

focus

THE MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 3 » SEPT-DEC 2007

ENVIRONMENT

THE AID PROGRAM IS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING LIFE OPPORTUNITIES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE ASIA PACIFIC. THAT INCLUDES HELPING TO TAKE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE.



FROM THE MINISTER

The Australian Government wants to see the Asia Pacific grow and prosper yet, increasingly, the lack of good environmental governance and escalating environmental problems threaten the region's future. There is a real risk that unless we start protecting the environment – nurturing and managing natural resources such as forests, ecosystems and fisheries – the outlook, particularly for agriculture-based economies, will be dismal. In the long run the loss of natural resources affects us all.

There's also climate change to consider.

In the recent White Paper on the Australian Government's overseas aid program I emphasised that more needs to be done to address environmental challenges in our region. I believe we need to work with our neighbours to develop the high standards of environmental management that we enjoy in this country.

As a frequent traveller overseas I see first-hand the effects of environmental damage and I am increasingly alarmed by what some people in our region must put up with, especially the poor

who have few options. In northern and southern Asia, heavy pollution blankets cities, towns and villages for days causing acute respiratory disorders. Rapid and unchecked land clearing, urbanisation and industrialisation have already resulted in an unprecedented loss of natural habitat and heritage, and soaring levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Landscapes in some areas are so seriously degraded that they are no longer fit for cultivation. In the Mekong region, access to the most basic of commodities, water – that is both safe and clean – is a daily struggle. In the Pacific, an area rich in natural resources, extreme weather events and other manifestations of climate variability threaten lives and livelihoods.

Yet there are many ways in which Australia can help countries in the region develop and progress economically while at the same time safeguarding the environment and protecting communities against the impacts of climate change. Developed countries, like Australia, which have prospered, are well placed to make major contributions in these areas.

I recently launched, *Aid and the Environment – Building Resilience, Sustaining Growth*, the aid program's strategy for investing resources in the key areas of climate change, water and environmental governance. These themes which align with Australian domestic priorities also find resonance with the needs articulated by regional partner governments. The aid program will invest around \$160 million, both directly and through partnerships with international organisations, in environmental programs in 2007–08. This represents a substantial increase in environment-related funding over previous years.

Australia is at the forefront in driving action on climate change. We are a forthright member of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate which brings together scientists and leaders in industry to devise methods for improved energy efficiency. We are also strongly promoting clean energy technologies, including wind and solar power, and investigating sustainable hydropower and biofuels.

Through the Global Initiative on Forests and Climate, to which Australia has committed \$200 million from 2007–08, Australia will support practical actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – actions such as planting new forests, implementing sustainable forest management practices, and reducing deforestation.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions – and their effects on our climate – we must discover and adopt clean energy solutions. We must also stop the unsustainable practice of damaging vital ecosystems and clearing forests.

We are doing these things. Our future depends on it.

Alexander Downer
Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, at the High Level Meeting on Forests and Climate in Sydney. Photo: Robert Owen-Jones

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Government aid in focus The Australian aid program is committed to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development in the Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Australian businesses and people play a major role in delivering the aid program. Australian expertise, Australian experience and Australian resources are used to tackle poverty. And by investing in development Australia is investing in its future. In 2007–08 Australia plans to spend almost \$3.15 billion on development assistance. The aid program focuses on promoting regional peace, stability and economic development. Countries with whom Australia is working include Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Nauru, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu (the Pacific region); Indonesia, East Timor, Vietnam, Philippines, China, Mongolia, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Burma (East Asia); Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, Bhutan (South Asia); and Africa and the Middle East.

cover: Philippines. Not much of a landscape. A soot-covered child breathes putrid smoky air as a rubbish dump burns in Malabon, Metro Manila. Photo: Darren Whiteside/Reuters

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IN BRIEF

GLOBAL FORESTS

A major international gathering of environment ministers and officials in Sweden welcomes Australia's innovative forests plan to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Greg Hunt, represented Australia at the Midnight Sun Dialogue on Climate Change, held at the tiny Arctic Circle village of Riksgränsen in Sweden.

As the 24-hour sun beat down on the icy summer setting, Mr Hunt delivered a keynote presentation on Australia's \$200 million Global Initiative on Forests and Climate. He outlined how savings of up to three billion tonnes or 10 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions per year could be gained from reducing rates of deforestation.

'Delegates from 28 countries and the European Union were

extremely positive about Australia's plan,' says Mr Hunt, 'which shows how the countries of the world can make an immediate difference with Australia's practical and cost-effective measures to reduce climate change. I told delegates that Australia was very keen to work with others to reduce the destruction of the world's forests, increase new forest plantings and promote sustainable forest management practices.'

Following the Midnight Sun Dialogue, Mr Hunt journeyed to Stockholm to present two 'ancient' Wollemi pine trees to Sweden. One went to the palace for His Majesty, Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden while Mr Hunt presented the other to Sweden's Minister for the Environment, Andreas Carlgren at the Bergius Botanical Garden.

The Wollemi Pine is a 200-million-year-old survivor from the Jurassic period and one of the world's oldest and rarest plants.

Pointing to this year's aid



program, which provides an extra \$164.4 million over five years to tackle climate change, Mr Hunt says AusAID is a key player in Australia's international efforts. Over this period, AusAID will work with the Department of the Environment and Water Resources to help partner countries curb deforestation-related emissions.

ABOVE: The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Hunt (*left*), with the First Curator of Stockholm's Bergius Botanical Garden, Henni Wantorp (*centre*) and Sweden's Minister for the Environment, Andreas Carlgren. 'The internationally-acclaimed Wollemi Pine is a symbolic gesture of our commitment to protecting the world's forests,' says Mr Hunt.



SOPU LANDFILL

TONGA: For Tilema Hurrel and her family who live in Sopus, in the outskirts of Nuku'alofa, it's a new experience – stepping out on dry land. More than 80 families are enjoying a better quality of life because an AusAID-funded project has transformed swamp land into suburbia. Coral has been used as landfill to make the ground firm and fit for habitation. 'The project has made an enormous difference to us,' says Tilema. 'It's simple things like being able to walk on dry ground to the clothes line and to be able to cook outside.'

AusAID is funding several similar landfill projects through the Tonga Community Development program. In 2006–07 AusAID funding provided 119 plots for poor urban settlers on marginal lands.

LEFT: Enjoying dry land. Photo: Cathy Reid/AusAID

ABOUT FOCUS

Focus magazine is published three times a year – January, May and September. Each edition has a different theme. 'Environment and Investing in People' is the theme for this issue (Sept to Dec 2007 vol 22 no 3). The theme for the next edition (Jan to April 2008 vol 23 no 1) is 'Growth'.

Focus may be viewed and downloaded <www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/focus>

ENERGY MATTERS

Pacific ministers meet to discuss alternative energy sources.

It's not often that 17 Pacific island ministers get together but that's how many met in the Cook Islands recently, along with more than 50 officials, donors and observers, for the first Pacific energy ministers meeting in over a decade. It shows just how important energy matters have become.

Partially funded by AusAID, and coordinated by the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the meeting involved an important review of regional and national energy initiatives.

Director of SOPAC, Cristelle Pratt, says energy security issues discussed a decade ago are now more relevant than ever. 'Pacific island countries are the most vulnerable in the world to the impact of rising world oil prices.

If oil rises by just \$10 a barrel, some countries face a loss of up to 14 per cent of gross national income.'

SOPAC energy adviser Jan Cloin told the conference that more needed to be done with available resources. 'Biofuels can make an important contribution to energy security and supply but they must be economically viable and environmentally sustainable. Oils from coconuts, ethanol from sugar cane and starchy crops like cassava, can help replace up to 30 per cent of our fossil fuel usage in the region.'

Ministers agreed that more regional support was needed to explore renewable initiatives such as wind, biomass, solar, hydropower and biofuels.

It's heartening that throughout

the region there are renewable energy success stories. Photovoltaic energy-powered communications is improving education services for children in Solomon Islands, biofuel and solar energy supply nursing stations in Fiji, and wind energy is used by communities in the Cook Islands.

Yet formidable obstacles continue to trip up countries eager to explore renewable energy options – for example, land ownership issues, seasonal cyclones, limited technical expertise and low quality energy production.

Talks concluded with a regional commitment to develop economic policy legislation that encourage efficient energy initiatives.

'Having Pacific countries endorse a new whole-of-



government approach to energy as a development imperative is a great outcome. By getting policy and implementation right, energy savings of up to 80 per cent can be made through improvements and conservation, which will greatly boost living standards,' says Cristelle Pratt.

ABOVE: Wind energy has the potential to provide up to 20 per cent of the electricity supply in the Pacific islands. Photo: Liam Camilleri/GRI.D

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY



The aid program has a new environment strategy. Over the coming years, Australia's environment assistance to countries in the Asia-Pacific region will concentrate on three areas – climate change, water and environmental governance.

The strategy outlines ways for Australia to assist communities understand and adjust to changes in climate, manage water resources more effectively and develop expertise in resource management. It is the result of extensive consultations with environment groups, institutions, business groups, the forest industry and other donors.

Aid and the Environment – Building Resilience, Sustaining Growth sets a firm direction for the aid program as it helps partner countries face difficult and pressing environment issues.

NEW HEADQUARTERS

AusAID has moved into a new environmentally-friendly building at 255 London Circuit in the heart of Canberra's city centre. It is the first building occupied by a Commonwealth Government agency to have a five-star rating for both design and energy efficiency.

