



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



# MAKING IT COUNT

*Lessons from Australian electoral assistance 2006–16*  
December 2017

[dfat.gov.au/ode](https://dfat.gov.au/ode)

© Commonwealth of Australia 2017 ISBN 978-0-9954465-6-4

Published by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2017.

**Authors:** Daniel Arghiros, Horacio Boneo, Simon Henderson, Sonia Palmieri, Therese Pearce Laanela.

**Disclaimer:** The views contained in this report do not necessarily represent those of the Australian Government.

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and where otherwise noted all material presented in this document is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>). The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the CC BY 3.0 AU licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/legalcode>). The document must be attributed as Office of Development Effectiveness, *Making it count: lessons from Australian electoral assistance 2006–16*, Canberra, 2017.

This document is online at [dfat.gov.au/ode](http://dfat.gov.au/ode)

**Disclaimer:** The views contained in this report do not necessarily represent those of the Australian Government.

For further information, contact:

Office of Development Effectiveness  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
GPO Box 887  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone (02) 6178 4000  
Facsimile (02) 6178 6076

**Cover photo:** A man casts his vote for Indonesia's next president, at a polling booth in Cilincing, North Jakarta, on 8 July 2009. Photo: Josh Estey, DFAT.

### The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE)

The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) is a unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which monitors the quality and assesses the impact of the Australian aid program. ODE conducts independent evaluations of Australian aid and quality assures DFAT's aid monitoring and performance systems. ODE also supports DFAT program areas to conduct evaluations. The Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) oversees ODE's work, providing independent expert advice on DFAT's Aid Evaluation Policy, the annual Aid Evaluation Plan, ODE's strategic evaluations, and ODE's annual work plan and activities.

[dfat.gov.au/ode](http://dfat.gov.au/ode)

## FOREWORD

The quality of electoral processes in our neighbouring countries is vitally important to Australia's interests in advancing stability and growth in the region. Although electoral assistance accounts for only a small share of Australian aid, it warrants careful consideration. Elections are regular and costly events for Australia's democratic partners, and come with substantial risks. Indeed, supporting electoral processes is an area of particular sensitivity to all partner countries.

Australia has a proud democratic tradition with highly functioning electoral systems and management bodies. Broadly, this Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) evaluation concludes that over several decades Australia has built relationships and been a trusted source of expertise which has contributed to some solid achievements in improved electoral processes across the region.

However, ultimate responsibility for the quality of democracy and elections rests with the countries concerned, and Australia must respect sovereign ownership of their political and electoral systems. While fully recognising this environment, this evaluation suggests that more could be done to consider elections as an element of effective governance, and to take a broader approach that pays greater attention to gender equality and including people with disabilities. The importance of identifying needs well in advance of elections, and ensuring sustained and coordinated contributions from one election to the next, is another clear lesson. The evaluation suggests that DFAT should routinely evaluate particular types of electoral assistance—strengthening electoral systems, improving participation, or directly assisting with delivery—to determine effectiveness.

This evaluation highlights successes and weaknesses in considerable detail, using case studies to illuminate the lessons in context. It notes that some of the weaknesses (especially those related to the choice of technology, the timing of assistance and the allocation of resources) may be more fairly attributed to partner government decisions than to any deficiency in Australian assistance. These complexities are reflected well throughout the report. It leaves room for the reader to judge the underlying causes of identified problems, and where the real potential to improve future assistance may lie, while considering diplomatic and political realities.

I endorse the evaluation's recommendations, and commend the lessons for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and its electoral assistance partners to consider when deciding future support.



**Jim Adams**

Chair, Independent Evaluation Committee



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation team comprised Simon Henderson (team leader), Horacio Boneo and Therese Pearce Laanela (democratic governance and elections specialists), Sonia Palmieri (gender and social inclusion specialist) and Daniel Arghiros (governance and political economy specialist). Their expertise and experience on governance, elections, electoral assistance, gender equality and democratic participation have ensured comprehensive attention to the evaluation questions, with strong reference to international evidence.

Jacinta Overs managed the evaluation for ODE, guided by Robert Brink and Jennifer Noble, and with assistance from Rhonda Bobbin.

The evaluation team thanks DFAT staff, advisers, implementing partners and others who shared documents and gave their time for interviews and discussions. The team would especially like to thank the people who facilitated visits to Indonesia, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, enabling access to a wide range of informants and perspectives.

The team is also grateful to those who reviewed and provided extensive comments on the draft, in particular the members of the Independent Evaluation Committee. Responding to the feedback received has contributed to a clearer and more rigorous final report.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Australian Civilian Corps
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
AGENDA	General Election Network for Disability Access
AMC	Australian managing contractor
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	civil society organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
DPO	disabled people's organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ELECT	Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow
EMB	electoral management body
GII	Gender Inequality Index
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
KPU	General Election Commission, Indonesia
MWC	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators network
PWD	people with disabilities
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (see <a href="http://www.ramsi.org/">http://www.ramsi.org/</a> )
RHTO	Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (Timor-Leste)

SIDALIH

Sistem Informasi Data Pemilih (Indonesia)

SSGM

State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM)

UEC

Union Election Commission (Myanmar)

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
ABBREVIATIONS	V
CONTENTS	VII
LIST OF TABLES	VIII
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE	8
1. THE EVALUATION	14
2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	20
3. OBJECTIVES OF AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE	32
4. EFFECTIVENESS AND INCLUSIVENESS OF ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE	38
4.1 Strengthening election management systems	38
4.2 Improving the quality of participation	45
4.3 Supporting the conduct of elections	54
5. EFFICIENCY OF ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE	61
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	66
Annex A: Recommendations for program managers	72
Annex B: Inclusive assistance across the electoral cycle	76
Annex C: Case studies	78
Annex D: Description of election delivery assistance	85
Annex E: Examples of democracy institutions	86
Annex F: Data collection methods and sources	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Individual management response to recommendations .....	9
Table 2: Australian electoral assistance, 2006–16.....	16
Table 3: Stages of the evaluation.....	17
Table 4: Outline of key characteristics of study countries 2006–16.....	21
Table 5: Ratification of human rights treaties, as of January 2017.....	25
Table 6: Measures of inequality: women in parliament (2017) .....	26
Table 7: Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2015).....	27
Table 8: Estimates of disability prevalence in the study countries.....	30
Table 9: Estimated Australian aid for electoral assistance in the study countries 2006–16 .....	36
Table 10: Australian-funded training for women candidates .....	50
Table 11: Adoption of temporary special measures to improve women’s political participation .....	52
Table 12: Assistance to improve electoral participation for people with disabilities .....	53
Table 13: Challenges for electoral assistance .....	67
Table 14: Practical recommendations for DFAT electoral assistance managers .....	72
Table 15: Strategies for supporting disability-inclusive electoral processes.....	76
Table 16: Strategies for supporting gender-inclusive electoral processes.....	77
Table 17: Australian assistance for election delivery.....	85
Table 18: Data collection methods and main sources.....	87

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Major national elections covered by the evaluation.....	15
Figure 2: Democratic governance and electoral process/pluralism scores, 2006–16 .....	22
Figure 3: Distribution of electoral assistance program objectives across study countries .....	33



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

Australia has had a strong presence internationally providing electoral assistance over several decades. During the 1970s–90s, a period of intense democratisation around the world, Australia, through the Australian Electoral Commission, helped to develop global and regional public goods in the field that are still widely used. Today, most developing countries are formal democracies and are now in what is viewed as a consolidation period. Only a few that made the transition in recent times have established deeply rooted, functioning democracies. This challenging period of consolidation provides the context for the Australian electoral assistance examined in this evaluation.

## The evaluation

The evaluation examined Australian electoral assistance to major national elections in eight countries in the Asia-Pacific region over the period 2006–16: Afghanistan, Myanmar, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga (the ‘study countries’).<sup>1</sup> The evaluation covered more than 30 different initiatives, spanning some 20 major elections<sup>2</sup> and accounting for more than \$135 million in assistance in the study countries for the period. Nearly 90 per cent of the assistance covered four countries: Afghanistan (\$33 million), Indonesia (\$26 million), Papua New Guinea (\$52 million) and Solomon Islands (\$17 million).

The evaluation considered the objectives of Australian electoral assistance, and assessed effectiveness and inclusion across three areas:

- strengthening electoral management systems
- promoting participation
- supporting the conduct of elections.

## Findings and recommendations

In all the elections covered by this review, the evaluation found evidence that Australian assistance made a positive difference to the quality of elections. It also found substantial risks in providing effective, inclusive and

<sup>1</sup> The study countries were those that received more than \$1 million per country per year in electoral assistance 2006–16.

<sup>2</sup> Australia’s support for PNG’s 2017 national election was outside the scope of the ODE evaluation, but will be considered as part of an independent evaluation in 2018.

efficient electoral assistance. The risks arise from the operational challenges posed by elections themselves, and constraints imposed by the institutional, political and cultural environment in which elections take place.

The findings and recommendations are intended to improve DFAT's future leadership and management of Australian electoral assistance, while noting that such assistance is highly context-specific. The evaluation acknowledges that the scope for change will depend on the nature of Australia's relationship with the countries concerned, and may be constrained by sensitivities around governance and elections.

Recommendations 1–4 suggest high-priority central actions for DFAT, to bolster broader approaches for more effective, inclusive and efficient Australian electoral assistance. Recommendation 5 is focused at the program level and provides practical suggestions—to be incorporated in a revised *Election handbook*—to improve electoral assistance covering the three typical areas of investment.

## Objectives of electoral assistance

Australia's interest in supporting elections in the Asia-Pacific region reflects, in part, its own democratic values and commitment to universal human rights and Australia's foreign, development and trade policy interests. Australian aid policy with respect to democracy shifted over the period of the review. Democratic governance was previously identified as a principle of Australian aid, along with the implicit assumption that support for improved elections would translate into better governance. More recently, while not precluding a principled stance, the policy has been pragmatic. It has emphasised support for institutions fostering economic growth, accountability, legitimacy and long-term stability rather than representative government *per se*.

Electoral assistance over the review period was remarkably similar across the different countries, and was delivered through a consistent group of partners. It was predominantly technical, targeting capacity building, expert advice, other support and materials, with an emphasis on electoral management bodies (EMBs). Inclusion and gender-equality objectives featured, but to varying degrees and typically as stand-alone, targeted and small-scale elements. Direct engagement on political issues affecting the conduct and integrity of elections was much less evident, though there were exceptions to this. Electoral assistance in the study countries has not typically been anchored in a broader strategy to promote democratic or accountable governance or linked closely to other governance support.

DFAT's *Election handbook* states that in fragile environments, electoral assistance should be 'one strand of efforts to improve wider governance: elections alone are not sufficient for effective governance or a reduction in violence in fragile or conflict-affected contexts.'<sup>3</sup> The evaluation's overall findings confirm that improving technical support alone, while important, is unlikely to improve electoral processes in challenging institutional, political and cultural environments; coordination, continual management and diplomatic engagement are also required.

Considering the limitations of technical support, and the need for more flexible and adaptive assistance, the evaluation recommends:

### RECOMMENDATION 1

Electoral support should be located within DFAT's wider strategy for effective governance in a country, and more clearly integrated with other governance programs, supported by effective coordination, management and diplomatic engagement.

<sup>3</sup> DFAT 2017, *Election handbook: guidance on developing policy and delivering assistance*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 13. The *Election handbook* (launched in 2016; updated in March and October 2017) provides internal guidance for DFAT posts and country desks on developing a policy approach and/or delivering development assistance to other countries conducting electoral processes.

## Effectiveness and inclusiveness of electoral assistance<sup>4</sup>

### Strengthening election management systems

The effectiveness of assistance to strengthen election management systems has been mixed. A major shortcoming has been the mismatch between recognising (for example, in program designs) the benefits of an electoral cycle approach,<sup>5</sup> while in practice continuing with a succession of separate projects. Projects were often later than ideal, and focused narrowly on the electoral management body. An important exception was Indonesia, where a very small but strategic and sustained contribution from Australia joined national momentum for reform, alongside international, civil society and national contributions. These collective efforts succeeded in creating the world's largest national centralised voter registration system.

Support for **voter registration** was effective in improving the accuracy of registers in Fiji, Indonesia, Myanmar and Solomon Islands. In Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea, however, support to strengthen voter registration did not contribute to significant improvements in the quality of voter lists. In difficult political economy contexts, the value of voter registration gains has been diluted by other threats to electoral integrity, such as vote buying or opportunities for corruption of officials. In those countries where stakeholders' commitment to the broader democratic process has been weak, gains achieved in the quality of voter registration began to depreciate almost immediately.

The importance of voter registration for inclusive elections has not yet been systematically or comprehensively addressed. There were problems with sustainability of technology-intensive registration solutions (such as biometric voter registration), related to long-term financing, technical capacity and ownership. DFAT has not routinely evaluated the effects of its investments in voter registration.

**Capacity building in electoral management bodies** has sometimes been effective, but overall its success has been mixed within and across countries. Gains have been greatest at the level of individuals, through people-focused investments including professional exchange programs, graduate recruitment, study tours, regional networking, peer-to-peer dialogue, and structured, contextualised training. There was some evidence of improvements in the organisational capacity of electoral management bodies, such as improved planning and operational procedures, better financial management, enhanced IT systems and increased HR capacity. The least evidence of success was found in addressing institutional (legislative, financial and political) constraints on electoral management bodies' capacity to operate effectively.

There was little evidence of deliberate strategies underpinning capacity building assistance, and assistance was not always well tailored to the key challenges, in particular the challenges of addressing gender equality and inclusion within electoral management bodies.

### Promoting participation in elections<sup>6</sup>

**Voter awareness programs** have been a key element of Australian assistance in all the study countries. The evaluation found that while there are good reasons for continuing voter awareness support, there is scope for Australian aid to take a more targeted and evidence-based approach.

<sup>4</sup> Inclusive development recognises that all members of a population are both beneficiaries and agents of development. An inclusive approach seeks to identify and remove barriers that prevent people from participating in and benefiting from development. In this evaluation, we interpret inclusiveness as **inclusion of all citizens and incorporating gender equality objectives**.

<sup>5</sup> The electoral cycle approach encourages planning and resourcing elections as a continuous process, rather than as periodic, isolated events. Box 5 (Chapter 4) provides further details.

<sup>6</sup> Strategies for promoting participation throughout the electoral cycle are provided in **Annex B**. Table 14 suggests strategies for disability-inclusive electoral assistance; and Table 15 suggests strategies for gender-inclusive electoral assistance.

Australian assistance generally did not address the more sensitive factors affecting the quality of participation, such as constituency size, the state of political parties, campaign finance and election-related anti-corruption measures. The exception was electoral support to Indonesia (2011–15), where cooperation with a range of actors on electoral integrity was made possible by a domestically driven reform agenda.

