



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DFAT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF AUSTRALIA AWARDS PAPUA NEW GUINEA

In June 2021, DFAT commissioned a review of the Australia Awards Papua New Guinea Program to assess progress towards its end of program outcomes (EOPOs). It also assessed the program's ability to adapt to an evolving PNG–Australia Partnership (including within the context of COVID-19), the appropriateness of management and implementation arrangements and the extent to which the program is demonstrating value for money.

The review found that the program has made varying degrees of progress towards its EOPOs. It found that, while there is clear evidence of alumni making positive development contributions using their new knowledge and skills, progress towards the other EOPOs is more variable. The review found little evidence to suggest that partner tertiary institutions (PTIs) have improved institutional policies and practices, although noted that this work is still in its early stages. For the other EOPOS, it found it was difficult to determine how much progress has been made because performance expectations are not clear. The review found that despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the program has adapted well to the needs of the PNG–Australia Partnership. Overall, it found that the program's management and implementation arrangements are supporting effective delivery and that the program has demonstrated value for money.

DFAT welcomes the review findings and provides a response to the recommendations for the remaining two years of implementation, and the design of the next phase of the program.

Recommendations for the next two-years of implementation

No.	SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE (AGREE/PARTIALLY AGREE/DISAGREE)	ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAME
1	<i>Program Management</i> <i>DFAT's management burden could be lessened by providing the program/contractor with a</i>	Revise guidance for contractor financial sign off for Alumni Grant Scheme and PTI minor works. The	Agree	Implement from January 2022.

	<i>higher level of delegation for some activities</i>	level of delegation could be based on an agreed risk matrix.		
2	<p><i>Program Monitoring and Evaluation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The current program does not include targets for EOPOs</i> <i>Additional information is required to inform programming for Short Course Awards, the Alumni Grants Scheme and on award support</i> 	<p>i. Develop performance expectations for each EOPO – one or two per EOPO should be sufficient to provide greater clarity as to what the program expects to achieve by 2023.</p> <p>ii. As part of the Short Course Awards review, undertake an analysis of the costs of delivering a blended approach to course delivery.</p> <p>iii. The program could undertake a study to identify the factors that influence variation rates for Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS). This could then inform possible improvements to how the program selects, prepares, and supports students while on-award</p> <p>iv. Better track Alumni Grants Scheme outcomes by focusing on a sample of grants.</p> <p>v. Application process: as part of the midwifery review, the program could review the role of midwifery PTIs within the selection process</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Partially agree. Midwifery PTI currently have final say on enrolment. PTI to be consulted to clarify the process.</p>	<p>Include in the Annual Plan for 2022-23.</p> <p>To be completed January 2022.</p> <p>To commence in 2022.</p> <p>To commence in 2022.</p> <p>To commence in 2022.</p>

		vi. On-award support: the program could consider exploring whether to raise the stipend for midwifery awardees as part of the midwifery review.	Agree	Review to be undertaken in the first quarter of 2022.
		vii. Ensure that Institution Contact Officers in PTIs are aware of family and sexual violence (FSV) processes, including FSV support providers. If there are no clear referral pathways, such as within certain provinces, the program could consider forming partnerships with FSV providers.	Agree Partially agree. Will assess need for creating new FSV referral pathways, and connection to existing providers.	To be included in service orders with PTIs in 2022.
		viii. Reintegration: the program could improve the use of reintegration plans for AAS awardees, both for those in open and public sector categories. These plans could be living documents that are developed prior to commencement, revisited while on-award including prior to graduation, and then implemented on awardees' return.	Partially agree. The GoPNG to be consulted on proposed changes for Public Sector awardees.	To be considered by the Joint Steering Committee in 2022.
		ix. Alumni network: the program should continue to support PNG Australia Alumni Association to become more sustainable, including through finalising a sustainability action plan.	Agree	To be included in the Annual Plan for 2022

Recommendations for the next phase of Australia Awards PNG

No.	SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE (AGREE/PARTIALLY AGREE/DISAGREE)	ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAME
3	<i>The program focuses on six priority areas. A more targeted approach would involve selecting one or two of these priority areas, and identifying key workforce gaps within these areas, such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) within education.</i>	Partly focus on a small set of workforce gaps: to maximise the program's impact, a successor program could focus part of its support on a small set of specific GoPNG workforce gaps.	Agree	This will be included in the terms of reference for the design of the next phase.
4	<i>Cross-program coordination: Alumni reported key constraints to using their new knowledge and skills, including a lack of resources and organisational support.</i>	The program could partner with other development programs that may be working to strengthen the institutional capacity of organisations within priority sectors.	Agree	This will be included in the terms of reference for the design of the next phase.
5	<i>The management of in-PNG scholarships continues to be resource-intensive, and PTIs have varying degrees of capacity to manage ongoing welfare and safety risks.</i>	Develop a set of criteria for selecting PTIs. These could include having a minimum acceptable level of security standards, leadership support for institutional strengthening (especially strengthening Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion policies), and alignment with any sectoral focus. The design team should also explore whether the current number of PTIs is appropriate.	Agree	This will be included in the terms of reference for the design of the next phase.

6	<p><i>While gender equality is an important component of the program, the program does not have a specific gender equality outcome and does not qualify for an OECD DAC gender marker.</i></p>	<p>To ensure the next phase of AAPNG qualifies for an OECD DAC gender marker, the design team should undertake a Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion analysis that identifies key barriers across the awards cycle to women, people with disabilities, and those from rural and remote locations. This analysis should also inform the development of a Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion EOPO.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This will be included in the terms of reference for the design of the next phase.</p>
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