With double-glazed windows and plenty of natural light, the new building uses about half the energy of a conventional office block. If the predictions are correct, AusAID will reduce its CO₂ emissions (in comparison to the old premises) by 586 tonnes annually.





AUSTRALIA IS HELPING VULNERABLE NATIONS PREPARE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE. IN THE ASIA PACIFIC IT'S PUTTING MEASURES IN PLACE TO BUILD RESILIENCE. CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS EVERYONE BUT IT'S THE POOR AND POWERLESS WHO ARE LEAST ABLE TO ADAPT.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, THE APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT TO THE USE OF CLEANER SOURCES OF

ENERGY WILL, WITH STRONG INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, SEE A CUT IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND A GRADUAL STABILISATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE TRENDS. AUSTRALIA IS AT THE FOREFRONT DRIVING NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS AND ATTITUDES.

ALTHOUGH IT'S NO SIMPLE CASE OF TURNING BACK THE DIAL ON CLIMATE CHANGE IT IS POSSIBLE TO ALTER THE COURSE.

CLIMATE RESET

LEFT: Indonesia. Forest fires rage out of control in East Kalimantan spreading a dense toxic cloud of pollution across much of South East Asia.

Photo: Dermot Tatlow/Panos Pictures

BACKGROUND IMAGE: China. Billowing thick smoke from a factory chimney in Yanzhou, Shandong Province, fills the morning sky. Photo: Qilai Shen/Panos Pictures

ELEVEN OF THE PAST 12 YEARS (1995–2006) RANK AMONG THE 12 WARMEST YEARS IN THE INSTRUMENTAL RECORD OF GLOBAL SURFACE TEMPERATURE (SINCE 1850).

SCIENTISTS MAY DISAGREE ABOUT THE PACE AND EXACT NATURE OF CLIMATE CHANGE BUT SOME OF THE IMPACTS ARE ALREADY EVIDENT AND, IN SOME CASES, COMING FASTER THAN PREDICTED.

A CHANGE IS COMING

Australia is helping the Asia Pacific to prepare for climate change. At the same time Australia is finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to protect the environment from other harmful effects.

Almost every day there's something in the media about climate change and the damage it's inflicting on the environment. 'Australia's aid program can assist developing countries to follow cleaner development pathways as well as support them to assess, and adapt to, the likely local impacts of climate change,' says AusAID's Director General, Bruce Davis.

Higher temperatures are driving other changes in regional climate systems. Predicted effects include an increase in the frequency of extreme weather conditions – from storms and tropical cyclones to droughts and floods – and losses of natural heritage and environmental assets. The United Nations Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change attributes the rise in temperatures to human activity, such as consumption of fossil fuels, forest fires, and large-scale land clearing.



WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

The world's climate has changed throughout time but 'human-induced' climate change is a recent global phenomenon. It's likely to cause widespread and unpredictable environmental shifts as a result of temperature increases. Most scientists attribute the rise in temperatures to human activity such as fossil fuel usage, wide-spread forest clearing and large-scale fires.

LEFT: Kiribati. Many communities depend on the sea for a living but experts warn global warming may cause migratory patterns of fish to change as they seek cooler waters. Photo: Lorrie Graham

THE CAUSE

Most greenhouse gas emissions result from burning fossil fuels – coal, oil, natural gas – to produce energy. All the elements of modern living – those things that make life more comfortable and are the result of progress and prosperity – electricity, heating, cooling, powering industry, manufacturing and fuelling road vehicles, planes and ships – are causing increasing harm to the global environment.

The energy supply sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Other human activities relating to land use change, such as land clearing, deforestation and fires, are the second largest source.

Although at present greenhouse gas emissions per person in the developing economies of Asia are still lower than those in developed countries such as Australia, the demand for energy is soaring – and will continue to soar – as economies industrialise and living standards improve. Energy exports to countries in the Asia Pacific (the APEC economies) are projected to increase by 90 per cent

in the 20 years from 2000 to 2020, driven by economic growth, industrialisation and urbanisation. This is especially true for India and China.

Add existing high energy demands of industrialised Western countries and it's clear the global challenge in managing the massive and growing demand for energy is daunting. If greenhouse gas emissions are left unchecked, the implications for the climate are very serious indeed.

NO GOING BACK

And yet it is naïve to believe the modern world is ready to give up energy. Reliable and abundant supplies of oil, gas and coal have quite literally fuelled global growth in the last two centuries. Rich countries have become much richer but poorer countries have also become richer and, as in the cases of India and China, are booming. Economic growth has delivered higher standards of living for whole populations and lifted many millions of people out of poverty.

Efforts to stimulate economic progress in the poorer nations of the Asia Pacific also lie at the heart of Australia's overseas aid program. National wealth and stable economies are built by developing human and natural resources and creating jobs. 'We want nations to prosper – and helping them to do so is, if you like, the *raison d'être* of the aid program – but that also means in sustainable ways and not at a reckless cost to the environment,' says Robin Davies, AusAID's Assistant Director General, Growth and Resource Management.

A tension clearly exists between, on the one hand, encouraging economic growth with all that it could entail (burning fossil

fuels, land clearing, placing demands on water resources, increasing waste production) and, on the other, living with the serious environmental, social and economic consequences.

But more experts believe the debate has moved on and it is now time for all countries to act. Climate change is a big problem and dealing with it will take a concerted effort. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, finding cleaner sources of energy, building capacities to adapt, looking after natural assets and protecting natural heritage are today's shared priorities.

Furthermore, according to the International Energy Agency, the days of cheap and abundant supplies of fossil fuels may well be numbered, 'The world is facing twin energy-related threats: that of not having adequate and secure supplies of energy at affordable prices and that of environmental harm caused by consuming too much of it.'

The aid program has set itself the multi-challenge of implementing measures to help neighbouring countries adapt to climate change while at the same time trying to encourage and balance sustainable economic growth with sound environmental management.

Roughly 70 per cent of all jobs in the Asia Pacific depend on natural resources and in rural communities it's virtually 100 per cent. The

lifeblood for millions is safe water, farmable land, forests and fisheries. Communities depend on these resources as the basis for their economic progress. Yet, future economic growth is threatened if these assets are not managed in sustainable ways. 'Many resources are already seriously degraded, and the subsistence livelihoods that they support are increasingly tenuous,' says Dr Kate Duggan, an AusAID environment adviser. 'Overuse and poor natural resource management practices have played a significant part and climate change will exacerbate those problems.'

EFFECTS

After Africa, the Asia-Pacific region – of which Australia is a part – will be most affected by climate change.

As the world's driest inhabited continent, Australia is acutely susceptible to drought. Many Australian farming communities are all too familiar with the daily hardship of chronic water shortages. But it inevitably follows, as the southern parts of the country become hotter and drier, water security will become increasingly critical not only for agriculture but also to supply cities and towns.

For the Pacific islands the intensification and extension into higher latitudes of destructive

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE?

Good environmental governance is the responsible management of all environmental assets – water, air, land, forests, fisheries, habitat and biodiversity, coasts and estuaries.

Major governance issues arise from climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Slowing down deforestation, improving energy efficiency and shifting to cleaner energy technology, for example, require strong policy and institutional responses by governments. They also demand international cooperation and genuine involvement from the private sector.

tropical cyclones and storm surges are of concern. The risk of sea encroachment and flooding of low-lying small islands that make up countries, such as Tuvalu and Kiribati, are especially worrying.

‘The Pacific islands are minor contributors to global climate change,’ says Duggan, ‘but they are highly vulnerable to its effects.’

In parts of Asia, environmental degradation, including air, soil and water pollution, has already reached alarming levels. The need to switch to cleaner energy technology and more sustainable development practices has never been more pressing. There is a strong correlation between the poor health of citizens, especially the number suffering from skin complaints and respiratory disorders, and the rise in smog-filled days and contaminated water sources. This is particularly so in the larger cities of northern Asia.

Worldwide, climate change is expected to cause an increase in deaths from malnutrition, heat-stress and airborne diseases. Diarrhoeal diseases associated with floods and droughts will probably rise in parts of tropical Asia. The zones affected by malaria and dengue fever could expand. In South Asia, increases in sea-water temperatures may exacerbate the spread and toxicity of cholera.

Global warming will also have a marked impact on biodiversity. Ecosystems in restricted ranges, including coral reefs and mountain systems, or in settings where they cannot expand into cooler higher latitudes, are particularly vulnerable.

Under these scenarios, widespread shocks to local livelihoods and national economies in the region are unavoidable.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

The environmental pressures on the Asia-Pacific region are putting at risk the gains made in economic growth and poverty reduction. Australia is well aware that governments around the region are struggling to manage the adverse consequences of development (such as increased pollution, deforestation and soil degradation) with the escalating demands for more natural resources (timber, fish and land).

Over many years, Australia has worked alongside regional partner governments to improve their environmental management. ‘It’s a crucial area to get right,’ says Duggan, ‘because good environmental governance safeguards natural assets so that they can continue to support growth.’

There’s no shortage of environmental challenges in the region but Australia can be nevertheless, justifiably proud of its aid program’s efforts and successes. Over the past 20 years it has tackled some of the toughest and most intractable problems, especially in such areas as water and waste management, food production and sustainable forestry.