DFAT's Effective Governance Strategy<sup>7</sup> requires that gender issues are incorporated into programming. Australian electoral assistance has sought to **increase women's participation**—and specifically to redress the paucity of women elected across the region—primarily through candidate training. This assistance has emphasised women's individual capacity to run, more so than the institutional or electoral environment in which they run. The focus has commonly been on numbers—increasing the number of women candidates, polling officials, voters and elected officials.<sup>8</sup>

Recent reviews of the utility and effectiveness of women's electoral participation programs have concluded that a more holistic approach is required. A more holistic approach would need to address wider attitudes and norms<sup>9</sup> and legal and institutional barriers,<sup>10</sup> and provide practical strategies to empower women for genuine participation throughout the electoral cycle. There are signs that program areas are beginning to think more strategically about their work on women's political leadership, but a holistic approach needs to become the primary approach for DFAT.

To support a more holistic and strategic approach to gender equality, the evaluation recommends:

#### RECOMMENDATION 2

DFAT should adopt a structured approach to mainstreaming gender equality in electoral assistance, by developing a policy or guidance note on women's electoral participation and leadership (linked to the *Election handbook*) that would assist program managers in considering:

- structural and institutional approaches to mainstreaming gender equality in electoral assistance, instead of the current focus on individual women
- how to position electoral support aimed at gender equality within broader strategies to advance gender equality or women's leadership.

Despite strong (and internationally renowned) DFAT policy guidance on **disability inclusion**, disability mainstreaming in electoral assistance has been a significant challenge. Inclusion of people with disabilities has been promoted through high-level policy dialogues, and targeted support to civil society for specific purposes, but has fallen well short of mainstreaming. Disability-inclusion efforts have prioritised physical access to polling places by people with disabilities, rather than their political empowerment. The focus has been on ensuring they are able to register, and vote and observe elections, rather than on breaking down cultural barriers to their participation and indeed on their election. The degree of attention to disability

<sup>7</sup> DFAT 2015, *Effective governance: strategy for Australia's aid investments*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 14. *Effective governance* provides guidance to DFAT teams on how to design, implement and assess governance programming.

<sup>8</sup> In Papua New Guinea's 2017 elections, women may have been prevented from voting in some locations. Several female candidates campaigned quite strongly, but no women were elected to parliament—down from three women MPs in 2012 (Source: Development Policy Centre, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University [2017], *PNG after the elections*, podcast, <https://itunes.apple.com/au/podcast/development-policy-centre-podcast/id576275861?>). Australia's support for PNG's 2017 national election was outside the scope of the ODE evaluation, but will be considered as part of an independent evaluation in 2018.

<sup>9</sup> These norms include those that prevent women from having a secret vote, expose women to violence and sexual harassment during elections, and prevent women from campaigning and being elected in proportionate measure.

<sup>10</sup> These barriers include prohibitive campaign finance and expenditure legislation, political party regulations, and institutionalised discrimination and harassment.

inclusion in electoral assistance has been driven more by individuals' motivation and relationships within DFAT, rather than by policy or technical imperatives.

To encourage more holistic and comprehensive attention to disability inclusion in electoral assistance, the evaluation recommends:

### RECOMMENDATION 3

DFAT should extend the current range of disability-inclusion programming objectives from the promotion of electoral participation and access for people with disabilities, to their political empowerment and representation.

#### Supporting the conduct of elections

**Short-term, operational support** to help deliver elections was provided in half the study countries. In each country, Australian assistance appears to have contributed to a better-run election than would otherwise have been the case. A stiffer test of effectiveness, however, is whether the possible delays or disorganisation averted by Australia's assistance would have mattered, and whether the adverse consequences prevented justified the cost. This was harder to judge, but the evaluation team concluded that the level of Australian support for delivery may have been greater than necessary.<sup>11</sup> The evaluation found some evidence that DFAT was learning from experience with election delivery and gradually improving planning, expertise and deployment strategies over time.

Australia supported a variety of forms of **election observation** in all the countries examined. The variation in forms of observation supported, and the focus of observation on the election day, meant Australia has lagged behind international best practice in this area.<sup>12</sup> There were selected good examples of Australian assistance for disability-inclusive election monitoring in Timor-Leste, and regionally through the General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA).<sup>13</sup> Overall, the evaluation found scope for Australia to develop a more strategic and fit-for-purpose approach to observation. Australia could also do more to jointly reflect on election observation experience with countries in the region.

#### Efficiency of electoral assistance

Australia is well regarded by implementing organisations and partner countries alike for the **responsiveness and flexibility** of its electoral assistance. But ensuring efficiency in Australian electoral assistance also requires continuing attention to a number of issues.

The evaluation found that **assistance that came too late** in the electoral cycle most likely entailed significant efficiency losses. Reliance on a **set-menu approach** to electoral assistance also likely incurred efficiency losses. Even though more recent program design documents included detailed analyses of context, translating the implications into appropriate program designs appeared to be a challenge. Better electoral assistance designs should feature support across the electoral cycle that is tailored to reflect the varying workload.

<sup>11</sup> Papua New Guinea in 2012 was an important exception, due to the imperative to meet the constitutional timetable for elections.

<sup>12</sup> The evaluation found limited evidence that DFAT's electoral observation activities aligned with the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers* (United Nations, 2005), in particular the requirements of: impartiality; a long-term countrywide presence; comprehensive reporting; and qualified, competent and experienced personnel (including country knowledge).

<sup>13</sup> AGENDA is a partnership between the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and election-focused civil society organisations, and aims to improve access to political and electoral opportunities for people with disabilities. It is funded by DFAT and USAID.



Australian electoral assistance was delivered through a range of competent partners, but in some cases **the higher costs of some partners** may not have yielded the expected benefits (such as superior technical knowledge or reduced political risks). Implementing partners should be selected based on a careful appraisal of their respective costs and benefits, including the costs of coordinating their contributions.

The international operations of the **Australian Electoral Commission** declined during the review period, due to pressure from domestic (Australian) priorities, institutional restructuring and reduced access to Australian development assistance.<sup>14</sup> While the AEC is now re-engaging in its international work, new entrants and a changing aid landscape may necessitate a different approach.

**Continuous improvement** is an important strategy for supporting efficiency, but the evaluation found no systematic approach to evaluating the success of electoral assistance in different contexts. Comparative analysis—for example, of alternative options for voter registration, the relative efficacy of different voter awareness campaigns, effective means of engaging civil society organisations—has not been systematically undertaken. Such learning could inform the design of future electoral assistance and the decisions of electoral stakeholders in the region.

Deep understanding of the political and institutional context in which assistance is provided is a foundational principle in DFAT's Effective Governance Strategy. Australia has much relevant expertise on electoral assistance, gender equality and social inclusion, as well as deep knowledge about the political and institutional situation in neighbouring countries. This **expertise and knowledge** are housed in individuals, different parts of academia and public sector bodies (including the Australian Electoral Commission and DFAT). They are not well coordinated or systematically accessed in electoral support programming.

The evaluation strongly endorses the importance of an 'investment in staff'<sup>15</sup> to ensure they have adequate understanding of the institutional environment; but such understanding also requires multidisciplinary, longitudinal analysis within countries, spanning electoral cycles. DFAT is well placed to establish and coordinate a repository of expertise and knowledge through its electoral reference group.<sup>16</sup> The explicit goals would be to: bring existing knowledge and new learning together more coherently and systematically; build DFAT's institutional knowledge base; and make this expertise and knowledge more accessible to DFAT staff.

To improve how DFAT accesses and applies electoral knowledge and expertise, the evaluation recommends:

#### RECOMMENDATION 4

DFAT should seek to build a sustainable electoral assistance capability outside any single program, and enhance the analytical and advisory resources available to staff responsible for designing and managing electoral assistance.

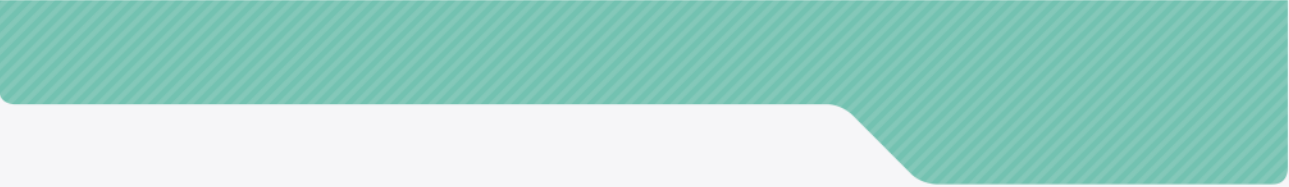
This might entail: identifying upcoming major electoral events over the next five years in countries where DFAT has an interest, and convening relevant expertise to develop and preposition assistance strategies in collaboration with program staff; supporting strategic gender and diversity mappings or assessments;<sup>17</sup> harnessing available expertise to support programs' risk monitoring in the years immediately before major

<sup>14</sup> Reductions in Australian aid affected the AEC's international operations.

<sup>15</sup> DFAT 2015, *Effective governance: strategy for Australia's aid investments*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Governance and Fragility Branch established an Elections Reference Group in 2015 to inform the first *Election handbook*, and maintains a registry of DFAT electoral expertise. Posts and program areas may use the register to identify staff with experience in leading or managing electoral assistance in particular regions, or with a particular technical focus.

<sup>17</sup> For gender-equality mapping, the Electoral Gender Mapping Framework may prove a useful tool, available at Annex C of Ballington, J, Bardall, G, Palmieri, S & Sullivan, K 2015, *Inclusive electoral processes: a guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women's participation*, UN Women & UNDP, New York, pp. 106–17.



elections; and deploying experts immediately after elections, and after completing major investments, to review what happened, the lessons learned and options to shape more effective support in future.

### Program management recommendations

The lessons on effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency of electoral assistance cannot be adequately applied through centralised management responses alone. Deciding the most appropriate type and scale of assistance, engaging strategically with stakeholders, delivering timely assistance, adapting to implementation challenges, managing risks, and using evidence to support continuous improvement are the responsibilities of DFAT staff on geographic desks and at overseas posts. Improving these aspects of electoral assistance requires practical suggestions for those who are charged with the design or oversight of electoral assistance programs.

A key source of existing guidance for staff who manage electoral assistance is DFAT's *Election handbook*.<sup>18</sup> The handbook is conceptually strong and is an important resource to sensitise officials to issues that arise when elections are on the horizon.

To incorporate lessons from this evaluation into improved electoral assistance management and practice, the evaluation recommends:

#### RECOMMENDATION 5:

Governance and Fragility Branch, in consultation with the Elections Reference Group and other key stakeholders, should augment and strengthen the guidance available in the *Election handbook*, with reference to the evidence-based suggestions provided in Annex A (Table 13).

<sup>18</sup> DFAT 2017, *Election handbook: guidance on developing policy and delivering assistance*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 13.

# MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

## Summary of management response

The evaluation *Making it count: lessons from Australian electoral assistance 2006-16* is a comprehensive and useful document. We find the insights into the country programs examined and elections assistance more generally, of considerable importance as we plan for the future. The evaluation was well informed by in-country visits to Indonesia, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, and access to program documents from the other study countries. DFAT thanks the review team for its endorsement of the DFAT *Election handbook* and recognition of the important role it plays in supporting both policy and programming. We also welcome the useful suggestions for enhancing the Handbook. DFAT thanks the members of the review team for their hard work.

DFAT continues to invest substantially in supporting electoral processes in the Indo-Pacific region, both through political engagement and development assistance. Elections provide a formal mechanism for improving representative governance, the responsiveness of states to their citizenries and the peaceful transfer of power. Elections in our region matter for Australia's foreign, development and trade policy interests; they can support or undermine stability, prosperity and growth.

DFAT welcomes the findings of the evaluation particularly around the positive contribution that Australian assistance has made to the quality of elections. Notwithstanding this positive finding we recognise the risks the evaluation notes around political sensitivities, and the institutional and cultural constraints to the provision of electoral assistance which may prevail. We also recognise the need to look for ways to coordinate and integrate our technical inputs to technical support programs as well as our diplomatic and management efforts.

The evaluation also raises some of the more difficult issues we face as a donor in assisting countries with their electoral processes. The issue of voter registration, voter lists and how to assess the usefulness and cost effectiveness of technology-intensive electronic registration systems, are often sensitive issues but finding a way to assist countries in our region manage these is an ongoing challenge. Programs have been working for many years towards making elections more inclusive of women and people with disabilities, and we recognise the distinct challenge to move beyond access and inclusion towards the objectives of empowerment and leadership. In many of the smaller countries where DFAT works, the electoral management bodies are often very small and/or semi-permanent and finding ways to build their capacity to run elections is sometimes problematic. We recognise the usefulness of incorporating electoral support with other broader governance programming where it offers advantages and is more effective, and some programs are already looking to their forward planning to do so.

DFAT will continue to develop its expertise around elections support, both through enhancements and additions to the DFAT *Election handbook* such as the DFAT *Elections observation mission guide*, the *Guidance note on elections in fragile and conflict affected states*, but also by more coordinated planning and work with partners such as the Australian Electoral Commission.

Table 1: Individual management response to recommendations

<b>RECOMMENDATION 1:</b>	
Electoral support should be located within DFAT's wider strategy for effective governance in a country and more clearly integrated with other governance programs, supported by effective coordination, management and diplomatic engagement.	
<b>Response</b>	Agree
<b>Explanation</b>	<p>Not all country programs include elections support. Where they do, they will look for opportunities to integrate it with broader governance strategies.</p> <p>Some programs report they already link electoral support to other strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Fiji, electoral support is integrated into a broader governance program.</li> <li>• The Myanmar program has a wide range of support for democratic institutions, parliamentary processes, civil society, elections commission and justice reforms. Myanmar is currently using an electoral cycle approach and supports the election commission's strategic plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible area and timeframe</b>	<p>Geographic Sections</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<b>Action plan</b>	<p>Governance Section will engage with geographic desks and Posts to advocate for more integrated and coordinated governance programming which includes electoral support where possible.</p> <p>Specific actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Cambodia program does not provide support for elections, but will consider governance strengthening (including elections) during its Country Strategy and Aid Investment Plan discussions in 2018.</li> <li>• The PNG program is undertaking an independent review of its support for the 2017 PNG elections in early 2018. This will consider the possible aligning of electoral support with broader support for governance.</li> <li>• Solomon Islands program will establish a monthly working group in 2018 spanning the Political, Economic, Justice and Governance, and Policing teams to ensure they are closely integrated and coordinated in their approach to democratic governance and elections in 2019.</li> <li>• In some smaller programs such as Tonga, electoral support is of mostly a short-term technical nature with the local elections management body. Broader questions around women's empowerment and leadership will be raised through civil society, the media, and policy dialogue.</li> <li>• The Timor-Leste program was commended by the evaluation for its electoral cycle approach and it will consider incorporating elections into broader governance programming in the Aid Investment Plan update in 2018–19.</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATION 2:

DFAT should adopt a structured approach to mainstreaming gender equality in electoral assistance, by developing a policy or guidance note on women's electoral participation and leadership (linked to the *Election handbook*) that would assist program managers in considering:

- structural and institutional approaches to mainstreaming gender equality in electoral assistance, instead of the current focus on individual women
- how to position electoral support aimed at gender equality within broader strategies to advance gender equality or women's leadership.

