

Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility Tracer Survey: Alumni of 1996-2005 Executive Summary

This report details the development, fieldwork and findings of the second Tracer Survey by the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (the Facility). This Tracer Survey involved alumni who completed scholarships as part of the Australia Awards or predecessor scholarship programs between 1996 and 2005.

Alumni were asked a range of questions via an online survey, focussed on exploring the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards. A follow-up telephone interview with a sample of alumni respondents collected further detail for analysis.

The survey is designed to provide a valuable quantitative insight into alumni use of knowledge and skills, development of networks and contribution to cooperation with Australia. Survey responses also offer rich examples from alumni of the types of contributions they are making, the way in which they are using their award, and the things that help and hinder them in reaching their potential.

In total 1,072 alumni in this cohort from 36 different countries participated in the survey (a 23 per cent response rate). Of the online respondents, 522 participated in the telephone follow-up interview. Of the respondents to the Tracer Survey, most (85 per cent) were aged between 40 and 60 at the time of the survey, and almost all (87 per cent) were employed. Of those alumni working, 94 per cent were in a leadership role, highlighting the influence this cohort has in their workplace and country.

The Tracer Survey data enables the tracking of alumni contributions in line with the four long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards. The following summary offers some overall findings in relation to these. A further summary of the Tracer Survey is included in an infographic the end of this section.

Outcome 1: Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development.

- **most alumni** (98 per cent) indicated they have passed on their skills and knowledge to others in their country on return from their award
- **most alumni** (97 per cent) indicated they had introduced improved practices and innovations in their work on return from their award.

Outcome 2: Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries.

- **more than 30 per cent** of alumni have maintained frequent contact with fellow scholarship alumni, while **28 per cent have frequent contact with friends** in Australia and 20 per cent with Australian students/alumni
- **alumni were less likely to have maintained frequent contact with Australian organisations**, with 16 per cent having frequent contact with universities, 13 per cent with Australian businesses and 9 per cent with Australian Embassies, High Commissions or Consulates.

Outcome 3: Effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and partner countries.

- **fewer than half** (41.5 per cent) of alumni have had a professional link with an Australian organisation at some time following award

- of these links, 43 per cent are with Australian institutions, 18 per cent within the government sector and the remainder shared between the private sector and non-government organisations.

Outcome 4: Alumni view Australia, Australians and Australian expertise positively.

- for most alumni **their experience in Australia positively influenced their perception of Australia** (97 per cent of alumni) and their perception of Australian skills and expertise (95 per cent)
- **Almost all alumni** (97 per cent) have provided advice to people in their home country about pursuing opportunities in Australia.

In addition to these findings, and similar to the Year 1 Tracer Survey of the 2006 to 2010 cohort, alumni highlighted that the factors that helped them to contribute following their award included **the new skills and knowledge** they had gained, **support from their employers** and **support from networks established** while on-award. They also outlined factors that challenged them in making contributions. These tended to focus on the workplace and included **cultural and bureaucratic barriers, a mismatch of skills to their jobs on return and lack of recognition of new skills.**

The Tracer Survey also explored the contribution of the Australia Awards to gender equity, disability inclusiveness and increasing opportunities in rural and remote areas. In relation to these issues of equity:

- Seventy per cent of **alumnae hold a formal leadership position in their work**, and a further 23 per cent have informal leadership roles
- alumni – both women and men – **are contributing to increasing gender equity** in their countries through advocacy, implementation of policy and programs, and mentorship of young women
- despite progress in gender equity since their return from award, alumnae highlighted that **discrimination on the basis of gender still has an impact** on their ability to make further contributions
- alumni are working on projects and policies to promote and enable the participation of people with disability and people from rural and remote areas in education, work and equal access to health care.