As a rule, environmental aid varies according to the quality of knowledge and expertise Australia can reasonably contribute. ‘Over the past few years we have invested around \$100 million a year in environment-related assistance,’ says James Hall, Director of AusAID’s Environment program. ‘And in our experience this has been effective aid – we’ve seen some very positive outcomes for communities. This amount has increased with two new initiatives announced in this year’s budget – the Global Initiative on Forests and Climate and a Climate Change

Partnerships initiative – and with these resources we’ll be able to do more. The recent White Paper on aid has also foreshadowed an expansion in environmental assistance over the next few years.’

In Asia, Australia has traditionally focused on natural resources management – for example, grassland and forest management in Inner Mongolia and northwestern China, forest management in Nepal and Sri Lanka, and water resource management in the Mekong region, Indonesia and India.

Since climate change and issues of energy use have assumed far greater importance globally, other areas have emerged. ‘In addition we’re now working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by such means as preventing deforestation, improving energy efficiency, and promoting clean energy technologies,’ says Hall. ‘Few people realise that deforestation in the tropics produces around 20 per cent of global emissions.’

Clean energy and forest management measures will be especially important for climate change mitigation in the future, as will improved environmental governance, for example, in relation to rapidly urbanising areas of Asia. The latter will be achieved through stronger partnerships between regional institutions.

Across the whole region, AusAID is placing ever greater emphasis on activities that will help people adapt to climate change. Through the aid program, Australia recently made a substantial commitment to the Least Developed Countries Fund (of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) to help Pacific island and poorer Asian countries to assess and adapt to the likely impacts of climate change.

POOR COMMUNITIES ARE THE FIRST TO FEEL THE EFFECTS OF RESOURCE DEPLETION AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND YET THEY ARE IN THE WEAKEST POSITION TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THEM.

For example, in Cambodia, considered one of the least developed countries in the region, malaria control and flood protection along the Mekong River are top priorities.

In the Pacific, Australia is supporting regional programs in water and waste management, sea-level monitoring and climate prediction. Helping the Pacific islands adapt to climate change, based on sound knowledge and proven practices, is an immediate task.

‘Preparation is so important,’ says Duggan. ‘We’re working with Pacific countries to build better knowledge of climate trends and vulnerabilities. Together, we are building resilience in communities by creating strategies that will help people to cope with climate change and to prepare for natural disasters.’

READY FOR CHANGE

To deal with climate change in Australia and elsewhere, the Australian Government has set down two clear objectives. One is to help the Asia-Pacific region to be ready to adapt to climate change. The second is to reduce emission of greenhouse gases.

It is no accident that climate change, water, and environmental governance are the main themes of the Australian Government’s



ABOVE: Borneo. Once virgin rainforest logged, burnt and cleared. Photo Paul Lowe/Panos Pictures

recently released environment strategy, *Aid and the Environment – Building Resilience, Sustaining Growth*, and match closely with Australia’s own domestic environment policy. These themes also strike a chord with the needs and requests from partner governments in the region.

The range and complexity of global climate change is such that nothing short of a coordinated international response by governments will have an enduring impact. Yet the Australian Government also recognises, at the community level, responses must be tailored to meet local conditions and vulnerabilities.

Through AusAID, Australia aims to improve access to affordable, clean and efficient energy. This is helpful for sustainable economic development but there is also a link with health. For example, by providing access to clean energy technologies, such as solar, wind and mini-hydropower generators, the aid program is helping to reduce pollution and associated respiratory disorders.

Community leadership and ‘capacity building’ will also be important. With the right capacities and resources, communities will be able to adapt affordable, cleaner sources of energy that will have multiple and far-reaching benefits.

At government level Australia is playing a strong leadership role.

For a start, it’s a member – along with China, India, Japan, Korea, and the United States – of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. Known as the AP6, these countries, which represent over half the world’s economy and population, are a formidable force against climate change. Since it was established in January last year AP6 has brought together front-line people in industry and government to find improvements in such areas as energy efficiency in buildings and power generation to aluminium, steel and cement manufacture.

Through the Global Initiative on Forests and Climate, which is jointly managed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, progress is tangible. ‘The Australian Government has pledged \$200 million for practical, cost effective and immediate action on reforestation, sustainable forestry practices and reducing deforestation,’ says Jan Adams, Ambassador for the Environment.

Recent research has identified reducing deforestation as one of the most cost-effective mechanisms for reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. If the global rate of deforestation were halved,

IF WE DO NOT FIND GOOD SOLUTIONS WHICH ALLOW FOR THE ONGOING USE OF COAL WHILE AVOIDING THE RELEASE OF THE CO₂ INTO THE ATMOSPHERE, PARTICULARLY IN CHINA, WE DO NOT HAVE A SOLUTION – CERTAINLY IN THE SHORT TERM – TO MANAGING GLOBAL EMISSIONS AND AVOIDING THE WORST IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by three billion tonnes a year – that is the equivalent to more than five times Australia's total annual emissions.

On average, between 2000 and 2005, about 13 million hectares per year were cleared world wide. Land clearing at this rate is equivalent to losing more than 71,000 football ovals of forest every day. Every hour, forests covering the area of 3,000 football ovals are lost.

Australia is applying a great deal of time and effort to help key countries, like China, to make fundamental adjustments. 'We have a strategic bilateral climate change partnership in place with China,' says Adams. 'There is also the Australia–China Joint Coordination Group on Clean Coal Technology. Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and China is the world's largest consumer so we have a lot to offer by working together, particularly in the area of clean coal technology.'

It is now widely understood that there is a serious and very damaging downside for the environment to China's fantastic growth. Soon it will overtake the United States as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. The lesson from China is that developing countries have an important role to play in the fight against climate change.

FINAL WORD

Prosperous developed nations that have benefited from unprecedented economic growth in the past century are now in a position to make significant investments in controlling environmental degradation and tackling climate change. Developing countries simply lack the level of resources to do the same but countries like Australia can help.

'In the short term we will support adaptation to climate change – preparing well and building sound responses and stronger communities,' says Duggan, 'so people are better able to cope with the worst effects. In the longer term the outlook is more positive if we can make significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions globally.'

The opportunity is there. With international cooperation and adoption of cleaner energy sources and technologies, and reduced deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions can be markedly reduced. Australia's aid program can make a strategic contribution by supporting the efforts of its neighbours. Helping to build capacity to engage, for example, in carbon trading, is but one way. For the aid program what's essential, says Duggan, is that, 'we help our region adopt clean technologies and renewable energy sources that will be kind on the environment while, at the same time, allow for continued economic development and growth.'

LESS CUT AND BURN



INDONESIA is a key partner with Australia under the Global Initiative on Forests and Climate.

The clearing of the world's tropical forests causes almost 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. This is second only to emissions from burning fossil fuels to produce electricity, and more than all of the world's emissions from transport. The \$200 million Global Initiative on Forests and Climate, recently announced by the Australian Government, will help reduce deforestation and, consequently, greenhouse gas emissions.

With the world's third largest area of tropical forest lying within its borders Indonesia is concerned about deforestation and committed to promoting

reforestation and sustainable forest management. In December 2007 the country is hosting the 13th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

With Australia's support Indonesia is also developing a national framework for reducing rates of deforestation. This will include trialling new approaches, such as offering communities economic incentives so that they are able to choose more sustainable forest practices.

Australia will also assist Indonesia to improve the management of peat-land and forest fires. Made of up of partially decomposed plant

MANGROVES FOR THE FUTURE

SOUTH ASIA: Healthy well-functioning ecosystems are a vital part of the stock of assets needed for coastal communities and local economies to thrive.



materials, peat-lands store large quantities of carbon. As a result, fires in peat-land forests release enormous amounts of greenhouse gases. Further, the fires contribute to smoke and haze across South-East Asia which cause respiratory problems.

Good information underlies good management. Australia will also help Indonesia to improve forest monitoring with a particular focus on forest carbon monitoring.

Overall, the aim will be to help promote sustainable and good forest management.

LEFT: Indonesia. Firemen fighting a losing battle with forest fires in East Kalimantan. Photo: Dermot Tatlow/Panos Pictures

BELOW: Borneo. Over logging is stripping the rainforest. Photo: Paul Lowe/Panos Pictures



ABOVE: Mangroves are natural infrastructure – they nurture life and protect the shoreline from erosion. Photo: Jerker Tammelaender/IUCN

Ecosystems fringing the zone between sea and land are essential natural ‘infrastructure’, especially for Indian Ocean coastal communities. Mangroves and coral reefs are the nursery grounds for a myriad of fish, crustaceans and shellfish. These ecosystems also help protect communities from natural disasters.

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which wrecked

shorelines and swept thousands of people to their deaths exposed the fragility of coastal communities. The function and value of coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, were only fully understood after this devastating event. Now it is realised that their healthy maintenance and restoration are fundamental to reducing impacts of natural disasters on local communities.

The former President of the United States and United



Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, Bill Clinton, last year launched a regional partnership entitled 'Mangroves for the Future'.

Its purpose is to promote investment and action in ecosystem conservation for sustainable coastal development. Its vision is for healthy, prosperous and secure futures for all Indian Ocean coastal communities that depend on ecosystems for their development.

Australia is giving seed funding for a program of work which responds to the needs in Indonesia and Sri Lanka for coastal zone management. The project will also identify opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and skills, including Australian expertise.

Through Mangroves for the Future, coastal communities will be in a better position to withstand natural disasters in two main ways. Firstly, because healthy, well-functioning ecosystems, such as mangroves, are more resilient to nature's destructive forces. And secondly, healthy ecosystems, damaged after an episode of extreme weather, are able to recover quickly and continue to support local economies, virtually without interruption.