<b>Response</b>	Agree
<b>Explanation</b>	<p>DFAT recognises the importance of focusing on structural and institutional approaches to gender equality, in addition to supporting initiatives which promote individual women's leadership, including consideration of temporary special measures.</p> <p>DFAT's program Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, for example, has a focus on supporting women's leadership and decision-making.</p>
<b>Responsible area and timeframe</b>	<p>Gender Equality Branch, Governance Section and Posts</p> <p>End 2018</p>
<b>Action plan</b>	<p>DFAT's Gender Equality Branch is developing a strategy to provide guidance for officers on how to design programs which support women's leadership and empowerment. This will include program-level strategies aimed at working to address structural and institutional barriers to women's participation and how to link up electoral and broader governance and gender programming.</p> <p>Governance Section will draw on the content of the overarching strategy to create a guidance note specific to elections programming. It will be the responsibility of DFAT Posts to look at ways to promote women's empowerment and leadership, including and beyond women's representation in legislatures, across all aspects of their engagement.</p> <p>PNG Program will consider how best to support women's empowerment and leadership in the design of its support program for the 2022 election.</p> <p>Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development is developing a program to increase women's participation and voice in political processes in the Pacific, with a focus on a more holistic approach to women's participation throughout the electoral cycle. The program will be delivered intensively in up to three countries in the Pacific, with some elements implemented across the region.</p>



### RECOMMENDATION 3:

DFAT should extend the current range of disability-inclusion programming objectives from the promotion of electoral participation and access for people with disabilities, to their political empowerment and representation.

<b>Response</b>	Agree
<b>Explanation</b>	<p>DFAT's disability strategy <i>Development for all 2015-2020</i> includes a focus on the empowerment of people with disabilities. One of its focus areas is supporting disabled people's organisations to engage in advocacy.</p> <p>DFAT can do more to identify opportunities within elections programs for strategies focused on political empowerment and representation of people with disabilities.</p>
<b>Responsible area and timeframe</b>	Geographic Desks, Posts and Disability Section Ongoing
<b>Action plan</b>	DFAT will build the capacity of officers and implementing partners to identify and respond to opportunities for increasing disability-inclusion, including supporting the political empowerment and representation of people with disabilities. DFAT will also draw on the expected recommendations and management response from the forthcoming ODE evaluation of disability programming across DFAT to strengthen disability mainstreaming and empowerment programs.

### RECOMMENDATION 4:

DFAT should seek to build a sustainable electoral assistance capability outside any single program, and enhance the analytical and advisory resources available to staff responsible for designing and managing electoral assistance.

<b>Response</b>	Agree
<b>Explanation</b>	Within available resources, programs will be supported in designing and managing electoral support activities.
<b>Responsible area and timeframe</b>	Governance Section, Australian Electoral Commission and Australia Assists <sup>19</sup> Ongoing
<b>Action plan</b>	<p>DFAT will continue to use a number of strategies to ensure it is able to give analytical and advisory support to geographic areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• maintaining its elections focal point within Governance, Fragility and Water Branch</li><li>• an active Elections Reference Group, drawing on key stakeholders across the Department and within the Australian Electoral Commission</li><li>• regular and close collaboration with the Australian Electoral Commission and other key stakeholders such as IFES.</li></ul>

<sup>19</sup> Australia Assists combines the Australian Civilian Corps (ACC) and RedR's humanitarian response roster in 'a new integrated civilian capability that will encompass the whole disaster cycle' (<https://www.redr.org.au/australia-assists/>).

## RECOMMENDATION 5:

Governance, Fragility and Water Branch, in consultation with the Elections Reference Group and other key stakeholders, should augment and strengthen the guidance available in the Elections Handbook, with reference to the evidence-based suggestions provided in Annex A (Table A1, Sub-Recommendations 1.1 to 8.2).

Response	Mostly Agree
----------	--------------

Explanation	<p><b>Recommendations 1.1-1.3 (electoral cycle approach):</b> can be readily reflected in the Election handbook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance Section will update the Election handbook accordingly (by first quarter 2018).</li></ul> <p><b>Recommendation 2.1 (risk ratings and review):</b> The <i>Risk management for aid investment better practice guide</i> discusses how officers should assess risk and then re-assess after treatments have been applied, and that this should be reviewed regularly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance Section will add a link to the appropriate sections of the <i>Risk management for aid investment better practice guide</i> and the <i>DFAT Election handbook</i> (by first quarter 2018).</li></ul> <p><b>Recommendation 2.2 (risk assessment approach):</b> The <i>Risk management for aid investment better practice guide</i> advises officers to embed risk management conversations into regular partner/stakeholder meetings (at least once a month), to ensure risks are being managed as planned and identify any new and emerging risks. This Guide also contains DFAT's official checklist for risk assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance Section will add a link to the appropriate sections of the <i>Risk management for aid investment better practice guide</i> and to the <i>DFAT Election handbook</i> (by first quarter 2018).</li></ul> <p><b>Recommendation 3.1 (capacity building):</b> DFAT's forthcoming <i>Capacity development guide</i> contains specific reference to the need for officers to provide support based on detailed analysis of where capacity constraints are most limiting, and for inclusion issues to an integral part of capacity building strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance Section will add a link to the appropriate section of the <i>DFAT Capacity development guide</i> and to the <i>DFAT Election handbook</i> (by second quarter 2018).</li></ul> <p><b>Recommendation 3.2 (voter awareness):</b> As voter awareness programs are either offered by the EMB, CSOs or larger bodies like the UNDP, DFAT is not best placed to roll out its own program, but is rather relying on partners. However, the <i>Election handbook</i> could be amended to reflect these suggestions for officers to pursue with implementing partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance Section will amend the <i>DFAT Election handbook</i> to reflect the need for baselines, quality controls and integrating voter education into an electoral cycle approach (by second quarter 2018).</li></ul> <p><b>Recommendations 3.3 and 7.2 (voter registration):</b> A comparative analysis of the merits of different voter registration systems would be useful, but is beyond the capacity of DFAT to undertake at this time due to resource constraints.</p>
-------------	---

• Action plan, responsible area and timeframe	
---	--

---

**Recommendation 4.1 (managing last-minute requests):** The Risk management for aid investment better practice guide discusses how officers should assess risk and then re-assess after treatments have been applied, and that this should be reviewed regularly.

- Governance Section will add a link to the appropriate sections of the *Risk management for aid investment better practice guide* in the *DFAT Election handbook* (by first quarter 2018).

**Recommendation 5.1-5.2 (gender equality and inclusion):** See response to Recommendation 2 on gender mainstreaming, and Recommendation 3 on disability-inclusion.

**Recommendation 6.1-6.4 (election observation or monitoring):** Governance Section is currently developing a *DFAT Elections observation mission (EOM) guidelines* document which contains references to the Copenhagen Document and the Declaration of Principles on International Elections Observation. It draws heavily from the OSCE and EU guides to election observation-which are based on the Declaration of Principles. The *EOM Guidelines* will be able to accommodate most of the suggestions in Recommendation 6.

- Governance Section will develop a *DFAT Election Observer Mission Guide* which will reflect the suggestions in Recommendation 6 (by end 2018).

**Recommendation 7.1** As per Recommendation 6 DFAT can reflect the need for officers to run post-activity evaluations to assess the effectiveness of program support to elections by reference to the Aid Programming Guide.

- Governance Section will update the *DFAT Election handbook* to contain a reference to the appropriate section of the APG which deals with evaluations of effectiveness (by second quarter 2018).
-

# 1. THE EVALUATION

This chapter describes the evaluation purpose, questions, scope and methodology.

## Evaluation purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, inclusiveness<sup>20</sup> and efficiency of Australian electoral assistance, and to provide practical lessons for DFAT's future aid policy and program engagement. The evaluation has both accountability and learning dimensions, but the study's main emphasis is learning.

The evaluation sought to answer three overarching questions:

1. **Effectiveness:** How and to what extent have Australian electoral assistance programs achieved their objectives (including whole-of-government, foreign policy and program-specific objectives)?
2. **Inclusiveness:** How and how well has Australian electoral assistance addressed discriminatory social norms and practices that prevent the equal participation of all citizens in the conduct of elections?
3. **Efficiency:** How efficient and cost-effective was Australian assistance compared to alternatives?

The main intended audience is DFAT's Development Policy Division (Governance and Fragility Branch). The evaluation is also expected to inform senior decision-makers in DFAT geographic areas and those who manage DFAT's electoral assistance programs. It may also be of interest to other Australian organisations engaged in electoral assistance, notably: the Australian Electoral Commission, which supports peer electoral management bodies in the region; the Australian Civilian Corps, which has provided operational support for a number of elections regionally; Australian managing contractors; and academia. Beyond Australia, the evaluation may interest international organisations that provide electoral assistance, and other donors active in this field of development.

Many of Australia's electoral support programs have been the subject of program reviews or evaluations, but Australia has not previously undertaken a broad thematic evaluation of electoral assistance that allows lessons to be learned from many countries over a period longer than one electoral cycle.

<sup>20</sup> Inclusive development recognises that all members of a population are both beneficiaries and agents of development. An inclusive approach seeks to identify and remove barriers that prevent people from participating in and benefiting from development. (Definition developed from DFAT's *Development for all 2015–2020: strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*, 2015.) In this evaluation, we therefore interpret inclusiveness as inclusion of all citizens and incorporating gender-equality objectives.

## Evaluation scope

The evaluation focused on the Asia-Pacific region, where most Australian electoral assistance has been provided.<sup>21</sup> It examined assistance to national elections in eight countries (the ‘study countries’) from 2006 to 2016: Afghanistan, Myanmar, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea,<sup>22</sup> Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga. The evaluation examined more than 30 initiatives, accounting for more than \$130 million in assistance and spanning 20 national elections (Figure 1).

In examining Australia’s support for more inclusive elections, the evaluation focused specifically on gender and disability, but also considered inclusion of other important groups where relevant and feasible, including ethnic minorities.

Figure 1: Major national elections covered by the evaluation



<sup>21</sup> The study countries were those that received more than \$1 million per country per year in electoral assistance from 2005–06 to 2015–16.

<sup>22</sup> Australia’s support for PNG’s 2017 national election was outside the scope of the ODE evaluation, but will be considered as part of an independent evaluation in 2018.



The evaluation identified three broad areas of assistance and eight specific areas of activity, as summarised in Table 2:

Table 2: Australian electoral assistance, 2006–16

Area of assistance	Specific activities
Election management systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voter registration, for example electronic voter registration in Fiji and Solomon Islands</li> <li>• Strengthening electoral management bodies (EMBs), especially through long-term technical assistance to improve election planning and delivery (in cooperation with the Australian Electoral Commission), study tours, regional and peer-to-peer networking (through the AEC-hosted PIANZEA network) and training (particularly BRIDGE23)</li> <li>• Reform of electoral institutions, laws and policies. For example, organisational reform of the Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission was a priority for electoral assistance in PNG, while in Indonesia Australia supported reforms to make elections more inclusive for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>
Improving the quality of participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society activities to raise voters' awareness about elections and voting, for example media development and civic education in Afghanistan, Indonesia and Timor-Leste</li> <li>• Support to improve women's participation in elections (as electoral officials, candidates and voters)</li> <li>• Activities to enable greater access to (and confidence in) polling stations, including for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>
Supporting the conduct of elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term operational support to deliver elections, mainly through specialists provided from the Australian Civilian Corps (ACC)</li> <li>• International and regional election observation to independently assess the integrity of elections, for example in Afghanistan and Solomon Islands.</li> </ul>

## Approach and methodology

The overall approach to the evaluation was qualitative and involved examining the causes of observed effects (rather than estimating the magnitude of those effects). The design used a case study approach, combining within-case analysis of study countries and comparisons across case countries. Findings were derived from examining individual cases and making qualitative comparisons. The evaluation was not designed to provide summative judgements at the level of individual country programs, but rather to look across the experiences in different countries to formulate forward-looking lessons. The evaluation had four stages (Table 3):

<sup>23</sup> Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) is a professional development program for electoral administrators, the media, political parties and electoral observers. It was conceptualised and nurtured by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and is now used worldwide. BRIDGE is delivered through five implementing partners: the AEC; International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES); International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and United Nations Electoral Assistance Division.

Table 3: Stages of the evaluation

Evaluation stage	Activities	Primary aims
1. Desk review	Review of program documentation, and contextual research and analysis for eight study countries. Remote interviews with officials and implementing partners involved in the delivery of the programs	Define and characterise the programs included in the evaluation (context, objectives, duration, expenditure, and implementation). Identify preliminary patterns of and differences in performance. Validate/augment documentary findings through interviews.
2. Case country analysis	Short visits to three countries: Solomon Islands, Indonesia and Timor-Leste	Explore specific aspects of assistance (identified during desk review). Validate/triangulate desk review findings through interviews with in-country stakeholders.
3. Face-to-face interviews	Interviews with Canberra-based stakeholders	Test preliminary findings with government and external (academic and independent) stakeholders.
4. Main analysis	Analysis and synthesis of findings Discussion of implications	Generate key findings, conclusions and recommendations from the data collected in the preceding stages.

The evaluation team synthesised empirical data from the document review and interviews<sup>24</sup> into templates informed by the evaluation questions and the team’s expertise. The templates provided a common analytical framework across the study countries and were used to:

- describe and characterise the nature of the Australian assistance in the study countries (such as expenditure, objectives, partners)
- identify key themes (based on the evaluation questions) to inform more analytical enquiry across the study countries (such as the effectiveness of different aspects of assistance across study countries and the extent to which gender equality and social inclusion aspects had been mainstreamed in project design and evaluations)
- locate, juxtapose, reconcile, adjudicate and integrate findings across the study countries
- identify other patterns or themes relevant to the evaluation purpose.

The search for evidence was therefore purposive, though the team remained open to any relevant information outside the templates, and maintained ‘running notes’ of additional findings.

## Limitations

The evaluation had technical, political and practical challenges related to the subject matter and obtaining access to relevant information. In particular, the breadth of the evaluation—covering eight countries and spanning a 10-year period of engagement—limited the possible depth of analysis.

Determining Australian electoral assistance’s effectiveness was technically challenging because:

- assistance was often associated with multiple, general (and at times unwritten) objectives

<sup>24</sup> Table 17 in Annex F lists the main data sources.

- some outcomes could only be expected in timeframes longer than the 10-year evaluation window
- easily observable, 'objective' data were lacking for many of the changes promoted by assistance
- causal chains were not explicitly defined or were complex and non-linear
- success was heavily context-specific and conditioned by external factors.

Information available from documents was at a fairly general level, and the evaluation team had no access to confidential or classified DFAT material (which might have contained pertinent information).

