DFAT Management Response to the Independent Review of the Pacific Security College (PSC)

The Independent Review of the Pacific Security College (the College) was commissioned by DFAT and conducted between July and October 2025. DFAT acknowledges the findings and recommendations of the review and provides the following Management Response.

Executive Summary

This DFAT Management Response addresses the findings and recommendations from the 2025 Independent Review of the Pacific Security College (the College). The review assessed the College's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability in supporting regional security in the Pacific. The review found the College has made commendable progress in establishing itself as a key part of the Pacific security ecosystem, particularly through its support for national security strategies, capacity building, and convening the Pacific Regional and National Security Conference (PRNSC). The review also identified areas for improvement, including enhancing gender and disability inclusion, strengthening partnerships, and evolving the College's offerings to meet changing regional needs. This response outlines DFAT's position on the review's recommendations and provides a plan to guide future implementation and a design refresh of the College.

Number	Recommendation	DFAT Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
1	The College should enter negotiations with a suitable academic institution in the region with a view to co-locating staff and undertaking joint activities in the short term, and in the medium-to-long-term, developing a shared ownership model of the College.	Partially agree.	DFAT supports the College exploring regional partnerships to strengthen Pacific ownership and presence. The extent to which shared ownership and management of the College could be successful would depend on the availability and capacity of one or more suitable academic institutions in the region to undertake such a role.	The College (supported by DFAT) to initiate discussion with the University of the South Pacific and/or other Pacific academic institutions on possible joint activities.	Target Q2 2026 commencement.

2	The College transitions its alumni and professional networks into a broader Pacific Community of Practice with a view to creating a more inclusive, decentralised resource network.	Partially agree.	DFAT agrees that more can be done to enhance engagement with College alumni and to extend its networks across the region. Further work is needed to define how such a network could be designed and managed.	The College design update should include a detailed Alumni engagement strategy i.e. laying out how a network could be designed and managed with a roadmap for implementation.	Design update due 30 January 2026. Implementation due by end of current investment period (30 September 2026).
3	DFAT should consider increasing funding to the College in the order of $1-2 million per year to support its efforts in building a partnership with a Pacific-based co-host and to establish and maintain a security-focused community of practice.	Partially agree.	DFAT will assess funding as part of the next design phase.	Funding requirements to be considered during the 2026 design update.	Design update due 30 January 2026.
4	DFAT should facilitate a partnership between the College and the Australia Awards program for several scholarships to be used to target participants in a College course who wish to pursue further post graduate study at ANU.	Agree.	DFAT supports leveraging Australia Awards to strengthen Pacific capacity-building and is considering partnership options for the Australia Awards program.	The Office of the Pacific and the College to continue engagement with DFAT's Australia Awards team. Further scholarship options to be considered in	Design update due 30 January 2026.

				the design process for the next phase of the College.	
5	The Technical Assistance Register should cease operating and not be included in the planned design refresh.	Agree.	DFAT supports removing the register due to limited use and operational inefficiencies.	The College to phase out the register.	Q1 2026
6	The College should co-create a contemporary annual agenda for every PRNSC ensuring that all aspects of the expanded definition of security under the Boe Declaration are regularly included.	Agree.	DFAT supports inclusive and dynamic program development for the PRNSC, including input from Pacific Islands Forum members and coverage of the full range of security topics included under the Boe Declaration.	The College to further consult PIF members and relevant stakeholders to develop the 2026 PRNSC agenda.	Q1 & Q2 2026
7	The College should draw speakers from a wider variety of sources, including community representatives and people with lived experience.	Agree.	DFAT supports broadening speaker representation.	The College to update speaker selection guidelines for 2026 PRNSC.	Q1 2026
8	The Pacific Security College Advisory Board should develop guidelines establishing the range of experiences and geographic and cultural diversity it seeks to maintain on the Board. This should be agreed with DFAT and new members recruited accordingly. The	Partially agree.	DFAT should work with the College and the Advisory Board to further develop guidelines for the appointment of future new board members, based on the existing Advisory Board Charter guidelines. DFAT values an efficient Board structure, while balancing this with a need to ensure the Board has broad	DFAT will undertake a review of Board membership and guidelines alongside the current design process for the next phase of the College.	Q1 2026

	size of the Board should balance the need for a range of views to be aired during substantive discussions, with all members afforded an opportunity to contribute, while also keeping costs at a reasonable level.		gender, geographic, and skill-set representation.		
9	DFAT should clarify the role of the Advisory Board, and who it reports to, to maximise its value to the College and DFAT as part of the next design of the College.	Agree.	There is scope for DFAT to play a greater role in meetings with the Advisory Board.	DFAT to take up official notetaking duties for Board meetings and explore what further value DFAT and the College can gain from engagement with the Board.	Q1 2026
10	The College should push for equality of opportunity for women, men and gender diverse people in terms of access to training and speaking opportunities.	Agree.	DFAT supports implementation of the College's Gender Action Plan.	The College monitors and reports on participation metrics annually (including establishing baseline data). The Design Update will propose opportunities for enhancing	

				the College's promotion of gender equality.	
11	DFAT should reconsider the reporting requirements for the College and ensure that they are fit for purpose.	Partially agree.	DFAT supports streamlining reporting to reduce administrative burden. However, DFAT reserves the right to request additional reporting to ensure adequate oversight of this high value Australian investment.	DFAT to revise mandated reporting schedule to bi-annual, while ensuring continued regular engagement between DFAT and the College's management.	Q2 2026