ABOVE: Coastal communities which harvest the sea closely depend on mangroves – the natural nurseries for a variety of fish, crustaceans and shellfish. Photo: Sriyanie Miththapala/IUCN



TONGA: When the sound of music fills the streets of Nuku'alofa, people know there's no time to waste.

The sound of a jaunty tune moving along the backstreets of Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa, brings people rushing to their front gates. No, it's not an ice-cream van – it's the rubbish truck!

The household rubbish collection, part of the Tonga Solid Waste Management Project, comes round once a week.

'As soon as everyone hears the music they bring out their rubbish,' says community waste specialist Sonia Chirgwin. 'People don't leave bags sitting outside, especially if they contain food scraps, because they attract scavengers. Wild dogs and pigs are a problem.'

Once they've completed their rounds the rubbish trucks, which are specially designed for

Nuku'alofa's narrow streets, return to a new world-class solid waste facility. Tapuhia Landfill is a far cry from the previous disorderly dump at Popua – a mangrove swamp infested with mosquitoes, rats and pigs. The new modern set-up is a former quarry divided into discrete cells double-lined to prevent waste material leaching into the water table. Once one cell is full it's carefully covered over and the next one is opened. The days of thoughtless dumping of rubbish are definitely over.

Tongans are no longer even allowed to enter the landfill area. They must instead place any rubbish not collected by the trucks in large yellow steel bins at the public 'transfer station'. When full these bins are taken by a wheel

PICKING UP

ON A TUNE



loader to the disposal area where the contents are compacted and covered with soil.

‘The landfill area is very well managed and we’re keeping health and environmental risks to an absolute minimum. For example, we test the water supply

through several bore holes once a month to make sure there is no contamination.’

An extensive recycling campaign is also gathering momentum. Special collecting cages managed by community groups are dotted around the city and surrounding

villages. Aluminium cans are returned to recyclers overseas while glass is crushed for use in concrete aggregate. ‘We’re finding people are only too happy to recycle if it’s made easy for them.’

Efforts to educate people about recycling and the hygienic disposal of rubbish are really beginning to pay off. Involving school-children through competitions such as designing a logo or coming up with a slogan has been a great idea. ‘Everybody is getting behind the recycling campaign and making sure rubbish goes in bins and is not left on the ground,’ says Chirgwin. ‘We’re all getting the message that we must take better care of our environment.’

And that’s music to everyone’s ears.

The first waste collection service in Tonga’s history is servicing 65,000 people in 16,000 individual households on the main island of Tongatapu. The governments of Tonga and Australia are funding the Tonga Solid Waste Management Project at a cost of \$9.02 million. Women’s groups in Nuku’alofa and outlying villages collect a small monthly fee from each household to cover basic costs. This will ensure the collection service is sustainable.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT:

Youngsters follow the rubbish truck – Pied Piper style – as it winds its way through the backstreets of Tonga’s capital, Nuku’alofa; Children put out the rubbish; Pigs scavenging the previous disorderly dump at Popua; One of the many recycling bins for aluminium cans
Photos: Cathy Reid/AusAID



THE ENVIRONMENT



ABOVE: Kiribati. Idyllic setting and leisurely fishing. Can it last?

LEFT: Kiribati. Wading through the shallows collecting shellfish at Bairiki.

Photos: Lorrie Graham

[1] Iraq. Local boys continue their football game as a ditch filled with oil and set on fire pumps acrid black smoke into the atmosphere. Burning fossil fuel is responsible for most of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Photo: Martin Adler/Panos Pictures

[2] India. A farmer inspects what's left of his crop during a severe drought. Photo: Dipak Kumar/Reuters

[3] China. During a sandstorm in northwest Gansu Province labourers persevere with digging the degraded soil to plant trees. Photo: Ge Gong/Reuters

[4] India. Must have water. Children try to beat the heat in the northern Indian city of Allahabad. Photo: Jitendra Prakash/Reuters

[5] Solomon Islands. Bountiful harvest – pineapples. Photo: Rob McColl

[6] Kiribati. Managing fresh water supplies is a serious business in many Pacific island countries. Photo: Lorrie Graham





4



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6

SAVING FORESTS

SOLOMON ISLANDS: It's both a challenge and an opportunity for any country to manage its natural resources. For Solomon Islands, protecting its rich natural forests will be a test.



Over the next five years, it will be especially important for Solomon Islands to establish good forest management practices, including a campaign of reforestation, to safeguard against unsustainable harvesting levels.

'Too many of the country's natural forests are facing depletion due to unprecedented and unsustainable logging practices,' says AusAID's Rhona McPhee who's based in Honiara.

Logging – both legal and illegal – is a major threat. Current operations are at five times sustainable yield levels. A recent inventory paints a gloomy picture

of depletion of commercial natural forests by 2012. A collapse of the natural forest sector will not only have profound ecological and environmental implications but also a very negative impact on the country's economy.

To offset damage already inflicted, the Government of Solomon Islands is supporting small-scale 'village-based' forestry plantations. In time these plantations – properly monitored – will help to meet both the export and domestic demand for timber. Trees such as teak and mahogany, the common high-value species, are being planted up and

down the country. 'Already the older plantations are attracting competitive returns,' says McPhee.

Ross Andrewartha, who heads an AusAID-funded forestry management project, is optimistic about the future. 'Forestry is a long-term business. Solomon Islands will emerge from this phase, as other societies have done, with a greater appreciation of its forests and the services they provide. The natural tropical forests are robust, and with care and time, will recover.'

In collaboration with the Government of Solomon Islands' forestry division, AusAID's forestry

FORESTRY IN SOLOMON ISLANDS IS CHANGING FROM AN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY THAT LOGS THE NATURAL FOREST TO ONE THAT WILL HAVE MORE IN COMMON WITH TREE-CROP AGRICULTURE.

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Australia is providing a \$7.5 million four-year forestry project which supports the efforts of the Government of Solomon Islands to reform its forestry sector. Environmentally – but also from an economic development and social perspective – reform is an urgent priority. A revised *Code of Logging Practice*, recently adopted by the Government of Solomon Islands, will lead to better enforcement of sound forestry practices.

Development of a sustainable forestry sector in Solomon Islands demands not only long-term commitment but also planning and coordination between governments, communities and businesses. The Australian-funded personnel facilitate these linkages as part of their work with the project.

management project is running the village-based plantation programs which are, in effect, a reforestation drive. At the local village level farmers are able to obtain technical advice about planting and maintaining trees while landholders can seek assistance with timber management and marketing opportunities.

The majority of land in Solomon Islands is 'customary owned' so it's local landholders who are establishing many of the timber plantations. Export markets will be interested in the harvests but the timber will also satisfy domestic needs. The ability to supply both markets will help save the plundering of precious native forests. Most rural people rely on timber for their housing and other building needs. Local forests are also common sources of wood fuel for cooking.

Approximately 35 enthusiastic men and women form what is called the 'reforestation extension network' which has links throughout eight of the country's nine provinces. Network members – who are themselves also local tree growers – provide encouragement and support to those just starting out. Because they have technical training, they often collaborate with staff from the Government of Solomon Islands' forestry division and the AusAID-funded community sector projects. As

Andrewartha explains 'Members of the reforestation network are particularly valuable when it comes to delivering forestry awareness campaigns and village training for landholders.'

To date, over 9,000 individuals and families have planted approximately 6,000 hectares of high-value timber trees on their customary land. Over the next two decades, as plantations mature, these plantings will realise significant economic benefits. 'The plantation opportunities are amazing,' says Andrewartha. 'Fantastic tree growth rates are being achieved across the country, particularly with teak and mahogany.'

But there's a proviso. To guarantee optimal returns, ongoing maintenance of the plantations is a must. This is again where the rural-based reforestation network comes in. Members will keep working with landholders advising them on new challenges that emerge at each stage of the forestry rotation. Training in such areas as silvicultural techniques of thinning and pruning are most important. In short, only good management will produce top quality timber and an economically-viable forestry industry.

**FAR LEFT: Among two-year-old teak trees
LEFT: Teak plantation in Makiri Province.
Landowners are pleased with growth rates. Photos: URS**

TREES AND TRIATHLONS

SOLOMON ISLANDS: During the day Ross Andrewartha, team leader of an AusAID forestry management project, works with government officials, businesses and communities on the best ways to protect and manage precious natural forests. In the evenings and any other spare moment, he's helping a group of talented local triathletes achieve international sporting success.



The triathletes have already achieved individual successes never before thought possible, including debuts at international sporting events. Photo: Rob McColl

Ross Andrewartha's coaching career in Solomon Islands began in early 2005 more by accident than design when he offered to teach a few local men how to swim. Before he knew it, he was elected President of Triathlon Solomon Islands and appointed head coach of a squad of 25. Because there's no swimming pool, training sessions – which occur three times a week – take place at Kakabona Beach, just west of Honiara. 'We call it the world's deepest swimming pool,' says Andrewartha.

Such is the emerging talent of the athletes that in March 2006, a three-man triathlon team competed, for the first time, at the Commonwealth Games, held in Melbourne. Each achieved personal best times in front of a capacity crowd of 200,000. The feat is all the more remarkable because it was accomplished in less than 12 months of training.

In many ways the Commonwealth Games has been a spur for the country's sporting pride. Momentum is still growing and so is the squad. 'It's great to see young people coming



to training,' says Andrewartha who is delighted more women are joining. 'The level of support and increasing respect shown by the men for their female colleagues is fantastic.'

Activity on the organisation side is growing too.