The efficiency assessment was limited due to lack of financial and other data on inputs and outputs, and due to the wide scope of the evaluation.

The evaluation relied heavily on interviews to contest and triangulate findings from the document review. Political sensitivities around providing support to elections (and around aid in general) may have limited informants' willingness to talk candidly about Australian aid. For reasons of time, budget, evaluation objectives and political sensitivities, the evaluation was also limited in its ability to consider citizens' perspectives on electoral assistance, to counterbalance the views of government officials.

The utility of the evaluation may be limited by institutional, political and cultural constraints in the environments where elections take place. The nature of Australia's relationship with the countries concerned, and sensitivities around governance and elections, may also affect the response to the evaluation.

Considering these limitations, the findings and recommendations reflect the available evidence, and the team's expert judgement, knowledge and experience. They are presented in context and from a risk-informed perspective, rather than as summative judgements, on the understanding that this is a complex area of development assistance requiring qualified (rather than definitive) conclusions.

## Report structure

After describing the context for the evaluation (Chapter 2), the report is organised as follows:

- **Chapter 3: Objectives of Australian electoral assistance.** This chapter highlights the policies that guided Australian electoral assistance, the objectives of assistance and the types of support provided.
- **Chapter 4: Effectiveness and inclusiveness of electoral assistance.** This chapter responds to the first two evaluation questions on the effectiveness and inclusiveness of Australian electoral assistance. The findings are described according to the three major areas of electoral assistance:
  - strengthening election management systems
  - improving the quality of participation
  - supporting the conduct of elections.
- **Chapter 5: Efficiency of electoral assistance.** This chapter responds to the third evaluation question on the efficiency of Australian electoral assistance, considering: the modalities and implementing partners used; how the assistance was designed and managed; costs and benefits; timeliness of assistance; and coordination with other donors. The risks to efficiency, and associated lessons, are summarised to inform future management improvements.

- **Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations.** This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations arising from the findings in Chapters 3–5, to improve the effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency of Australian electoral assistance in two respects:
  - strategic improvements: a limited number of central actions to inform and bolster DFAT’s broader approach to providing more effective, inclusive and efficient electoral assistance
  - program management improvements: practical suggestions for programs to improve the effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency of specific areas of electoral assistance (subject to contextual feasibility).



Government staff Sabino Ramos and Felipe de Oliveria carry ballot boxes to a polling station at Suco Maununo, Ainaro District, in preparation for Timor-Leste’s 2012 presidential elections. Ainaro has some of the highest places in Timor-Leste, and ballot boxes are transported across difficult terrain to reach polling stations.

Photo: Sandra Magno, UNDP

## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This chapter provides the background to the evaluation, including Australia's profile on electoral assistance, the democratic and electoral context in the study countries, and the countries' progress on gender equality, ethnic minority inclusion and disability inclusion.

### Democratic and electoral context

Australia has had a strong presence internationally in electoral assistance, established long before the period of this review and arising from the immediate post–Cold War period of intense democratisation around the world in the 1970s–90s.<sup>25</sup> At that time, there was a large and very genuine demand for assistance from countries that lacked experience organising elections and whose electoral management bodies were starting from scratch. Neither the United Nations, the Organisation of American States, nor the European Union had developed specialised bodies. Only Australia and Canada in the western world had large, well-established and independent election authorities with a substantial pool of officers to draw from. Australia became an important and valued resource for the United Nations and international community in designing and supporting transitional elections.

During this period Australia, through the Australian Electoral Commission, helped to develop global and regional public goods in the field: the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) training project;<sup>26</sup> the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (PIANZEA) network; and—as a founding member of International IDEA—a code of conduct on electoral administration.<sup>27</sup> The BRIDGE curriculum, courses and methodology now form part of standard practice in election administration worldwide, with more than 1,350 events held and with a cohort of facilitators representing 146 nationalities to date. The code of conduct provides internationally recognised guidelines and norms for the professional and ethical conduct of elections.

**Australia has provided electoral assistance in diverse settings.** The eight countries included in this review represent very different contexts for Australian aid and vary significantly in terms of Australia's relative size as a donor, the level of aid dependency, and history of democracy and conflict.

Table 4 highlights this variation for the study countries during the review period.

<sup>25</sup> The so-called 'third wave' of democratisation. See Huntington, SP 1991, 'Democracy's third wave', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 12–34.

<sup>26</sup> Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) is a professional development program for electoral administrators, the media, political parties and electoral observers. It was conceptualised and nurtured by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and is now used worldwide. It is delivered through five implementing partners: the AEC; International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES); International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and United Nations Electoral Assistance Division.

<sup>27</sup> International IDEA 1997, *Code of conduct for the ethical and professional administration of elections*, International IDEA, [www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/code-conduct-ethical-and-professional-administration-elections](http://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/code-conduct-ethical-and-professional-administration-elections).



Table 4: Outline of key characteristics of study countries 2006–16

Study country	Australia's relative size as donor <sup>a</sup>	Country's relative aid dependency <sup>b</sup>	Electoral inexperience?	Post-conflict setting? <sup>c</sup>
Solomon Islands	Predominant	Very high	No	Yes
Fiji	Predominant	Low	Yes	No
Papua New Guinea	Predominant	Low	No	No
Timor-Leste	Largest	High	Yes	Yes
Tonga	Largest	Medium	Yes	No
Indonesia	Large	Very low	No	No
Myanmar	Small	Low	Yes	No
Afghanistan	Very small	Very high	Yes	Yes

Notes:

- a) 'Predominant' is where Australian aid is typically larger than the combined Official Development Assistance of the next nine largest donors
- b) Official Development Assistance as percentage of GDP: Very low < 1%; Low < 5%; Medium < 15%; High < 25%; Very high < 35%
- c) Refers to the setting at a national level and does not reflect sub-national conflict

The countries also differed in their democratic trajectories during the study period (Figure 2). While there is no consensus on how to measure democracy, the available measures incorporate 'the possibility of varying degrees of democracy'.<sup>28</sup> Based on the Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy, five of the eight countries were considered 'flawed democracies'.<sup>29</sup> Some of the countries started from a very low base; some improved over time, while others went backwards. In short, there was no general trend of improvement across the study countries in terms of transitioning from weaker to stronger democratic states.

Thomas Carothers has argued that 'what is often thought of as an uneasy, precarious middle ground between full-fledged democracy and outright dictatorship is actually the most common political condition today of countries in the developing world and the post-communist world. It is not an exceptional category ... it is a state of normality for many societies, for better or worse.'<sup>30</sup> Elections may be held but there is no general, concomitant deepening of democracy. In contexts where citizens base their votes on things other than government performance—traditional loyalty ties, for example—the democratic feedback mechanism of elections is necessarily limited.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in some of the countries examined, the prevalence

<sup>28</sup> Kekic, L (2007), The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy.

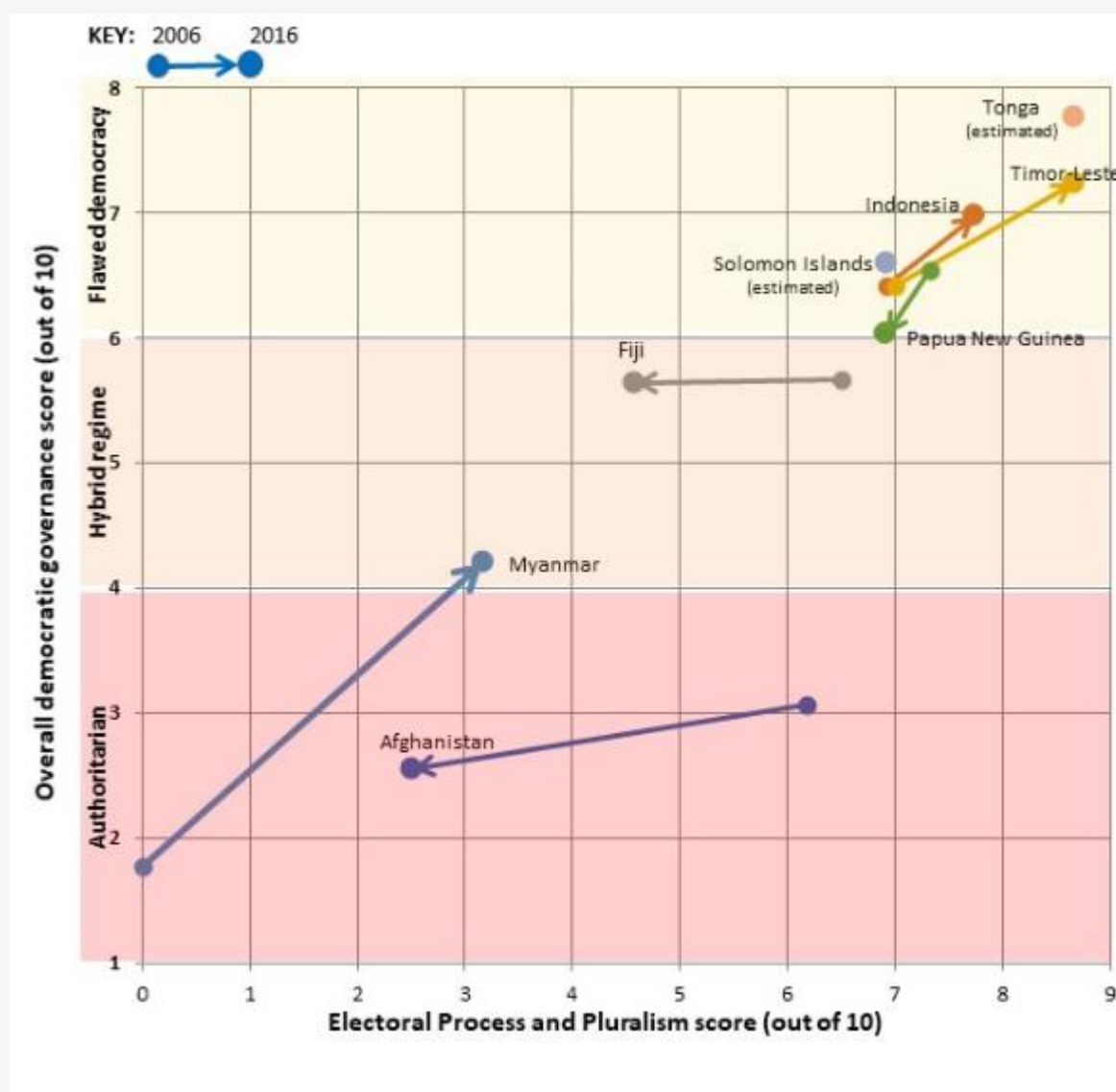
<sup>29</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy includes five indicators which, taken together, may be used to assess the overall quality of democracy on a scale from 'authoritarian regime' (worst case, 0) to 'full democracy' (best case, 10): i) a free and fair electoral process and political pluralism; ii) guarantees of individual human rights, including the rights of minorities; iii) a functioning government that can implement its commitments; iv) citizens who freely participate in public life; and v) the peaceful transfer of power.

<sup>30</sup> Carothers, T 2002, 'The end of the transition paradigm', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 5–21.

<sup>31</sup> Electoral assistance and politics: lesson for international support, DFID, 2010.

of money politics<sup>32</sup>—fuelled by significant constituency development funds<sup>33</sup>—suggested that elections may be providing the mechanism to entrench an illiberal politics and undermine accountable governance. A number of the governments in the study countries are characterised by unstable coalitions, few strong political parties, and weak links between democracy and programmatic politics.<sup>34</sup>

Figure 2: Democratic governance and electoral process/pluralism scores, 2006–16



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, Democracy Index, <http://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index>, viewed 24 Jan 2017.

Note: 2016 position of Tonga and Solomon Islands estimated based on comparative Freedom House data <https://freedomhouse.org/report/methodology-freedom-world-2017> viewed on 24 January 2017.

<sup>32</sup> 'Money politics' refers to the use of money to 'unduly influence the political process by buying votes or influencing policy decisions'. It is a worldwide problem which poses an equally significant threat to the integrity of elections in emerging and mature democracies (*Funding of political parties and election campaigns: A handbook on political finance*, International IDEA, 2014, p1).

<sup>33</sup> These are public funds provided to sitting politicians for discretionary use. The extent to which their use is controlled and accounted for varies, though the control frameworks typically have significant weaknesses.

<sup>34</sup> Programmatic politics (as distinct from personality-driven or clientele-driven politics) is when parties 'predominantly generate policy, mobilise support and govern on the basis of a consistent and coherent ideological position' (Cheeseman et al, *Politics meets policies: the emergence of programmatic political parties*, 2014).

Most of the elections covered by this review were deemed largely ‘free and fair’<sup>35</sup> by international observer reports,<sup>36</sup> but were also to some extent fragile. At a very broad level, the number of study countries classified as ‘electoral democracies’ by Freedom House<sup>37</sup> doubled from three to six over the period, but the ability of these regimes to deliver effective development—in economic and social terms—remained mixed. The evaluation team’s review of election observer reports during the period found no simple pattern of performance, and suggested that the quality of elections in some countries may yet deteriorate further.

The summary below characterises the differences. One common thread was that all countries’ experiences served to highlight the important distinctions between elections, the quality of democracy and the quality of democratic governance institutions. Satisfactory elections do not necessarily translate into stable, responsive or accountable government.

**Consistently weak: Afghanistan.** Almost all elements in the conduct of elections in Afghanistan have remained problematic, despite clear recommendations by observers: none of the elections (2009, 2010 and 2014) was considered free or fair. They were all marred by widespread fraudulent practices, political interference and weak security. Afghanistan is not classified as an electoral democracy by Freedom House; governments have been more the result of negotiations than elections.

**Inconsistent, with fundamental underlying weaknesses: Papua New Guinea.** Improvements observed with the 2007 elections in Papua New Guinea were not sustained in 2012, with significant reversals in many areas of electoral practice observed against a fraught political background<sup>38</sup>. Endorsement by the international community was muted in 2012, with serious concerns expressed. Indeed, many commentators feel elections in Papua New Guinea are becoming increasingly contentious. With 21 different political parties (including seven with just one MP) and 16 independents returned in 2012 out of a total of 111 MPs, governments in Papua New Guinea have also been a product of post-election negotiations.<sup>39</sup>

**Consistently adequate: Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga.** Fiji’s elections in 2006 and 2014 were considered free and fair, with most elements seen to be improving. Of course, they bookended the suspension of democracy following the coup in 2006. The reintroduction of elections in 2014 was widely welcomed, but major concerns were voiced about restrictions imposed on the ability of political parties, candidates, civil society and the media to engage effectively in the elections.

<sup>35</sup> Elections may be assessed against a range of obligations, including international human rights instruments; regional standards; and national policies, laws and regulations. The key international reference for what constitutes ‘free and fair’ elections is Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrines the right of everyone to political participation ‘directly or through freely chosen representatives’. It states that ‘the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government . . . expressed in **periodic and genuine elections** which shall be by **universal and equal suffrage** and shall be held by **secret vote** or by equivalent **free voting procedures**’ (UDHR, 1948).

