intake.</p>

## CRITERIA: EFFICIENCY

No	Focus - Priority	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Timeframe
11	Operational – Medium	Ensure that communication products such as the annual calendar of short courses and social media content is disseminated to stakeholders across DFAT with as much notice as possible.	Agree. The program will continue ongoing efforts to ensure appropriate lead-time for DFAT stakeholders to action.	Done, with ongoing refinements and adjustments.
12	Operational – High	Continue to develop and strengthen the AAI MEL system to improve alignment and integration with DFAT MEL frameworks and systems, sharpen and standardise cross-cutting indicators and strengthen narrative analysis of outcomes.	Agree.	Ongoing including through an updated MEL plan to be delivered by May 2026.
13	Operational – Low	Leverage alumni expertise in AAI MEL activities.	Agree.	Ongoing

## CRITERIA: GEDSI/ CLIMATE CHANGE

No.	Focus – Priority	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Timeframe
14	Strategic – Medium	Undertake a cross-cutting GEDSI analysis to guide measurement, programming and reporting.	Agree. AAI will further enhance its approach to GEDSI ensuring alignment with the DFAT's Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy and Indonesia's policy landscape. This will involve a detailed GEDSI analysis to map the barriers faced by ETGs, establish precise criteria and improve mechanisms for proactive support, targeting, selection and feedback. This analysis will be incorporated into an update of the AAI GEDSI Strategy.	July-Dec 2020: Analysis and updating of GEDSI strategy, aiming for the updated strategy to be tabled at the May 2026 PCC meeting.
15	Strategic – Low	Consider implementing a small-scale pilot undergraduate scholarship program for persons with disabilities, most likely at Australian university branch campuses in Indonesia.	Partially agree, as this must be aligned with global Australia Awards policy. DFAT will explore possibilities to provide an undergraduate scholarship program for people with disability, in consultation with the Australia Awards global program.	AAI to incorporate this recommendation into the AAI Annual Plan 2025-26 with exploration of activities to be conducted from November 2025 onwards.
16	Operational – Low	Work with local organisations of people with disabilities and inclusive education advocates to identify talented candidates early and offer preparatory programs, including foundational courses and structured mentoring.	Agree. The program will explore collaboration with potential partners and alumni to offer preparatory programs, in particular across Equity Target Provinces.	Immediate and ongoing and to be incorporated into the AAI Annual Plan 2025-26.
17	Operational – Low	Strengthen institutional engagement with local government agencies to ensure formal release of awardees to undertake AAI program activities, including through providing agencies with AAI briefing sessions and DFAT endorsement letters.	Partially Agree. Institutional engagement has been and will be continued to be strengthened, with government agencies across national and sub-national levels, with the support from Indonesian Ministry of State Secretariat (SetNeg) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA).	ASAP through leadership from SetNeg and MoHA.
18	Strategic – Medium	Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to mainstream climate change indicators, programming and reporting across AAI modalities.	Agree. Relevant to recommendation 3 and 12.	As above.

No.	Focus – Priority	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Timeframe
19	– Strategic – Medium	Develop a comprehensive strategy for managing awardee psychosocial and mental health, in conjunction with the Australia Awards program globally.	<p data-bbox="879 191 953 215">Agree.</p> <p data-bbox="879 232 1570 435">In line with recommendation 14, the program will continue refining the strategy to support the psychosocial and mental well-being of awardees, aligning with the Australia Awards global program. This commenced with a study on the experience of scholars in this area, identifying the unique pressures and stressors faced by awardees.</p>	Immediate and ongoing.