'We now have regular monthly triathlon events, run by individuals involved in various AusAID and RAMSI [Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands] projects. It's truly inspiring to see other Australians and visitors to this country pitching in with the local community. It builds great understanding between our different cultures.'

And triathlon is proving more than just an outlet for sporting talent. It's building

confidence, leadership skills and is a source of inspiration for the next generation.

Members of the Commonwealth Games team happily help other athletes and share their story. Recently they took part in a successful high-school mentoring program, the highlight of which was Stanley Ofasisili recalling his first triathlon. Ofasisili is living proof of what can be achieved with the right mindset, encouragement and opportunity.

The next big sporting event is the South Pacific Games in Samoa. Solomon Islands will send a four-person team, its largest ever, including promising talent Diana Buaga, likely to be the first female Solomon Islands international triathlete.

In November 2007 it's off to Queensland with a team of 10 for the Noosa triathlon, a key event in Australia. The Sydney not-for-profit organisation, Cool Runnings, has donated second-hand running shoes. In Solomon Islands the athletes train barefoot but not usually on bitumen. In Noosa, they will run 10 kilometres on a hard hot road in 30 degree heat – the shoes will be handy!

The discipline of training and competing in triathlons is

giving many young people a sense of accomplishment and the community a great deal of pleasure as they chart the progress of athletes and share their success. It's a way for everyone to realise potential – but that's not all.

Largely through Ross Andrewartha's networking in the community nine previously unemployed athletes have found regular jobs. He has also helped set up a small business – a bike courier express service – for one of his star triathletes. Nathan Thompson Siofa – known as 'Thommo' – is now a regular sight in his flash yellow jacket darting about Honiara delivering parcels and documents.

Sport is just the beginning. And Ross Andrewartha, an AusAID forest manager and dedicated coach, has helped to make it happen.

Ross Andrewartha's individual generosity has been assisted by URS, managing contractor of AusAID's Solomon Islands Forestry Management Project. URS has become a major sponsor of the local team, assisting with donations of much needed swimming costumes for the triathletes and support for Andrewartha to attend the Commonwealth Games and other international events with his team. For more information about URS <www.ap.urscorp.com>

TOP: Over the last two years Ross Andrewartha has donated much of his spare time to coaching and developing local triathletes. For many he is a real local hero. Photo: Rob McColl

ABOVE LEFT: Thommo starts his courier run. Photo: URS



KIRIBATI: Global warming has serious implications for small Pacific island nations.

An older woman contemplates the weather in the small island state of Kiribati in the central Pacific Ocean, 'The sun is getting closer to my island. It is getting hotter.'

She could be right. The weather patterns that cross the 33 coral atolls that make up Kiribati seem to be changing and becoming more extreme.

DELICATE ISLAND HOME



LEFT: Riibeta Abeta who works in Kiribati's Ministry of the Environment contemplates the future. He more than most knows the importance of educating people about the possible impacts of climate change. Photo: Lorrie Graham

'We used to be able to predict the weather. We knew when the strong westerly winds would blow and when the waves would be high. But it's different now. We don't know what to expect or when,' says Kaiarake Taburuea from the Kiribati Adaptation Project.

Funded by donor nations, including Australia, New Zealand and the World Bank, the adaptation project is finding ways to reduce the country's vulnerability to climate variability and sea encroachment.

When it comes to climate change, Kiribati is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world. Its atolls which, on average, are only a few hundred metres wide lie just four metres above sea level. People live under the constant threat that inundating seawater and erosion will take their land and heavy storms will contaminate precious groundwater lenses. As one of the main sources of drinking water, groundwater lenses are critical for survival.

A groundwater lens is a layer of fresh water floating on layers

of salt water under the ground. The quality and depth varies from atoll to atoll but when there are big storms with excessive rain the lenses can become contaminated with runoff.

'Australia is helping us to improve our water management,' says Katuna Kaitara from the climate adaptation project. 'We are preparing a master plan for South Tarawa, which is very heavily populated, and this will form part of our national water plan.'

Foremost is the need to catch and preserve as much rainwater as

possible. Through its Small Grants program, AusAID continues to fund the installation of numerous water tanks in villages in South Tarawa and the outer islands, and is also helping to improve sanitation.

Most of the 90,000 people on Kiribati live a subsistence lifestyle. They rely on fish and crops such as coconuts, giant taro, breadfruit and bananas. But for the crops to thrive and continue to bear fruit they need a healthy environment and protection from seawater, sea spray and erosion.

'We are doing a lot to educate people about climate change,' says Riibeta Abeta, an officer in the Ministry of Environment. 'We have programs on the radio that discuss different concerns and we get together with communities. We are all doing the best we can to prepare ourselves and adapt to changes as they occur.'

INVESTING IN PEOPLE – EDUCATION

By working alongside partner governments Australia is helping to improve education systems in other countries. More than any other factor, education enables and accelerates development.

Around the world there are 77 million children who do not go to school. About one-third – 26 million – live in the Asia-Pacific region.

‘This is an area where 700 million people live on less than \$1 a day and 1.9 billion on less than \$2 a day,’ says Charlotte Blundell, head of AusAID’s education section. ‘Families find it difficult to send children to school because they’re needed at home. Parents rely on them for chores such as fetching water from wells, fuel from forests for cooking, or taking care of younger siblings. Children may also be needed to sell wares and produce at market stalls. In many countries, parents simply can’t afford school fees or to buy uniforms. Australia is one of the very few countries in the region where the state provides free education.’

There may be still a long way to go but, through Australia’s efforts, more children now than ever before are enrolled in school.

Yet girls, more so than boys, are likely to miss out. This is because of the different and often lower social status they occupy to males in some societies. ‘The

tragedy is it flies in the face of all the evidence which shows that investing in education for girls is one of the surest ways of breaking poverty cycles,’ says Kate Nethercott from AusAID’s gender group. ‘If a girl is educated, she is more likely to understand about health and nutrition so she’ll have a better chance of nurturing her children. Because she can read and write she’ll be able to get a better job and improve her family’s circumstances. Most importantly, because she recognises the value of education, she will do everything she can to send her children to school. And a girl who has some education stands a far better chance of protecting herself against HIV.’

AusAID’s recently released education policy, *Better Education*, shows the way to helping keep 10 million more children at school. It also aims to improve the quality and relevance of education for a further 50 million teenagers and young adults.

Underpinning the policy is a \$540 million investment over four years into the region’s education systems. There’ll also be a \$40 million contribution from Australia to the ‘Education for All Fast Track Initiative’ which is administered by the World Bank. This initiative recognises that, without drastic action, poor countries will not have either the infrastructure or the expertise to offer children even the most basic

standard of education. To help meet the immediate shortfall, funds from the ‘fast track initiative’ allow countries to extend the reach of their education systems. For example, Vietnam has been able to build or refurbish 7,000 classrooms and supply textbooks to 2,300 communes.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In Mongolia there is a special group of people affectionately known as Mozzies – short for Mongolian Aussies. They have a great deal in common – not least that they all studied in Australia on scholarships provided by the Australian Government and they’re all leaders in their chosen field.

The Mozzies regularly get together to talk about old times and share stories. They’re also proud graduates. ‘The Australian Scholarship program is most effective and well implemented. Many Mongolians who have graduated in Australia are making enormous contributions to the development of their country,’ says Nyamaa Enkhbold, the Mongolian Minister for Foreign Affairs and former Australian Development Scholarship graduate.

Since the early 1950s, under the highly successful Colombo Plan, Australia has supported the studies of students from around the Asia Pacific. The common purpose and understanding created through the Colombo Plan – namely regional

cooperation and excellence in education – remain at the core of the new program, Australian Scholarships.

Over the next five years, the number of post-secondary and professional development awards to be offered to the Asia-Pacific region will double to 19,000. It will be possible to obtain vocational qualifications and take university study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Under Australian Leadership Awards, applicants have the choice to study for a Masters degree or PhD, or undertake short-term specialist training, research or work placements.

‘The program represents a \$1.4 billion investment in the Asia-Pacific region – it’s an investment in people, institutions and progress,’ says AusAID’s Fiona Cornwell, Director of the Australian Scholarships section. ‘Students often show enormous leadership potential as well as academic ability. Many of our former scholarship holders have gone on to make very positive contributions to development in their own countries. For example, the Mayor of Banda Aceh, Marwardy Nurdin, who played such a big role in the reconstruction effort after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami – he’s an Australian Development scholar.’

ALLISON SUDRADJAT AWARDS

AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the Australian Scholarships initiative, the Australian Government is promoting sustainable development and excellence in education in the Asia-Pacific region. The program offers educational, research and professional development opportunities to support economic growth and regional ties.

Under Australian Scholarships, education awards managed by AusAID and the Department of Education, Science and Training are combined under one umbrella. These awards are:

> Australian Development Scholarships is a well-established program managed by AusAID. It aims to strengthen human resource capacity in Australia's partner countries in order to help long-term development and promote regional stability.

> Australian Leadership Awards is a new regional program managed by AusAID to develop leadership and regional partnerships. Australian Leadership Awards comprise:

- Scholarships
- Fellowships

> Endeavour Awards managed by the Department of Education, Science and Training focus on strengthening education linkages, skills and knowledge throughout the Asia-Pacific region

For more information

<www.australianscholarships.gov.au>

or <www.ausaid.gov.au/scholar>



Australian aid worker, diplomat and humanitarian, Allison Sudradjat, was one of 21 people killed on 7 March 2007 in a plane crash at Yogyakarta airport, Indonesia.