<sup>36</sup> See bibliography for observer reports that the evaluation team reviewed.

<sup>37</sup> Freedom House produces an annual report, *Freedom in the world*, which assesses the state of political rights and civil liberties in countries on 25 indicators, covering: the electoral process; political pluralism and participation; the functioning of government; freedom of expression and belief; freedom of association and organisational rights; rule of law; and personal autonomy and individual rights (including women’s and family rights). Freedom House classifies countries as ‘electoral democracies’ if they score well in the categories of ‘electoral process’ and ‘overall political rights’. Further details on the Freedom House methodology is available at <https://freedomhouse.org/content/frequently-asked-questions>.

<sup>38</sup> See Henderson, Boneo, Australian Aid For Electoral Assistance in Papua New Guinea 2000-2012, Independent Evaluation, AusAID, 2013

<sup>39</sup> Although Papua New Guinea’s 2017 elections are outside the scope of this evaluation, initial reports from observers suggest that the quality of the electoral process has not improved since 2012. Widespread irregularities were reported, including: inflation and deflation of the voter roll; problems with distribution and availability of ballot papers; constraints on participation (in some locations women were prevented from voting); problems with handling of ballot boxes; and difficulties within the electoral commission. While some female candidates campaigned quite strongly, no women were elected to Parliament—down from three women MPs in 2012. However, violence was not considered markedly greater than in previous elections, and governance in PNG has quickly reverted to its pre-election state (Source: Development Policy Centre, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University [2017], *PNG after the elections*, podcast, <https://itunes.apple.com/au/podcast/development-policy-centre-podcast/id576275861?>).

The conduct of elections in Solomon Islands in 2006, 2010 and 2014 was deemed largely free and fair in international observer reports, which is notable given Solomon Islands' post-conflict setting. However, it is still seen as fragile because broader governance is extremely weak. Two-thirds of MPs were elected as independents in 2014, but most joined parties afterwards. The most relevant choice—of the prime minister—was not the result of elections, but of post-election negotiations. Thus, the most dangerous period in Solomon Islands is not during the elections, but when the prime minister is announced. This decision sparked serious rioting in 2006.

Tonga's elections in 2008, 2010 and 2014 were all considered free and fair, though only its 2010 constitution led to the first 'democratic' elections (with 65 per cent of seats in the Legislative Assembly available for directly elected representatives). Nevertheless, Tonga is still some way short of full democracy, with nine assembly seats reserved for members of Tonga's nobility, while the monarch retains the power of veto over certain laws, as well as the power to dismiss the government.

**Potentially on an improving trajectory: Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Myanmar.** Timor-Leste's national authorities administered elections for the first time in 2007 and were deemed to have executed a smooth and efficient election. Polls in 2012 were seen as a marked improvement on these. Transparency was high and the elections were deemed free and fair.

Indonesia's national elections in 2004 were well managed. The 2009 elections were noted for weaknesses in electoral administration, political interference and accusations of corruption, including within the General Elections Commission. In contrast, the 2014 elections were judged Indonesia's best. Whether the trend is for general improvement, or indeed for an oscillation between poor and good quality, remains to be seen. Currently concern exists that the value of procedurally strong elections is at risk of being undermined by money politics and populist politics<sup>40</sup>.

Myanmar has recorded the greatest improvement, from the 2010 elections that were perceived as undemocratic from the outset, to the 2015 elections when Myanmar's authorities—with extensive help from the international community—managed remarkably free and fair elections. International monitors were unanimous in their praise for its conduct. Nevertheless, Myanmar is not classified as an electoral democracy by Freedom House and the distance to travel remains great: 25 per cent of MPs are appointed by the military, as is one of the vice-presidents and key ministers. Above both parliament and government is a National Defence and Security Council (NDSC). Constitutionally, the NDSC is convened during emergencies as the most powerful body in Myanmar, with a built-in majority for the military.

## Gender equality and social inclusion context

Many of the case study countries have ratified most of the relevant treaties on gender equality and social inclusion, with Indonesia being the only country among the group to ratify them all (Table 5). It is perhaps not surprising, given their relatively recent transitions to more democratic electoral processes that Myanmar and Tonga each have yet to sign or ratify three of these instruments.

<sup>40</sup> 'Populist politics' is a general political position that claims to represent the interests of the people, as distinct from the interests of (self-serving) elites ('What is populism?', *The Economist* (Online), 2016).

Table 5: Ratification of human rights treaties, as of January 2017

	ICCPR	ICERD	CEDAW	MWC	CRPD
Afghanistan	○	○	○	◆	○
Fiji	◆	○	○	◆	○
Indonesia	○	○	○	○	○
Myanmar	◆	◆	○	◆	○
Papua New Guinea	○	○	○	◆	○
Solomon Islands	○	○	○	◆	○
Timor-Leste	○	○	○	○	◆
Tonga	◆	○	◆	◆	○

Legend: ○ Ratified ○ Signed, but not ratified ◆ Not ratified

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; ICERD: International Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination; CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; MWC: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families; CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Source: Status of Ratification: Interactive Dashboard, available at <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>

The degree of social inclusion varies across the study countries but all present challenging environments. Around the world, electoral processes remain predominantly exclusive to well-educated, financially solvent, able-bodied, racially dominant, heterosexual men. In large part, this is because financial, structural and attitudinal barriers exist to the participation of 'others' in public life. Importantly, and as noted in Boxes 1–3 below, these barriers are not the same for each marginalised group. In an electoral context, inclusion means realising political rights guaranteed in the relevant human rights instruments.



A voter in the Highlands marks her ballot during Papua New Guinea's 2012 elections.

Photo: Treva Braun, Commonwealth Secretariat



## Gender equality

Relatively high rates of women's participation in national parliaments are evident in Afghanistan, Indonesia and Timor-Leste, in large measure due to the electoral gender quotas in place—the only three countries of the group to have implemented temporary special measures (Table 6):

Table 6: Measures of inequality: women in parliament (2017)

Country	Women in national parliament <sup>a</sup>	
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Timor-Leste	38.5%	18
Afghanistan	27.7%	54
Indonesia	19.8%	99
Fiji	16.0%	124
Myanmar	10.2%	159
Tonga	3.8%	183
Papua New Guinea	2.7%	186
Solomon Islands	2.0%	188

Notes: a) Inter-Parliamentary Union data for the latest renewals in a single or lower house of parliament, as at 1 July 2017.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2017), *Women in National Parliaments*, <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010717.htm>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

'We can make things happen!'  
Keynote speaker Honourable Freda Tuki Soriacomua, Minister for Rural Development, at the Honiara International Women's Day event in Solomon Islands on 10 March 2015. Ms Soriacomua was the only woman elected to parliament during Solomon Islands' 2014 national elections.

Photo: UN Women/Marni Gilbert





These relatively high rankings, however, do not automatically translate into favourable rankings on the Gender Inequality Index (Table 7):

Table 7: Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2015)

Country	Gender Inequality Index score <sup>a</sup>	
	Value	Rank
Fiji	0.36	75
Myanmar	0.41	80
Indonesia	0.47	105
Papua New Guinea	0.59	143
Tonga	0.66	152
Afghanistan	0.67	154
Solomon Islands	..	..
Timor-Leste	..	..

Notes: a) The Gender Inequality Index show lost development potential due to disadvantage for women (relative to men) in three dimensions: empowerment, economic status, and key aspects of women's health. The GII ranges between 0 and 1. Higher GII values indicate higher inequalities and thus higher loss to human development.

Source: United Nations Development Programme, Gender Inequality Index, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

Although data is regularly and systematically collected on the results of women's election or appointment to national parliaments, other important measures are tracked less well. Efforts to remedy data gaps include work by UN Women<sup>41</sup> to monitor women's participation in local elections (under Sustainable Development Goal 5).

<sup>41</sup> The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which seeks to accelerate progress toward UN goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women and incorporates: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW); International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI); United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Box 1 explains some of the many barriers to women's equal participation in elections in the countries studied during this review:

### Box 1: Barriers to inclusive electoral participation for women

Women are often subject to deeply entrenched social norms that:

- keep them largely responsible for domestic work and child care even when they also work outside the home
- reduce women's mobility and ability to network
- reinforce inequality through gender-based violence
- restrict women's vote and other choices
- perpetuate legal discrimination.

Women may be precluded from registering, voting and nominating due to a lack of access to identity documentation or due to the high incidence of violence. Women are often in a weaker socio-economic position than men from which to engage in political discourse and launch a political career (education, paid employment, assets). They are also less likely to:

- be nominated to winnable positions by political parties
- win seats under majoritarian electoral systems that elect one person per district
- generate sufficient financial resources to run electoral campaigns
- attract positive, fair and balanced attention from media organisations.

Source: UN Women, *Women's political participation and leadership*, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

### Ethnic minority inclusion

The study countries vary in terms of the nature of their ethnic heterogeneity. Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, while both broadly Melanesian, are ethnically, religiously and linguistically highly diverse internally; indeed, they are so locally diverse that they do not typically suffer from problems at a national level associated with persecution of minority groups. Nevertheless, this diversity has ramifications for elections, complicating electoral administration, resulting in quite different voting practices across each country and resulting at times in disenfranchisement of smaller clans or language groups within constituencies. In Timor-Leste, there are a number of distinct ethnic groups, most of whom are of mixed Malayo-Polynesian descent and Melanesian/Papuan stock. Afghanistan, Fiji, Indonesia and Myanmar all include significant populations of distinct ethnic groups.<sup>42</sup>

- **Afghanistan:** Pashtun (42%), Tajik (27%), Hazara (9%), Uzbek (9%), Aimaq (4%), Turkmen (3%) and Baloch (2%).
- **Fiji:** Indo-Fijians (40%), Chinese (unknown), Banabans (unknown), Rotumans (1%).

<sup>42</sup> Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Populations*, <http://minorityrights.org/directory>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

- **Indonesia:** Javanese (41.7%), Sudanese (15.4%), Malay (3.4%), Madurese (3.3%), Batak (3.0%), Minangkabau (2.7%), Betawi (2.5%), Buginese (2.5%), Bantenese (2.1%), Banjarese (1.7%), Balinese (1.5%), Sasak (1.3%), Makassarrese (1.0%), Cirebon (0.9%), Chinese (0.9%), Acehnese (0.43%), Torajan (0.37 %).
- **Myanmar:**<sup>43</sup> Shan (9%), Karen (7%), Rakhine (4%), Chinese (3%), Indian (2%), Mon (2%).

It is difficult to generalise about barriers related to this ethnic diversity. However, examples are provided in Box 2 to illustrate the potential difficulties:

### Box 2: Barriers to inclusive electoral participation for ethnic minorities

Ethnic minorities can face restrictions on religious freedoms, and persecution on the grounds of religious intolerance (for example, blasphemy charges). They may not be recognised in national counts (for example, census collection or voter registration exercises) and may be disqualified from nominating as candidates for election.

They may also:

- have restrictions on their freedom of movement (for example, may be required to travel large distances to register marriages or births, or to vote, because local officials refuse or are unable to register them)
- be disenfranchised where the use of indigenous languages in areas of public life are prohibited, such as in local administration and education; or where ownership of land is a requirement of electoral enrolment.

Source: Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Populations*, <http://minorityrights.org/directory>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

Ethnic minority inclusion in electoral processes is not monitored systematically. Only in Myanmar have political parties contested elections that specifically identify themselves as representing ethnic minorities.

### Disability inclusion

Indicators on disability inclusion in electoral processes have not yet been developed. Indeed, data on people with disabilities is particularly difficult to obtain and existing statistics are difficult to compare due to differences in definitions and measurement methods. In this regard, Australia is committed to working with partner governments to include standard disability-relevant questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics in national censuses and administrative data. DFAT is also working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to incorporate these practices in Australian data collection and across national statistical organisations in the region.

Two studies have reported on disability prevalence, being the proportion of cases in a population at a point in time. The data collected by the World Health Organization (WHO) are reported in Table 8. It is noteworthy that the prevalence statistics in *Disability at a glance* (UNESCAP, 2015) for Indonesia (2.5%), Solomon Islands (14%) and Tonga (8.7%) differ markedly from the WHO estimates.

<sup>43</sup> While Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Asia, with 135 recognised 'national ethnic groups', one group remains marginalised. The Rohingya Muslims represent the largest percentage of Muslims in Myanmar, with the majority living in Rakhine State. They self-identify as a distinct ethnic group and claim a long-standing connection to Rakhine State. Successive governments have rejected these claims and Rohingya were not included in the list of recognised ethnic groups (see UNHCHR 2016, *Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar*, A/HRC/32/18, UNHCR, New York).

Table 8: Estimates of disability prevalence in the study countries

Country	Disability prevalence (%) <sup>a</sup>	Impairment <sup>b</sup>	Activity limitation <sup>c</sup>	Participation restrictions <sup>d</sup>	Year	Total population	Number of people with disabilities
Afghanistan (survey)	2.7	✓	✓	✓	2005	24,399,948	658,799
Fiji (census)	13.9	✓	✓		1996	784,479	109,043
Indonesia (survey)	21.3	✓	✓	✓	2007	232,296,830	49,479,225
Myanmar (survey)	2.0	✓			2007	50,698,814	1,013,976
Papua New Guinea (no data)	-	-	-	-	2015	7,619,321	-
Solomon Islands (survey)	3.5	✓	-	-	2004	457,841	16,024
Timor-Leste (survey)	1.5	<i>Not specified</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	2002	894,837	13,423
Tonga (survey)	2.8	<i>Not specified</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	2006	101,507	2,842

Notes: <sup>a</sup> estimates from either census or disability survey

<sup>b</sup> loss or abnormality in body structure or function (including mental functions)

<sup>c</sup> difficulty doing activities

<sup>d</sup> constraints on participating in society

Source: World Health Organization (2011) *World report on disability*,: [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/), viewed on 6 February 2017.



Frederico Hornai (front left) participates in an election simulation for the 2012 presidential elections in Timor-Leste, part of a voter education program organised by the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration, UNDP and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

Box 3 describes some of the obstacles that people with disabilities may face in realising their political rights and participating in elections:

### **Box 3: Barriers to inclusive electoral participation for people with disabilities**

People with disabilities may suffer from social stigma and perceived lack of capacity to vote (related to context-specific norms, beliefs and practices). They may be subject to discriminatory electoral laws that, for example, exclude people with a mental disability from voting, or render those with a disability ineligible as candidates in elections.

Even where these forms of stigma or discrimination do not exist, it may be impossible for people with a disability to exercise their vote for other reasons:

- If unable to physically mark a ballot, there may be no practical alternatives for voting that are allowed under electoral laws, and resourced by the electoral management body (such as braille papers or magnifying glasses).
- They may be prevented from voting by physical barriers limiting access to polling places, such as steps, stairs and steep ramps; polling stations in busy or hard-to-reach locations; long queues; ineffective technology; and the attitudes of electoral officials.