Allison Sudradjat believed in the power of education. As her many friends and colleagues attest, she regarded education as one of the central pillars of development.

In her 18 years with AusAID she dedicated her considerable talents to furthering educational opportunities in both Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. There can be, therefore, no better memorial to her life and her contribution to development than the Allison Sudradjat Awards, announced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer.

The top four Indonesian and top two Papuan New Guinean applicants for Australian

Leadership Awards will be named the Allison Sudradjat awardees each year. Typically, they will be future or existing leaders from a range of fields including the public sector, civil society, faith-based organisations or private industry.

Those who receive an Allison Sudradjat award will undertake a Masters degree or PhD in Australia in a field related to the development needs of their country. They will each receive an additional benefit valued up to \$25,000. This funding will be tailored to individual needs and interests. For example, awardees may choose to take professional work placements in Australia, or conduct further research related to their degree program in Australia, Indonesia or Papua New Guinea, or a relevant regional country. Awardees will also be able to take part in a leadership and mentoring program and will be given enhanced opportunities to meet influential Australians.

'It's fitting that Allison will be remembered through people, and through institutions of education, rather than by a plaque on a building somewhere,' says AusAID's Georgina Harley, a member of Allison's team in Jakarta. 'Her passion for development was based on her love of people so it feels right that we should cherish her memory through people who will continue her work.'

ABOVE: Allison Sudradjat (centre) with colleagues inspecting building progress on a new junior secondary school. The school is part of a basic education program for Indonesia. As AusAID's Minister Counsellor in Jakarta from 2005 until her death, Allison Sudradjat led the \$1 billion assistance package to Indonesia known as the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development. Photo: AusAID

CLASS OF 2007

The first scholars and recipients of Australian Leadership Awards under the new Australian Scholarships program have begun their studies and placements in Australia.



Lawyers meet. Justice Yang Honglei from the Supreme People's Court, China, with the Hon Justice James Jacob Spigelman, AC, Chief Justice of New South Wales. Photo: AusAID

LAW

THE JUDGE

It's a rare sight in a Sydney courtroom – a visiting judge from China seated alongside a gowned and wigged Australian counterpart. But since Dr Yang Honglei began his fellowship he has become something of a fixture on the benches of Sydney courts, listening and observing intently as legal cases are played out.

It's a world away from life in Beijing. 'When I first arrived in Sydney I could barely understand a word of English, even though I had studied it for some time in China. Now I am pleased to say I can understand about 70 per cent of what is said.'

Dr Yang is one of six Chinese lawyers in Australia as a Fellow under the Australian Leadership

Awards program. For several months he has been learning about Australian commercial law through cases heard in the District Court in Sydney, Supreme Court of New South Wales, Court of Appeal and Federal Court. 'I learn something new and valuable every day. It's wonderful. You could be here two years and not learn as much as I have in a few short months.'

This quiet judge, with an easy smile and laughter in his eyes, is a graduate of the China University of Political Science and Law. After completing a Masters degree and a PhD, Dr Yang was ready to make his mark on the rapidly growing field of commercial law. 'I very quickly found my niche in international commercial arbitration and company law. These are rapidly expanding fields in China because of the country's booming economy and rate of

development.' And of course China has been a member of the World Trade Organisation since 2001.

'I find the different approach to commercial law in Australia very interesting. I've translated a lot of decisions and work practices into Chinese to take back home to my colleagues. That way they will also benefit from my fellowship,' says the self-effacing judge.

'Long-term support for the professional development of the Chinese legal sector is fundamental to China's development,' says Sir Laurence Street, Chairman of the International Legal Services Advisory Council which is advising on the program for the Fellows. 'The judiciary is a very important institution and legal systems need to be strong, impartial and transparent.'

More broadly the fellowship program is strengthening links between the legal sectors of Australia and China and promoting mutual understanding. The six lawyers who are taking part in the program have enormous potential to influence the shape of China's legal system. 'They are very high quality candidates and represent a good cross-section of the legal profession in China,' says Sir Laurence. 'Dr Yang specialises in international commercial arbitration which is a particular issue in China and of great interest to Australia. We've arranged for Dr Yang to visit several universities and meet Australian international arbitrators. He particularly requested that the majority of his experience in Australia be in the court system dealing with commercial cases.'

When not in the courts, Dr Yang enjoys the lighter side of life, and has visited several of Sydney's famous beaches and tourist spots. 'There is a lot about Australia I will remember with great affection when I return to China.'

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

THE DOCTOR FOR MANAGEMENT



Peng Sean Sem looks forward to extending his knowledge in peace building and managing HIV/AIDS.

Photo: AusAID

When Cambodian Peng Sean Sem traded his medical career for a job in public administration it was not to a desk job. Instead the young physician found himself on the other side of the world setting up polling stations with the United Nations. As part of the municipal elections in Kosovo in 2000 he shared with the people a moment of tremendous historical significance. For the first time citizens had the opportunity to vote and take part in shaping a democracy.

Long since back from Europe, Peng Sean Sem is now studying for a Masters degree in public administration at Flinders University, South Australia. He is one of six Cambodians selected for an Australian Leadership Award scholarship.

In Cambodia Peng Sean Sem works as a monitoring and evaluations program officer for the Khmer HIV/AIDS alliance of non-government organisations,

known as KHANA. Over the next year he will expand his knowledge and skills, especially in the area of peace building and tackling HIV/AIDS. His single aim is to help his country develop.

‘Conflict has had a long-term damaging impact on my country but I believe that sound public administration can make a very big difference. If government systems work well, everything functions better and the triggers that cause conflict are greatly reduced. When this happens we can start to get on – to progress as a nation.’

NATION BUILDING

THE CURATOR

Few people can claim that they are among the first to create something of national significance in a new country but Abilio da Silva is most certainly eligible.

He is one of a small group charged with the responsibility of establishing East Timor’s first national museum. ‘During Indonesian times, East Timor had a museum,’ explains da Silva. ‘Sadly, it was badly damaged during the violence that followed the 1999 referendum and many artefacts were lost or stolen. Those that we managed to retrieve are now stored in a room in the Ministry of Education but the conditions are not adequate for conservation or preservation.’

The challenge for East Timor is to establish what will be its first museum post independence.

With colleagues Manuel Smith and Joao Fatima da Cruz, da Silva is a recipient of a fellowship under the Australian Leadership Awards. Each man is on an eight-month placement at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin.



Abilio da Silva looks forward to the day East Timor has its own museum. ‘So we can display our history, our songs and our art,’ he says. Photo: Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin

Da Silva will work on the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. This will take him through exhibition scheduling, layout and design, and just about every aspect of running a major art project. ‘I will coordinate the installation of the artworks and look after the conservation requirements as well as help with the marketing and promotion side. It will be a wonderful learning experience to take back to Dili.’

Meanwhile, Smith and da Cruz are delving into other important areas of museum management, such as the legal technicalities involved in art acquisition, and transporting and storing precious objects. There is a lot to absorb. The sound administration of a national institution also requires the writing and implementing of a disaster plan for fire, heavy rain and civil unrest.

As for da Silva, his love of history and culture goes way back. A graduate of Surabaya University in Indonesia he began his working career in the Division of Culture at the Department of Education,

Dili. ‘It’s so important for us in East Timor to have our own museum to document and display our history, our songs, and our art. We have already started talking to people in the provinces about not selling cultural objects but instead to send them to our collection so that everyone in East Timor can be familiar with them and enjoy them.’

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin is just as pleased to be part of the Australian Leadership Awards program as the fellowship holders are to be there. ‘It’s a fantastic experience for us,’ says Joanna Barrkman, Curator South-East Asian Art and Material Culture. ‘After all, East Timor is only an hour’s flight from us. Having East Timorese museum staff here develops our ability to work in the South-East Asian area. It orientates our staff to the needs and the culture of the region. Best of all, it helps strengthen our relationships and creates a platform to develop collaborative programs – be they exhibitions, research, or ongoing training programs – that benefit everyone.’

CLASS PAST

Many overseas students have benefited from secondary school scholarship programs funded by AusAID.

COMMUNICATIONS

THE EDITOR

P riscilla Raepom is the Editor of *New Age Woman* which has a circulation of 33,000 copies and rising. It’s Papua New Guinea’s most prestigious lifestyle magazine.

When the reader multiplier effect is added – one magazine may be shared among 10 or more – it’s easy to believe close to a third of a million people read *New Age Woman* each month. Increasingly, those readers are men.

‘Thirty-four per cent of our readers are male,’ Raepom explains, ‘They want to read our magazine because they’re curious about what makes women tick. I also like to think our magazine is teaching men how to support and treasure their wives and girlfriends. The reason we introduced “Man of the



Month” was so as to present good role models for Papua New Guinean men.’

The target audience is deliberately broad. ‘There’s something for everyone. Some women – those who want to make the most of their appearance – are attracted by the fashion pages, hair and make-up tips. Others are perhaps more interested in our business stories and feature articles. And the men are interested in everything!’

In important ways Raepom’s background has helped direct her chosen path. In 1990 under the Secondary School Scholarship program she won a place at All Souls School and St Gabriel’s School in Charters Towers, Queensland. ‘The experience made me more independent and gave me a glimpse into other cultures. I’m able to appreciate other viewpoints and attitudes. People were warm and welcoming and I still keep in touch with the friends I made during those crucial three years.’

A love of English literature led her to study journalism at the University of Papua New Guinea and she has been the Editor of *New Age Woman* since 2000. In that time Raepom has been able to develop her vision for the magazine

and its serious purpose. ‘I want to show Papua New Guinean women a range of possibilities. I want to open up their thinking – for them not to feel limited by circumstances. We all need to stretch ourselves and improve the quality of our lives and the lives of those around us.’

It’s a question of constantly learning and developing says Raepom. ‘I know I’ve grown over the last few years. The colleagues I started with have long since moved on – they were a great support – but I now have plenty of confidence to direct the magazine myself.’

That’s not to say it’s ever an easy job, especially when touching on subjects such as HIV/AIDS, women’s rights, domestic violence and gender equality, which some people may consider too sensitive or culturally difficult to discuss. But like any good journalist, Priscilla Raepom doesn’t flinch from the truth or from providing accurate information. For some readers, it can be – and is – life changing.

ABOVE: Editor of *New Age Woman*, Priscilla Raepom, confers with the Art Director, Kala Kamu. Photo: AusAID

The Papua New Guinea Secondary School program was an AusAID-funded scholarships program that ran between 1989 and 2002.



PACIFIC: A centre of training excellence will generate job opportunities and financial growth across the region.

World-class vocational training in the Pacific has taken a big leap forward with the opening of Vanuatu campus, one of four campuses which form the Australia–Pacific Technical College. Up to 3,000 students will graduate from the college by 2011. Other campuses will be in Fiji, Samoa and Papua New Guinea.

The Australian Government has committed \$150 million over the next four years. Courses will meet Australian standards and graduates will be awarded internationally recognised qualifications.

Subject areas include:

- > hospitality and tourism
- > health and community services
- > automotive mechanics
- > manufacturing
- > construction and electrical trades

The Australia–Pacific Technical College will give Pacific Islanders a real opportunity to improve their work skills on their home patch. And improved skills and formal qualifications will lead to better job prospects at the local, regional and international level.

‘The Australia–Pacific Technical College offers exciting training opportunities in the Pacific region that will open many new doors – training and educational opportunities that are rewarding, expanding, challenging, relevant and fun. Our goal is to make quality vocational training available



to everyone from Pacific Island Forum countries,' says Dr Peter Shepherd, the college's chief executive officer.

Two Australian technical colleges have won contracts to present accredited courses. Queensland Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE is contracted to deliver training in automotive, manufacturing, construction and electrical trades. Box Hill Institute in Victoria will deliver training in tourism and hospitality.

Australia is also establishing partnerships with business through the college to ensure training courses meet industry needs both now and in the future.

ABOVE: Dressed and ready to begin. Students for the commercial cookery course at the Hospitality and Tourism School, Vanuatu campus. Photo: AusAID

A BREAK FROM BRAC

BANGLADESH: BRAC is the country's largest non-government organisation. Its activities concentrate on reducing poverty and empowering the poor.

AusAID has been in partnership with BRAC since 2002. The two agencies have collaborated on a number of programs, the latest of which is targeting the ultra poor – women whose nutritional intake is less than 1,805 kcal [kilogram-calorie] per day.

The ultra poor typically spend 80 per cent of their income on food and yet on a daily basis fail to reach 80 per cent of the recommended calorie requirement. They are usually excluded from microfinance programs run by non-government organisations because they don't have the capacity either to use the loans effectively or make repayments.

AusAID is adding funds to BRAC's ongoing program called Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction. Its main goal is to find sustainable living options for the ultra poor.

An intensive support package is extended over two years. It includes transferring productive assets such as a goat, cow, chickens or other trading items, and providing instruction on income generation skills. Until it's possible to make a living from their new assets the women receive a daily stipend.



Health and legal services, and a caring community network, also form part of the support package.

In its first phase, from 2002 to 2006, the program targeted 100,000 ultra-poor women of whom 90 per cent graduated. This means they acquired some skills and ability to survive albeit with support from one of BRAC's other less acute microfinance programs. Altogether the current program will help around four million people classified as ultra poor by 2011. To date, AusAID has contributed \$2.1 million to help with running costs.

ABOVE: Women weed a mulberry plantation as part of a BRAC income-generating silk making program. BRAC runs mulberry cultivation projects throughout Bangladesh. Photo: GMB Akash/Panos Pictures

BRAC stands for Building Resources Across Communities

The national minimum nutritional requirement will be 2,122 kcal. The poor live on between 1,805 and 2,122 kcal per day while the ultra poor get by on less than 1,805 kcal.

CLIMBING OUT OF POVERTY



BANGLADESH: Suva Rani is typical of the many poor people given a lifeline by BRAC's North West Microfinance Expansion Project funded by AusAID.

Suva Rani from Lalmonirhat district in the country's northwest did not complete year three at primary school. Her father, an impoverished day labourer, could not afford the fees. At 15, she married Bhupal Chandra, another day labourer.

Suva and Bhupal began married life in extreme hardship. They often went hungry during the *monga* (famine season) when Bhupal was out of work. Yet Suva gave birth to four children in a few short years which brought the couple great joy but also worsened their poverty.

In 2002, along with other poor women in her area, Suva enrolled in an AusAID-funded BRAC microfinance program. During its course she was shown how to manage a loan of 4,000 taka (about \$80) to start up a paddy husking business. Suva worked furiously to make her business a success and was scrupulous about making regular repayments on her loan. Her efforts weren't in vain.

In 2003, Suva took out a second slightly larger loan. She invested the money in a cow-rearing business and sold milk in the local markets. By the end of the year she'd managed to save 14,000 taka which she used to lease a piece of land for Bhupal to cultivate.

In 2004, she took a third loan (8,000 taka) to expand her paddy husking business.

At the end of 2004, Suva's capital had risen to 25,000 taka. She set up a tube well and installed a sanitary latrine in her house. A further loan allowed her to engage her son in a banana-selling business.

In just three years, Suva's capital reached 42,000 taka, thanks to the profit from both her son's work and through selling milk at the markets. Now in 2007 she's leasing more agricultural land for banana cultivation.

While perhaps not everyone has Suva Rani's flair for business her remarkable success nevertheless demonstrates what women can achieve with access to financial advice, a manageable loan and a bit of support.

Today she stands proudly as a self-reliant woman. Each of her children goes to school, her

family is healthy and well nourished, and they can all look to a brighter future.

Suva Rani climbed her way out of poverty – and pulled her family with her – through her own determination and the chance given to her by an AusAID-funded BRAC microfinance program.

BRAC programs cover all 64 districts of Bangladesh and 78 per cent of all rural villages. BRAC employs over 95,000 people to implement its programs, the benefits of which touch 110 million people. To date, AusAID has contributed \$6.6 million to help.

ABOVE: A little help goes a long way. Suva Rani has made the most of her chance to break the poverty cycle. Photo: BRAC

VOLUNTEERING

DASH TO CHINA



CHINA: A love of travel and a desire to contribute some of his medical know-how to the developing world merged perfectly for Dashiell Gantner when he became an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development. For the past eight months, Dash has worked as a clinical research fellow at the George Institute for International Health, Beijing.

When the news came he'd been selected as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development Dash was thrilled. For a doctor with interests in epidemiology, global development and Asia, it was an opportunity 'too good to miss'. Not only was it a chance to undertake high quality clinical research at the prestigious George Institute in Beijing but it was also a chance to explore Chinese culture. 'I knew it was a fabulous opportunity to extend my research skills and to learn a great deal more about China which fascinates me, particularly at this time when it's undergoing massive social, environmental and medical changes – all at unbelievable speed.'

Dash's research is in the highly demanding areas of cardiovascular, stroke and intensive-care treatments. 'The work, and just being here, has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life. We're in the centre of Beijing

engaging every day with Chinese researchers and practitioners, collaborating on international-standard clinical studies that will influence health policy here and abroad. The eventual aim is to improve access to affordable, proven interventions for as many people as possible, and to provide a framework for better allocation of the limited Chinese health budget.'

A science graduate from Melbourne University before studying medicine and surgery at the University of Sydney, Dash has a large appetite for all things medical and international. Before completing his residency at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney he managed a stint as a volunteer medical assistant in East Timor.

Although accustomed to living and working abroad, he acknowledges that life in China can be challenging in unique ways. 'I've never met a Chinese person who didn't offer to lend a hand, even if he had no time and no experience. Unfortunately, that part often only comes out a month after the work is due to be finished!' But coping with the quirky side of the Chinese character doesn't faze him. Dash spent a year in China at the onset of Deng Xiaoping's liberalising economic reforms so brings to his assignment some useful cultural grounding. 'Everyone over the age of 30 in China has an incredible story to tell. Every family has a history of tragedy and loss. Although it might not be immediately obvious, people are actually very forthcoming about their lives, and offer amazing insights into the changes of the last 50 years.'

Australia's relationship with China is predominantly based on trade, development and

environmental concerns, yet Dash sees further opportunities. There's enormous potential, he believes, for Australian researchers to exchange skills and resources with Chinese counterparts in collaborative projects. 'Our biggest health assets in Australia are our strong culture of research and solid evidence-based policies, such as the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. We should be looking for ways to export these 'soft' resources for the benefit of hundreds of millions of impoverished Chinese.'