Sources: IFES and NDI, 2014, *Equal access: how to include persons with disabilities in elections and political processes*; Rabia Belt, 2016, 'Contemporary Voting Rights Controversies Through the Lens of Disabilities', *Stanford Law Review*, Volume 68(6).

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

This chapter describes the policies that have guided Australian electoral assistance, the objectives of assistance and the types of support provided.

Elections are important to Australia's foreign, development and trade policy interests in Asia and the Pacific because of their potential to affect stability, prosperity and growth. Australia's interest in supporting elections reflects, in part, its own democratic values and commitment to universal human rights. It is also shaped by the fact that elections can materially affect Australia's foreign, development and trade policy interests. Well-run, inclusive elections can build state legitimacy and support the peaceful transfer of power within neighbouring countries. Supporting well-run elections effectively can enhance Australia's reputation and influence in the region. Conversely, problematic elections may be flashpoints for instability that may in turn jeopardise Australian economic and development objectives and investments in a country. Flawed elections in Australia's near neighbours pose political risks: too much involvement can leave the Australian Government open to accusations of interfering in another sovereign state's political processes, too hands-off an approach exposes the Australian Government to domestic criticism for doing too little to avert the problems.

This pragmatism guides Australia's approach and is reflected in DFAT's current governance strategy for the Australian aid program.<sup>44</sup> *Effective governance* (DFAT, 2015) emphasises support for institutions that foster sustainable economic growth, legitimacy and long-term stability rather than representative, accountable government *per se*. The strategy acknowledges that democratic political systems may be more likely to ensure growth is equitable and inclusive and may ultimately be associated with more stable, prosperous societies. However, it also notes that there are different pathways to achieving those goals, a point emphasised by Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs (Box 4):

#### Box 4: Democracy and Australia's national interests

'While non-democracies can thrive when participating in the present system, an essential pillar of our preferred order is democratic community. Domestic democratic habits of negotiating and compromise are essential to powerful countries resolving their disagreements according to international law and rules.

'History also shows democracy and democratic institutions are essential for nations if they are to reach their economic potential. While it is appropriate for different states to discover their own pathway leading toward political reform, history shows that embrace of liberal democratic institutions is the most successful foundation for nations seeking economic prosperity and social stability.

'Australia is an active and vocal advocate of the liberal rules-based order because the continuation of the long and prosperous peace depend on it.' (Hon. Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 13 March 2017)

Source: Bishop, J 2017, 'Change and uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific: strategic challenges and opportunities', 28th IISS Fullerton Lecture, delivered in Singapore on 13 March 2017, DFAT, Canberra.

<sup>44</sup> DFAT 2015, *Effective governance: strategy for Australia's aid investments*, DFAT, Canberra.



The current governance strategy differs from the policy that operated during most of the review period (2006–16). Democratic governance was previously identified as ‘a principle of Australian aid because it allows poor and marginalised people to be active in their own development and play a role in more accountable responsive and effective government’, while ‘elections conducted freely and fairly, and in line with good governance’ were an area of explicit focus for assistance.<sup>45</sup> This policy appears to have assumed that improved elections would translate into better governance.

The more recent policy reflects greater realism but does not preclude a principled stance on governance. This was witnessed in Fiji, where a return to democratic political order was a prerequisite to normalising relations. It does, however, acknowledge that other objectives, such as maintaining stability, may at times be the primary driver of electoral support.

The type of support provided in the eight countries reviewed has been remarkably similar, relatively narrow and predominantly technical in nature (Figure 3). Even support to civil society—which has been a common feature across all the countries—has been largely technical, targeting capacity building and providing support and materials for voter awareness activities.

Figure 3: Distribution of electoral assistance program objectives across study countries

Objective	Afghanistan	Fiji	Indonesia	Myanmar	PNG	Solomon Is	Timor-Leste	Tonga
Improving voter registration	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Strengthening EMBs			■		■	■	■	■
Reforming electoral institutions, laws, policies	■		■	■		■		■
Raising voter awareness	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Supporting women’s participation in elections	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Enabling access to polling stations		■	■	■	■		■	
Supporting election operations/delivery		■	■		■	■		■
Supporting election observation	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
Improving voter registration	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Strengthening EMBs			■		■	■		■

■ Countries where the objective featured.

<sup>45</sup> AusAID (2011), *Effective governance, Thematic Strategy November 2011*, <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/effective-governance.aspx>, viewed on 24 July 2017, p.8.

Indeed, the degree of uniformity is greater than suggested by Figure 3. Support for electoral management bodies (EMBs) has been a consistent priority and viewed as an Australian strength due to the Australian Electoral Commission's long-standing role and relationships. The AEC's absence from support to Afghanistan and Myanmar reflected the fact that this area was already covered by other donors, while in Fiji, a longer-term capacity building engagement with the Fiji Elections Office was not attempted in advance of the 2014 elections, due to the political context.

**Direct engagement on political issues affecting the conduct and integrity of elections was much less evident, though there have been exceptions to this.** In countries where Australian aid was relatively small and provided in a multilateral setting (Afghanistan and Myanmar), Australia contributed credibly to international efforts on key issues. Even in those cases, the evaluation found limits on Australia's support: in Myanmar, Australia was very careful that its support did not include work with political parties, due to perceived sensitivities.

**Support to strengthen other key aspects of elections—for example, political parties, candidates and the media—have also been included on occasion, but in practice have been much less of a feature of electoral assistance.** Australia supported, for example, training for political parties and parliamentarians in both Indonesia and Papua New Guinea during most of our review period.<sup>46</sup> In Solomon Islands, support for parliament, accountability agencies and civil society was included as part of the broader democratic state-building program under the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). However, these initiatives were not usually coordinated or integrated with electoral support programs, with electoral support mostly delivered on its own.<sup>47</sup>

**Electoral assistance in the study countries has not typically been anchored in a broader strategy to promote democratic or accountable governance or linked closely to other relevant governance support programs.** While Australia has supported other programs to strengthen accountable governance institutions in the study countries, most electoral assistance has been delivered outside these. Electoral support has generally not been an element of broader political development objectives, or part of an active strategy of political engagement. The exceptions appeared to be:

- Fiji (2014), where Australian technical assistance sat within a wider political engagement strategy that was carefully structured to encourage the re-establishment of democratic government
- Myanmar (2015), where Australia supported dialogue and relationship building alongside technical capacity as part of the multi-donor support program (see Annex C, Case Study C1)
- Tonga (2010, 2014), where Australian electoral assistance was delivered alongside support to build democratic political structures and strengthen governance practices.

In these three cases, the countries were at significant transition points. However, this sort of coordinated, strategic approach was not found in the other study countries.

<sup>46</sup> Provided by the Centre for Democratic Institutions.

<sup>47</sup> Where multi-stranded support has been given as part of a broader democratic state-building program, donors cannot assume that the elements will combine to create a more accountable governance environment without continuous development and diplomatic engagement. These synergies are unlikely to develop without a degree of coordination and continual management.

**Inclusion objectives have featured, but to varying degrees.** Active participation by civil society has been a common—though often implicit—objective: as an instrument to achieve related objectives (such as voter awareness and voter registration), and as a quasi-integrity- or oversight-strengthening channel. All programs included gender-equality objectives, but the depth at which this issue was prioritised varied. The extent of actual implementation, as distinct from intentions, also varied. Solomon Islands, for example, was striking for the gender ambition of the design document, but ultimately disappointing implementation and gender-equality outcomes.<sup>48</sup>

Gender-equality objectives were promoted through strategies such as:

- support to civil society organisations (both women’s organisations and disabled people’s organisations) (Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga)
- training of aspiring women candidates (BRIDGE in Timor-Leste; practice parliaments in Fiji and Tonga)
- deployment of gender experts (Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Tonga)
- gender ‘sensitisation’ within the electoral management body (Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste)
- research and analysis of gender-integration (Papua New Guinea).

Incorporation of disability-inclusion objectives has been a more recent feature of program designs, but objectives relating to other marginalised or vulnerable groups have been much less evident.

## Australian funding

Expenditure on electoral assistance is a very small proportion of total Australian aid per country. In the study countries between 2006–07 and 2015–16, electoral assistance accounted for less than 1 per cent of Australian Official Development Assistance each year.<sup>49</sup>

Support to the study countries has varied significantly in absolute and relative terms, reflecting many factors and not simply the newness of elections (Table 9). Australia has provided electoral support in some form to at least 16 countries since 2006.<sup>50</sup> The largest recipient overall has been Papua New Guinea, where elections have been held regularly since independence in 1975.<sup>51</sup> Indonesia, a middle-income country with significant electoral experience, is also among the top three recipients.

Examining Australian electoral assistance relative to the estimated number of voters in each country provides even starker contrast, with more than 300 times the volume of ‘per voter’ support to the largest (Solomon Islands) versus the smallest (Indonesia) recipient. Per voter support in Tonga, for example, undoubtedly reflects the very small electorate there (around 50,000), but even allowing for the higher cost of doing business in small island states, and the transitional stage of Tonga’s political development, the investment looks high. Similarly, relative support in Solomon Islands is four times greater than in Papua New Guinea.

<sup>48</sup> From review of program documents and interviews in Solomon Islands.

<sup>49</sup> Data from DFAT Budget and Statistics Section.

<sup>50</sup> The evaluation focused on the eight countries that received more than \$1 million in electoral assistance per year 2006–16.

<sup>51</sup> These figures do not include the significant logistical support provided to the 2012 elections by the Australian Defence Force.

Table 9: Estimated Australian aid for electoral assistance in the study countries 2006–16

Country	Estimated Australian electoral assistance (\$ million) <sup>a</sup>	Estimated voting age population <sup>b</sup>	Estimated electoral assistance contribution per voter (\$)
Solomon Islands	17.2	321,236	53.54
Tonga	2.0	50,418	39.67
Papua New Guinea	51.7	3,637,394	14.21
Fiji	5.2	602,405	8.63
Timor-Leste	3.3	595,005	5.55
Afghanistan	33.0	14,191,908	2.33
Myanmar	6.4	38,646,398	0.17
Indonesia	26.2	168,300,873	0.16

Notes: a) Estimated expenditure calculated by evaluation team using Aidworks data and program documents.  
b) Voting-age population estimates are the latest available (2006–16) from International IDEA.<sup>52</sup>

Accurate, comparable estimates of election costs around the world are hard to obtain. However, previous analysis<sup>53</sup> and ballpark estimates<sup>54</sup> suggest that elections in several of the study countries stand out as the most expensive (per voter) in the world.

**Australian electoral assistance has been predominantly bilateral.** The exceptions to this were Afghanistan, Myanmar and Indonesia (in 2009), where support was provided through multi-donor programs. However, even in these cases, Australia also funded separate activities—for civil society support (Afghanistan) and the Australian Electoral Commission (Myanmar, Indonesia). In Timor-Leste, the relatively limited engagement reflected the fact that the UN Integrated Mission took the lead in the 2007 and 2012 elections and Australian assistance was shaped around these.

**Support has been delivered through a relatively consistent group of primary implementation partners:** United Nations Development Programme, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, The Asia Foundation, the Australian Electoral Commission, and the Australian Civilian Corps. These implementing partners have worked with more than 50 domestic (typically civil society) organisations with Australian support. In Papua New Guinea, support was delivered primarily through an Australian managing contractor (AMC), and AMC-led facilities were used to provide some assistance in other settings.

<sup>52</sup> International IDEA, Voter Turnout Database, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Rafael López-Pintor and Jeff Fischer, *Cost of Registration and Elections (CORE) project*, Washington, DC, IFES, Center For Transitional and Post-Conflict Governance, 2005, p.19 ENER.

<sup>54</sup> First Post (2014), 'What's the price of an election? Here's a map on India vs other countries.' <http://www.firstpost.com/business/data-business/whats-the-price-tag-of-an-election-here-is-a-map-on-india-vs-other-countries-1964525.html>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

**Support has been provided in a variety of forms:** equipment and materials (including supply of IT and office infrastructure, materials and resources for training and publicity); funding operating costs (for awareness campaigns and programs, domestic election observers and for planning and logistics support); and technical assistance (for training, workshops, study tours, research/reviews and technical advisory support). Technical assistance has been a significant form of aid over the period, especially long-term and short-term personnel.



Vote-counting centre in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 10 July 2012.

Photo: Geraldine Goh, Commonwealth Secretariat



## 4. EFFECTIVENESS AND INCLUSIVENESS OF ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

This chapter discusses the evaluation's findings on the effectiveness and inclusiveness of Australian electoral assistance, in response to the first two evaluation questions (Chapter 1). It is organised according to the three major types of electoral assistance provided:

- strengthening election management systems
- improving the quality of participation
- supporting the conduct of elections.

### 4.1 STRENGTHENING ELECTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Systems strengthening has been a significant feature of Australian electoral assistance, predominantly: improving voter registration systems; building capacity in electoral management bodies; and supporting reform of related electoral laws and policies. The ideal way to strengthen electoral systems is to use an electoral cycle approach, as explained in Box 5 below.

#### Box 5: Electoral cycle approach

The electoral cycle approach encourages thinking about and planning for elections as a continuous process rather than as periodic, isolated events. It advocates:

- carefully targeting attention to the many determinants of an election's outcome, including those that arise long before and long after the election itself
- channelling aid as necessary to all actors whose participation at different points is essential for a democratic outcome.

Sustainable electoral processes cannot be developed in the months leading up to an election. Many of the most important **determinants of an election's outcome** are established years before: legal or regulatory reforms to strengthen the independence of electoral management bodies; institutionalising democratic practices in political parties; professionalising and regulating the media. Effective electoral assistance should consider all stages of the electoral process, from planning and registration in the pre-electoral period, through campaigning and voting in the electoral period, to reviewing, reforming and improving in the post-election period.

In addition to the electoral management bodies, **necessary actors** are likely to include political parties, the media and civil society, as well as other relevant state institutions, such as: parliament; judiciary, if involved in complaints or appeals processes; ministry of finance, to build understanding of election-specific budget and expenditure challenges; and auditor general's office, which might participate usefully in evaluations and audits.

Source: ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2017) *What is the electoral cycle?* <http://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/electoral-assistance/electoral-cycle> viewed on 2 November 2017.



Australian aid has recognised the value of adopting an electoral cycle perspective in supporting systems strengthening but has struggled to implement it in practice. An electoral cycle approach was an explicit ambition in more recent assistance for around half the study countries. For a variety of reasons, DFAT has found it hard to deliver electoral assistance consistent with the long-term, comprehensive approach encouraged by the electoral cycle.