The George Institute for International Health, affiliated with Sydney University and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, is a dynamic organisation dedicated to finding solutions to major health problems in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region (particularly China and India). Through a close association with Peking University Health Science Centre, support of the Chinese Ministry of Health, and partnerships with researchers across China, the George Institute is producing work of outstanding quality and developing capacity within China for prudent policy development.

www.thegeorgeinstitute.org.au

AusAID's Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) program places skilled Australian volunteers, aged from 18 to 30 years, on short-term assignments in the Asia-Pacific region. For more information see www.ausaid.gov.au/youtham

ABOVE: 'The work, and just being here, has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life,' says Dashiell Gantner who is in China for a year. Photo: The George Institute

WOMEN IN BLUE

PACIFIC: More women are joining Pacific island police forces as gender equality becomes less of a myth and more of a reality.

The Pacific Regional Policing Initiative is an example of Australia's success to date in integrating gender equality into Pacific policing policies. With a deliberate focus on activities to promote women's participation and benefits, the policing initiative is ensuring women's issues are not quietly buried in a profession traditionally dominated by men. Instead it's making sure that both men and women have equal access to opportunities, such as management development.

Since the policing initiative started in 2003, there has been a measurable increase in women police across the Pacific region in both operational and training roles. There's also an increase in senior leadership support for the part played by women police and in policies that explicitly target women. Police commissioners and other senior officials are highly effective champions of gender equality, especially in their support of women in leadership positions.

But as Paulini Matavewa, Manager of AusAID's Law and Justice program in Suva, warns, it's not all plain sailing. The regional policing initiative has also exposed some serious blocks to gender equality. 'Family expectations and cultural taboos often work against career aspirations for females, as well as a lack of confidence and adequate peer support networks.'

These may be some of the factors that inhibit gender integration and equality yet the outlook is optimistic. 'We know the areas where we must do more – for example, we must improve the image of policing as a suitable and worthy profession for women and build up confidence levels.'

TOP RIGHT: Practical training session in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

RIGHT: Corporal Philipa Lini (right) from Vanuatu assists a fellow officer from the Federated States of Micronesia to take fingerprints during a crime scene management training course.

Photos: Bryn Jones/PRPI

EQUALITY IN THE AID PROGRAM

Advancing gender equality is essential to reducing poverty and increasing the effectiveness of aid. In some parts of the world women face unique barriers to participating in development projects, which limits both their capacity and that of their country.

Australia's commitment to gender equality requires that the views, needs, interests and rights of women and girls shape the development agenda as much as those of men and boys. Gender equality is at the heart of economic and social progress.



10TH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Representatives from governments, non-government organisations, donors and regional organisations gathered in Noumea for the Pacific's 10th triennial conference on women, *Pacific Women, Pacific Plan: Stepping up the Pace to 2010*. Improving gender equality in the Pacific region was the main topic for discussion. Photo: AusAID



TAKING THE CURE

KIRIBATI: Every year approximately 100 million people are infected with tuberculosis or TB. Eight million develop active or infectious TB, and about two million die. The burden of this curable disease is particularly heavy on developing countries. In the western Pacific region 3.8 million cases were recorded in 2004. Of the countries in this area, Kiribati has the highest incidence.



The small island nation of Kiribati in the Pacific is experiencing a TB epidemic. There's been about 200 reported new cases each year since 2000, mainly among adults. 'You wouldn't think that TB would be a problem in a country that has more than enough fresh air to blow away infected droplets,' says Dr Takeieta Kienene, Coordinator of the Kiribati Tuberculosis Epidemic Control Project. 'But the thing about TB is it thrives in crowded living conditions. Parts of Kiribati, especially South Tarawa, are very densely populated. Up to 20 people live in one house. And it only takes one infected person in a house not very well ventilated and there's a fair bet the others will become infected too.'

Australian assistance through the AusAID-funded epidemic control project includes constructing a new TB ward at the old hospital site in Bikenibeu, and helping Kiribati to recruit, train and mobilise community health workers.

'Kiribati is following a highly effective TB management strategy recommended by the World Health Organization called DOTS [Directly Observed Treatment Short-course],' says Dr Kienene. 'As soon as someone is identified as having the disease that person is admitted to hospital for two months intensive treatment. Once a patient returns home he is treated every day for four months by a health worker.'

Four specialist nurses travel the country identifying TB cases. They're backed up by a team of 15 health workers who manage the post-hospital home treatments. Armed with medications this group sets out each day on motorbikes to visit patients in their villages.

'Compliance is a big problem. People often start out taking their medicine regularly – that's the medicine they're given when they're released from hospital – but then they stop or forget as they begin to feel better. We've since decided the best system is not to send them home with any medication, as we used to do under the old TB treatment regimen. Now we'd rather our community health workers give it to them on their daily visits. That way our health workers can watch each patient swallow the tablets and be confident the right dose is being taken at the right time. This is the crux of the DOTS strategy. It's the only way we can be sure we're curing TB.'

ABOUT TB

Tuberculosis – also called TB – is primarily an illness of the respiratory system and, as an airborne disease, can spread quickly in densely populated areas and poorly ventilated homes, usually by coughing and sneezing. The resulting lung infection is called pulmonary TB. However, other parts of the body – for example, lymph nodes, intestines, and bones – can also be affected and this is called extra-pulmonary TB.

TOP LEFT: Photo: TB is a curable disease but it is especially serious when it affects the lungs. Patients with TB can become too ill to return to work and convalescence takes many months.

LEFT: Community health workers set off on their daily run dispensing medicines and checking patients recently discharged from the hospital's TB ward. Photos: Lorrie Graham

GOVERNANCE

MAKING PROGRESS



NAURU: The country has seen wealth come and go. Phosphate mining ushered in great prosperity but as demand fell away 10 years ago, Nauru sank into debt. Finding its way back to economic stability will take time and determination but the Government of Nauru is showing it has what it takes. Over the past three years it has posted balanced budgets.

With the help of an Australian finance team the Government of Nauru has moved steadily to implement key financial and governance reforms in debt management, business planning, public sector training and accounting. And the reforms are working. In 2006–07, Nauru's budget was looking decidedly healthier. With support from donors like Australia, the reformist government led by Ludwig Scotty is starting to turn around Nauru's fortunes.

'When we came in, all the geese that lay golden eggs had gone so we had to start from scratch. We're still on the brink. Two steps forward and one step back. Life is still risky for us,' says the President of Nauru, Ludwig Scotty.

'But one of the first things we did as a government was cut the salaries of public servants and ministers right back across the board. We all received the same amount, including me. There was a lot of grumbling at first but everyone knew Nauru had lost its properties and its aircraft. We're now on a sliding salary scale.'

Australian in-line officials are working with the Government of Nauru, through AusAID, to help the country get on its feet again. Schools are being built and refurbished and there is less absenteeism. Health and pharmaceutical services are improving and power and fuel supplies are more reliable. 'Some people think it's not good to use people from outside, that we should maintain our independent sovereignty and do everything

ourselves, but we need professional advisers. We set the policies and make decisions but we need independent, high quality advice.'

Nauru is no longer issuing investor passports, it has tightened up on banking operations and is off an international money laundering blacklist. Staff numbers in the public service and state-owned enterprises have been streamlined. Phosphate exports have recommenced on a small scale.

'We know what we must do to get the nation's finances in order,' says the Minister for Health, Kieren Keke. 'It's a matter of controlling expenditure, fixing up budgets and trying to generate revenue.'

The trouble is Nauru's main revenue base is largely limited to issuing fishing licences. 'But we're now looking at alternative ways to raise funds, such as establishing commercial fisheries and introducing secondary phosphate mining. The market for phosphate is growing again and, while this method of secondary extraction

is more complicated, the signs are that it very well may be an economic winner for us.'

With the help of the finance team from Australia and consultants provided by AusAID, Nauru is becoming once more fiscally fit. 'We're putting in place new financial systems in most state-owned enterprises,' says President Scotty. 'Accounts will be properly issued again. Part of the constitutional review process also looks at strengthening the independence of the Audit Office. We're looking at our expenditure, we're tightening our belts and we're making progress.'

TOP LEFT: Police practise drill. It's all about discipline – from fiscal responsibility to maintaining law and order.

CENTRE: Describing the steps of the constitution. There are several similar billboards on the island.

TOP RIGHT: Building up the public service. Photos: Lorrie Graham

GLOBAL EDUCATION

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

AID ACTION

Video clips on different aspects of the aid program

AusAID is producing a DVD with six short clips on the aid program. The clips cover:

- > reconstruction of Aceh
- > landmine action (de-mining)
- > mine-action (rehabilitation)
- > HIV/AIDS
- > water in Vietnam
- > volunteers, including youth ambassadors.

Curriculum material will accompany the DVD.

CLIMATE CHANGE – A TOPIC GENERATING A LOT OF HEAT!

Teaching/learning about climate change in middle secondary classrooms

Climate change is a global phenomenon affecting people and environments across the world. Communities and governments are becoming aware of global warming and its current and potential impacts. Teachers – how will it affect you and your students?

WATER POSTERS

AusAID's series of four water posters – water and health, water and work, water and environment and water and agriculture – is reprinted by popular demand.

All materials available free by emailing <books@ausaid.gov.au> or phoning (02) 6269 1050





VOLUME 22 NUMBER 3 » SEPT-DEC 2007

FOCUS IS THE MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM

Focus is published by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). It aims to increase community awareness and understanding of the Australian Government's overseas aid program, which is managed by AusAID.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of AusAID or the Australian Government.

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Proposals for articles should be sent to the Editor. AusAID does not accept responsibility for damage to, or loss of, material submitted for publication.

Design by GRI.D, Canberra
Printed by Pirion Pty Limited, Canberra

ISSN 0819-9973
Volume 22 Number 3 Sept-Dec 2007
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