For some programs, initial implementation delays limited the activities possible immediately after the election and compressed assistance in the period leading up to the next. Programs that did provide assistance over a full cycle (or beyond) were predominantly centred on the electoral management body. Engagement with other actors, potentially better suited to address critical constraints at different points in the cycle, was not a strong feature of assistance. In Indonesia, the Electoral Support Program (2011–15) did broaden engagement beyond the electoral management body to include work with other actors on electoral integrity issues. The program was followed by a small Democratic Governance Support Fund to support civil society engagement on integrity issues, but it was discontinued after 12 months.<sup>55</sup>



A woman with her registration card is ready to vote in Timor-Leste's 2012 Parliamentary Election.

Photo: UN Women/Betsy Davis Cosme

## Voter registration systems

Voter registration influences the fairness and inclusivity of elections, the efficiency of election administration and citizens' confidence in the electoral process. It is a sensitive area for support. Given its centrality to the election process, it requires careful engagement to avoid claims of external interference. It is also one of the main steps in the electoral process (along with vote counting) where there may be systematic efforts to cheat in an election.

**From a technical perspective, voter registration has been one of the most effective areas of assistance.** All the study countries at some point during the review period experienced problems with voter registration and the quality of associated voter lists. Australian aid contributed to improvements in the accuracy of voter registration at different times in five of the six study countries where significant support was provided. In Solomon Islands and Fiji, support helped implement entirely new voter lists using biometric

<sup>55</sup> The Democratic Governance Fund was discontinued due to the significant reduction in Australian aid to Indonesia, and increased priority on economic partnerships.

technology<sup>56</sup>; in Myanmar and Indonesia, support contributed to significant progress in upgrading databases and quality control systems.

While the volume of Australia's contribution in dollar terms was small, the Indonesia case (Box 6) is instructive. It highlights the benefits of taking a longer-term electoral cycle approach and involving the full range of actors, which led to a nationwide transformation in the quality of the voter register. It also shows the potential value for money of strategically positioning Australia's contribution to systems strengthening.

#### Box 6: Transforming Indonesia's voter register (Sistem Informasi Data Pemilihan, SIDALIH)<sup>57</sup>

With the incumbent stepping down, and considering the likely high stakes of Indonesia's 2014 presidential elections, the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU) initiated an overhaul of the voter registration system in 2011. With the tone set from the top by the commissioners, the KPU worked collaboratively with national organisations, the University of Indonesia, civil society organisations, academics in other universities, and counterparts in the Ministry of Home Affairs to build support and streamline complicated regulations. It established a new IT system connecting all the KPU offices, and trained and deployed 500,000 staff to go door-to-door and check voter information throughout the country. It educated citizens about the new registration process, and made the new voter list available so the public could check it before the election.

By the parliamentary elections in April 2014, the KPU had purged hundreds of thousands of duplicate names and tens of thousands of deceased voters from the list, and added millions of missing national ID numbers. From a system that was managed via more than 70,000 spreadsheets across the country, the KPU created the world's largest national centralised voter registration system: SIDALIH.

The Australia Indonesia Electoral Support Program was the sole source of external assistance for the reform effort, delivered through the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) under significant time and technical pressures. Although the resources (\$4.8 million) were little more than 1 per cent of the Government of Indonesia's commitment to the project, Australian funds and IFES' expertise added significant value through a highly strategic contribution, acknowledged by KPU.

Source: Evaluation team interviews and program document review.

**In challenging political economy contexts, technical assistance for voter registration struggled to achieve sustainable gains.** Support to strengthen voter registration in Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea—the latter over many years—has not contributed to significant improvements in the quality of voter lists. In Solomon Islands in 2010, the voter register became grossly inflated due to upheaval in the country and movement of people.<sup>58</sup> The voter list created with Australian support for Solomon Islands' 2014 elections had over a third fewer names than the 2010 list; on that measure it represented a significant improvement in quality. The biometric technology may have also increased voters' confidence in the

<sup>56</sup> Biometric technology measures unique physical or behavioural characteristics (including fingerprints, palm prints, retina and iris scans, voice patterns and DNA profiles) to identify individuals or verify their identity in relation to other records (Peter Wolf (2017) *Introducing Biometric Technology in Elections*, International IDEA, Stockholm).

<sup>57</sup> See Annex C, Case Study C2, for a more detailed account.

<sup>58</sup> Rather than any deliberate, systematic attempt to corrupt the register, which can be a means of election-related fraud.

election.<sup>59</sup> However, concerns about electoral integrity in Solomon Islands stem not from weaknesses in the register *per se* but from the behaviour, largely post-registration, of political and bureaucratic actors—such as vote buying and corruption of officials to undermine the secrecy of the ballot. Given other opportunities to corrupt the process, technical improvements in the register have struggled to translate into commensurate gains in confidence in the democratic process.

**This points to the need to start any effort to improve the quality of the register from a broader analysis of the political economy of voter registration and the electoral process.** It also suggests the need for commitment by domestic stakeholders to the integrity of the process. Where the accuracy of the voter register is actively undermined, Australian aid has struggled to support even technical improvements. Where stakeholders' commitment to the broader democratic process is weak, technical improvements in voter registration bring far fewer benefits.

There may be situations where support for voter registration is not necessary, even if the register has inaccuracies. In Timor-Leste, Australia has not supported work to strengthen voter registration, even though the size of the register is significantly larger than the true number of eligible voters. New names have been added to the register over the years, but the deceased have only been sporadically removed. This appears to reflect a widely held commitment to ensure that as many voters are enfranchised as possible, rather than any systematic effort to defraud the voting process. In the main, stakeholders seem to be comfortable with the current register.

**The importance of voter registration for inclusive elections is recognised but the exclusion of marginalised groups has not been addressed systematically.** Australian aid has actively promoted involvement of civil society organisations to strengthen voter registration. In some cases, this has worked through the electoral management body, but in others Australian aid has been provided directly to civil society. In Indonesia, in response to identified obstacles to the inclusion of people with disabilities on the voter register, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)—with Australian funding—deployed officials in a sample of polling stations to generate more accurate voter lists as well as refine definitions and data counts by different types of disability. This new methodology was in strong contrast to the previous process, which relied on interviews with heads of family and was believed to significantly under- and misrepresent people with disabilities.

**Voter registration processes have also been used to disenfranchise particular groups of voters,** as was evident with the Rohingya in Myanmar's 2015 election. In Afghanistan, observer reports have referred to 'the misuse of female registration/voting to enable fraud,' pointing to the need for comprehensive anti-fraud mitigation measures to fully protect the right of women to participate in elections.

**The evaluation identified problems related to sustainability of Australian investments in technology-intensive registration solutions.** The decision to introduce biometric technology for voter registration in both Fiji and Solomon Islands was taken independently of Australian advice to the electoral authorities.<sup>60</sup> Implementing the new systems was a Herculean task. Australian assistance appears to have been a critical element in the success that was achieved. The voter register and lists that resulted are considered among the most accurate in the region, if not the world. It is possible, however, that a significant part of the quality gains could have been achieved through registration exercises using simpler technology.

The evaluation found the following limitations related to sustainability:

<sup>59</sup> Anecdotal evidence from Australian National University research during the 2014 elections.

<sup>60</sup> Biometric voter registration (digital photographs and thumbprints) was used in Fiji and Solomon Islands to prevent individuals from registering more than once by creating a new voter register and issuing voters with a photo ID card they had to present at the polling place on election day.

- In both countries, the hands-on nature of Australian assistance that was necessary given the timelines severely restricted the scope to build local ownership and capacity as part of the process.
- In Solomon Islands, the Electoral Commission's knowledge about the new system resided with external advisers and a single staff member.
- Biometric systems are relatively expensive to introduce and update—costs per voter of the system in Solomon Islands are approximately \$30 to introduce and \$22 to update. The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission has been unsuccessful in securing government funding to update the system since the 2014 elections.
- The cost of biometric systems can be offset if used to contribute to a permanent national ID system. However, at the time of the evaluation, this idea appears to have been abandoned in Solomon Islands, and there are no official plans in this regard in Fiji.
- In both countries, there remains significant confusion regarding the proprietorial status of the new systems—whether owned by the respective electoral bodies or the system vendor—and the consequent cost of ongoing maintenance and upgrading. This was in contrast with the SIDALIH system in Indonesia, which used open-source software, giving greater local control over the data and greater transparency to the system.

**Despite major investments, to date Australia has not supported a systematic, comparative analysis of the introduction of biometric and other registration systems in the region.** Australia's decision to support biometric voter registration in Fiji and Solomon Islands was pragmatic and reasonable in the circumstances. Given its experience, Australia is well placed to support consolidated learning in this area to help other countries facing similar decisions in the future.

**Formal evaluation of the quality gains in voter registers have not been routine, even though these could be done at little additional cost.** While the improvements reported seemed reasonable to the evaluation team, they were not based on formal evaluation of the registers. There are comparatively cheap methods for obtaining reliable, quantitative estimates of the quality of voter registers, for example, using sample-based tests of accuracy and inclusion, or comparative statistical analyses of the age structure of the population and the structure of the voter register. Political sensitivities may limit Australia's ability to be practically involved in efforts to improve the quality of the voter registers. But Australia could support proper evaluation, to obtain objective, quantitative estimates of changes in pre- and post-intervention quality of the voter registers. While potentially still sensitive, if handled appropriately, helping to build a stronger evidence base could be valuable for discussion among domestic stakeholders and to inform future Australian assistance.

## Capacity building in electoral management bodies

Shortfalls in capacity in electoral management bodies may be the result of:

- a lack of technical knowledge among **individuals**
- **organisational** weaknesses, such as poorly suited management structures or systems, or problems with leadership and culture
- problems in the **legislative, financial and political environment and institutions** that shape and define potential effectiveness.

**Technical assistance for capacity building in electoral management bodies has been effective on occasions, but overall its success has been mixed within and across countries.** Capacity building



among individuals has been one of the most consistently effective areas of assistance. People-focused investments have included professional exchange programs, graduate recruitment programs, study tours, regional networking and peer-to-peer dialogue opportunities (through the PIANZEA network) and structured, contextualised training programs (particularly BRIDGE). The Australian Electoral Commission and the IFES were key implementing partners. Evidence suggests support was overwhelmingly appreciated and generated positive impacts on staff motivation. However, gains to electoral management bodies were often diminished by wider organisational problems or staff turnover.

**Organisational capacity building has been a more mixed picture (than individual capacity building) in terms of effectiveness.** Assistance has contributed to improved election planning and operational procedures, better financial management in smaller bodies and updated IT systems. Australian support in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands facilitated structural change and increases in staffing (including young women recruits). Internal training capability was enhanced in most electoral management bodies. Indonesia's General Elections Commission, for example, adapted, streamlined and now uses AEC-introduced BRIDGE training for a range of human resource development needs. In a few cases, Australian aid has also been important in building external engagement capacity. A former electoral commissioner in Papua New Guinea said Australia's support to engage the cross-government elections coordination committee was one of Australia's most important contributions. In Myanmar, earlier Australian support to informal government–civil society dialogue was considered a positive influence on the Union Elections Commission's confidence to engage with civil society in the lead-up to the 2015 elections. Relationships of trust built with Australian-funded advisers have been important sources of guidance to leaders in the smaller electoral management bodies when navigating the external demands and challenges associated with elections.

**Other organisational constraints—rooted in organisational culture, management practices and internal leadership—have been much harder to address than procedures, systems and manuals.** These constraints have been reflected in absenteeism in key posts, last-minute planning, resistance to new ways of working and reluctance or inability to challenge poor behaviour. In important cases such problems served to undermine the effectiveness of changes introduced with Australian assistance.

**Institutional capacity building has been least effective.** Australian assistance has been weakest when navigating the enabling environment (legislative, financial and political) that ultimately determines the scope for electoral management bodies to act effectively. Across the range of contexts, the evaluation found frequent problems in the legal and administrative arrangements and practices that determine how, and how well, electoral management bodies manage their operations, for example:

- restrictions on recruitment and structure
- inadequate or late release of funding by central authorities
- impossible deadlines frequently imposed due to delayed legislation
- lack of insulation from the political divisions affecting wider society.

In some of the countries, institutional challenges such as these limited the ultimate effectiveness of Australian assistance.

**There was little evidence of deliberate strategies underpinning capacity building assistance, and assistance was not always well tailored to the key challenges.** Objectives of capacity building support were often framed in very general terms. In important cases, the design of assistance failed to address the full range of critical constraints, even though a narrow approach is limited in what it can achieve. Somewhat paradoxically, the interviews and program documents revealed at times a quite sophisticated understanding of the context; yet this knowledge does not seem to have been translated into capacity building strategies.



The approach to inclusion within EMB capacity building has similarly lacked clear purpose and coherence (Box 7):

#### **Box 7: Supporting diversity-sensitive electoral management bodies<sup>61</sup>**

Australian aid has promoted diversity in electoral management bodies (EMBs), but not through a coherent or comprehensive strategy. Most progress was evident in developing gender policies for the EMBs, and recruiting and training women as temporary and permanent electoral staff. Since election delivery is mostly devolved to local government, these centralised efforts to improve the gender balance of electoral staff in EMBs had limited influence on recruitment practices at the polling station level. There was no evidence of strategies or activities to support women's access to leadership positions within EMBs. The evaluation found little evidence of mainstreaming diversity within EMBs, and inclusion of people with disabilities as permanent or temporary election staff was insufficiently addressed in all electoral assistance programs.

Source: Evaluation team interviews and document review.

In more favourable contexts, capacity building has been quite effective with relatively small investments. But in the two largest commitments, the gains did not appear commensurate with the investments, because many of the critical capacity constraints lay outside the electoral commissions' control. Support to the Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission and the Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) both relied heavily on in situ technical advisers. In both countries, late and inadequate funding by central government was a feature, limiting the operations of the commissions. In such circumstances, the permanent presence of advisers with operating budgets provided an important stream of much-needed funds for Electoral Commission activities.<sup>62</sup> At other times, there was a real need for technical advice and guidance, and the access provided to high-quality international expertise was extremely welcome. However, integrity of elections is determined by behaviours in each constituency and by the actions of the political and bureaucratic elites after polling. In these contexts, international advisers based centrally in the Electoral Commission can do relatively little.

In the case of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, institutional problems have been compounded by chronic human capacity constraints. Each department in the Commission is a one-person operation and highly vulnerable to staff departures.<sup>63</sup> For the Commission to approach, for example, the equivalent size and stability of the Australian Electoral Commission, the number of permanent full-time staff would need to more than double and nearly 40 part-time staff be added. This is clearly unrealistic. While the aim of a self-sustaining Electoral Commission was recognised by Australian aid as a long-term ambition, over most of the period there appears to have been no detailed analysis of alternative pathways toward a more sustainable business model for the Commission.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> See Annex C, Case Study C3 for a more detailed description of this case.

<sup>62</sup> For example, donor support in 2016 (excluding the salaries and costs of the long-term advisers) was almost double what the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission had requested from its own central government, and more than 10 times what the Commission received from central government.

<sup>63</sup> The SIEC's training section had no staff in April 2017, because the training manager had joined a consulting firm running a DFAT project. Aside from the international advisers, only one IT manager in the Commission had knowledge of the IT underpinning the biometric voter system.

<sup>64</sup> In some countries, for example, elections are managed by the judiciary or the ministry of interior (for example, Czech Republic, Greece, France). Other countries combine responsibility for management of elections and the large population databases. In Colombia, for example, one body organises elections, issues the national ID document and runs the civil register (including births, deaths and marriages).

An Electoral Reform Taskforce (2015–17) recently submitted recommendations to Solomon Islands' Parliament, which included merging the Office of the Electoral Commission and the Political Parties Commission and upgrading the post of Chief Electoral Officer. This was a domestic initiative, though the international advisers funded by Australia have supported the Commission's contribution to the work. Interviews with stakeholders reveal mixed views as to whether the merger, if approved, will provide an effective solution.

**The sort of political engagement needed to build capacity in the wider enabling environment can only be effectively conducted by DFAT staff in posts or Canberra over time.** In the above countries, we did not find evidence of a consistent, coherent approach to engagement of this sort. This was in contrast to the experience in Myanmar and Afghanistan, where Australia was a partner in a multilateral program.

## 4.2 IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION

This section examines the effectiveness of Australian support for: raising voter awareness; improving women's participation; and increasing access to (and confidence in) polling stations.

### Voter awareness initiatives

Support for voter awareness activities has been a feature of Australian assistance in all the countries examined. This has covered:

- voter information—the basics on how, when and where to vote
- voter education—more complex concepts about voting and elections
- civic education—broader concepts relating to democracy and political and civic participation.

Although distinct, in almost all cases civic education initiatives in the study countries have been delivered alongside, and as part of, voter education efforts.<sup>65</sup> Delivery of messages has typically involved multiple channels, including broadcast and print media, innovative use of social media, candidates and political parties, as well as civil society organisations enlisted and funded specifically for the purpose (see Annex C, Case Study C4).

**Estimates of program 'reach' and voter turnout<sup>66</sup> were impressive, but were not reliable indicators of success in raising voter awareness.** Estimates of reach by themselves are problematic as effectiveness measures for voter awareness activities, as they provide no indication of changes in voter knowledge or understanding. Unless grounded in formal surveys, simple aggregate estimates of reach are likely to overstate the true picture. Broadcast media use their maximum audience figures; certain groups are typically exposed to multiple messaging channels while others receive none.<sup>67</sup> Attributing voter turnout to voter awareness activities is similarly fraught, because voters typically receive information from a range of sources.

<sup>65</sup> The exception appears to be Solomon Islands, where Australia supported a specific Civic Education Project (2005–06), which according to documentation was the first ever nationwide civic education initiative, undertaken by 250 trained provincial-based Solomon Islanders and reaching over 200,000 people across all 50 constituencies. Nevertheless, given the proximity of the program to the April 2006 elections, it is likely that material relating more to basic voter education (as distinct from civic education) was also a significant part of the content.

<sup>66</sup> Voter education activities were viewed as an important factor contributing to the high voter turnout (almost 90 per cent of registered voters) and low number of invalid ballots in the 2014 Solomon Islands elections; a similar argument was also made for the 2014 elections in Fiji, where voter turnout was estimated at 85 per cent of registered voters.

<sup>67</sup> A formal follow-up survey to voter awareness efforts for the 2012 Papua New Guinea elections found the numbers of people reached by community-level, face-to-face voter awareness meetings was less than half the number estimated by the CSOs delivering the program.

### Formal studies of the effectiveness of voter awareness programs have not been routine.

The evaluation found only three formal studies of completed voter awareness programs: in Indonesia (2014 elections), Papua New Guinea (2012 elections) and Solomon Islands (2014). The results pointed to positive gains in understanding, particularly with respect to voter information-type knowledge. Awareness-raising about new systems appeared to have been valuable, for example when limited preferential voting was introduced in Papua New Guinea in 2007, and biometric voter registration in Solomon Islands in 2014.

Nevertheless, the formal evaluations point to the challenges faced by voter awareness programs (Box 8):



Freda Po'oti facilitating voter awareness at Hovikoilo Village, Maringe Kokota constituency, Isobel Province, Solomon Islands.

Photo: Sophia Close, ACC, 2014

#### Box 8: Evaluating the reach and limits of voter awareness programs<sup>68</sup>

Three studies of completed voter awareness in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands reviewed during the evaluation revealed the achievements and limitations of activities supported.

In all cases, there was evidence of positive changes in people's understanding of basic information about the election and voting, such as how and where to enrol and vote. But there was little change in knowledge or understanding of more difficult topics, such as eligibility to vote, more complicated aspects of the electoral process, the system of government and laws related to elections.

Source: Evaluation team document review.

There was limited anecdotal evidence of the effectiveness of civil society organisations (CSOs) engaged to deliver messages at the community level, face-to-face, to convey more complex educational messages or to access harder-to-reach groups. For example, an informal evaluation of community-level voter awareness efforts during the 2007 elections in Papua New Guinea suggested that the local workshops contributed to: the election of three candidates who did not use money politics in Chimbu Province; the reduction of campaign houses; and the commitment of women candidates to share preferences as a way of getting at least one woman in the Highlands into power.

Despite some positive results, the approach taken to voter awareness support demonstrated significant **risks to effectiveness**:

- Only a minority of voter awareness programs appear to have been based on systematic pre-assessment of knowledge among communities, relying instead on assumptions about what information or education people may need. Where major changes have been introduced and the need to explain them is clear, this

<sup>68</sup> See Annex C, Case Study C5, for a more detailed account.

may not be such a problem. But assumptions can sometimes be wrong: the survey of voter awareness undertaken after the 2014 elections in Solomon Islands found that many of the assumed best means of communication (for example, radio) were actually less effective than previously thought; it belatedly identified the need to better segment key demographics and provide more targeted guidance.<sup>69</sup>

- The evaluation found instances where voter awareness activities started late in the process, in some settings very late.<sup>70</sup> Voter awareness programs should be started well in advance of elections, and civil society delivery partners should be carefully selected and trained to avoid inconsistent or biased messages. In Papua New Guinea (2007), problems were experienced with capacity and quality, as well as political bias among civil society groups. Research on voter awareness has found that effectiveness is significantly influenced by the quality of delivery, especially the materials and teaching techniques used.<sup>71</sup>
- In a number of countries at different times, independent program reviews concluded that civil society–led voter awareness activities were isolated, untargeted and lacked a strategic overall approach.<sup>72</sup> There may have been specific targeting of harder-to-reach, under-served groups (such as rural, illiterate women; voters with disabilities; and youth), but in practice the reviews found shortcomings in implementation and coverage. In particular, reviews questioned the effectiveness of one-time, isolated training events, a problem compounded by late starts to the activities.
- In practice, civic education efforts in the study countries were focused almost entirely on specific electoral events (either by design or circumstance) and conducted as a series of time-bound initiatives, without sufficient reinforcement of the messages. Continual reinforcement is needed to build understanding of the concepts addressed, particularly for effective civic education (Box 9). The evaluation found little evidence of coordination with broader, non-election-related programs; or where these linkages were mooted—for example with the Ministry of Education—there was little evidence they were delivered with any lasting effects.

#### **Box 9: Changing attitudes through civic education requires continual reinforcement<sup>73</sup>**

A survey of voter attitudes in six Indonesian provinces after the 2014 elections revealed that many people still held views that ran counter to anti-corruption and pro-inclusion messages provided by a civic education program run before the elections. For example, substantial numbers of respondents said they would still accept money for their vote, would prefer to vote for a man, and would not vote for a candidate with a disability.

Source: Evaluation team document review.

**There is room for Australian assistance to take a more rigorous approach to voter awareness.** Systematic learning across the different contexts where voter awareness has been supported would be a start, including learning about the most effective means of reaching different groups in different countries. It is unrealistic to expect voter and civic education to result in significant improvement in governance-related attitudes and behaviours in the short term; they should not be implemented on this assumption. Much more

<sup>69</sup> Sustineo (for UNDP, 2015) *Solomon Island Electoral Commission Voter Awareness Survey and Voter Awareness Program Evaluation*.

<sup>70</sup> Afghanistan 2009 and 2010, Papua New Guinea in 2007 and again in 2012, in Indonesia 2011 and 2012 and Myanmar in 2015.

<sup>71</sup> For example, see: Finkel (for IFES, 2012) *The Voter Opinion and Involvement through Civic Education (VOICE) Impact Evaluation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: final report*, USAID; or Counterpart International (2011), *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Support to the Electoral Process (STEP) Civic Education Program in Afghanistan*, USAID.

<sup>72</sup> In Indonesian national elections in 2009 and local elections 2011 and 2012; in Papua New Guinea for the 2007 and 2012 national elections; in Afghanistan during the period 2009–12.

<sup>73</sup> Refer to Case Study C6, Annex C, for further details.



care is required in design, training and delivery of these programs, combined with a focus on longer-term capacity building, independent of—though coordinated with—the electoral cycle.<sup>74</sup>



Electoral Commission workers explain separate voting for women and men at a practice poll booth in Port Moresby for Papua New Guinea's 2012 elections.

Photo: Department of Defence

## Supporting women's participation<sup>75</sup>

Australian electoral assistance has sought to increase the electoral participation of women as voters and as candidates. As voters, programs have supported women's right to:

- ***Cast an independent, secret ballot.*** The right to a secret ballot is a fundamental principle of free and fair elections. The secrecy of women's ballots has been called into question in Pacific Island countries where decisions are frequently left to husbands or male heads of household.<sup>76</sup> In Papua New Guinea in 2012, observers noted male family or community members filling in the ballots of female voters.

<sup>74</sup> The electoral cycle is explained in Box 4, Section 4.1 (above).

<sup>75</sup> Strategies for promoting participation throughout the electoral cycle are provided in Annex B. Table 15 suggests strategies for gender-inclusive electoral assistance.

<sup>76</sup> Research by Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki found that in Tonga, more than 80 per cent of women in intimate partner relationships had to get the permission of a partner or husband before accessing health services. 'That speaks volumes as to how actually women would vote on the day,' she said.



- **Be safe:** Violence has an obvious impact on the right of women (and other vulnerable or marginalised groups) to participate in elections.<sup>77</sup> Connections between violence—particularly intimate partner violence—and the vote have been indirectly addressed in electoral assistance design, but with varying degrees of success. For example, the decision to create separate polling booths for men and women in the 2012 Papua New Guinea election intended to give women a safe space in which to vote. In some places, however, the polling booths were not used in an effort to speed up the process. In some locations this did not have any serious ramifications for women. Observer reports for the Highlands areas noted the lack of separate booths, and that male voters appeared to be favoured by a first-come-first-served mentality.

A stronger focus on gender equality in electoral programming has been supporting women candidates for election in all the study countries. The call is based on the argument that the more women are elected in proportion to their numbers in the population, the more the political process will reflect the full range of interests, needs and experiences in the wider electorate. Women's inclusion in formal political institutions is essential for getting beyond 'pro forma' approaches and empowering women in political leadership (Box 10):

### Box 10: Women must participate equally for elections to be truly free and fair

'For elections to be truly free and fair, women must have the same opportunities as men to participate in all aspects of the electoral process. Women should have an equal chance to serve at all levels within local and national electoral management bodies. Women should be engaged on an equal basis as election monitors or observers. Women should be able to participate fully in all aspects of political party operations. Women candidates and issues of special concern to women should be given fair and equal treatment in the media. Focusing on areas of the greatest potential impact can help ensure that women's participation in the electoral process is more than a pro forma exercise and that free and fair elections fulfil their potential for contributing to the advancement of women, particularly in post-conflict situations.'

Source: United Nations (2005), *Women and elections: guide to promoting the participation of women in elections*, pp. 10–11.

**In most of the eight countries studied, few women ran as candidates and few women were subsequently elected.** Moreover, the number of women contesting elections in some countries (Solomon Islands, Tonga) remained largely unchanged over the course of successive elections.<sup>78</sup> In Indonesia and Timor-Leste, a higher percentage of women candidates reflected political parties' compliance with legal provisions that their party lists include at least 30 per cent women. Translating candidature into women MPs has been more variable, and greater representation has not necessarily led to greater political influence.

**In addressing the paucity of women elected across the region, candidate training has been the primary form of assistance.** This assistance emphasised women's individual capacity to run, over the institutional or electoral environment that was critical for enabling (or inhibiting) their election (Table 10).

<sup>77</sup> The allegations concerning MPs' access to voter-identifiable ballot papers in the aftermath of the 2014 election in Solomon Islands are particularly troublesome in the context of electoral violence. Wherever there is the perception that votes are not secret, women will not feel confident in expressing their own voice in elections, for fear of family violence.

<sup>78</sup> Nicole Haley and Kerry Zubrinich, 2015, *Election observation in Solomon Islands*. SSGM In Brief 2015/6.

Table 10: Australian-funded training for women candidates

Implementing partner	Countries	Activities
Centre for Democratic Institutions	Papua New Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women in politics courses for women candidates</li> <li>• Campaign handbook for women candidates in local elections in 2013</li> </ul>
The Pacific Leadership Program	Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership development forums for women candidates</li> </ul>
United Nations Development Programme	Fiji and Tonga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Parliaments to give prospective candidates a sense of what it is like to be in parliament</li> </ul>
UN Women	Fiji, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tonga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformational Leadership training (using core funds) and BRIDGE training to equip women with skills including public speaking and campaign message crafting</li> </ul>

The effectiveness of candidate training has been limited; a different approach is needed to support women in overcoming the real obstacles to their genuine political empowerment. In 2016, two Pacific-focused conferences explored the utility and effectiveness of these programs, both concluding that a more holistic approach was required.<sup>79</sup> Specific challenges noted with candidate training included: support was limited to the immediate lead-up to an election (rather than across the electoral cycle); inadequate theories of change and evidence bases; limited follow-up with candidates; promotion of skill sets and campaign messages that were not electorally salient and seen as ‘setting women up to lose’; insufficient attention to cultivating support bases, both electoral and financial; and poor coordination among national and international stakeholders. Training must be married to the specificities of the electoral context in which women run, as one former candidate noted: ‘We don’t need transformational leadership training, we need transactional leadership training’.

Many interviewees for this evaluation remarked on the long-term nature of promoting women’s political empowerment, particularly in changing attitudes and stereotypes about women’s more traditional, home-based role in many of these societies. The ‘big man’ culture commonly noted in Papua New Guinea elections is essentially replicated—albeit in different forms—across most of the region.

**Recognising the long-term nature of change, DFAT program areas are beginning to think more strategically about their work on women’s political leadership:**

- In Myanmar, DFAT is extending the ‘She Leads’ program<sup>80</sup> to be delivered across the electoral cycle and expanded specifically to include women from vulnerable marginalised communities.
- With DFAT funding, the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) program has devised an evidence-based, five-year ‘whole-of-election’ candidate-training program in Papua New Guinea.
- The Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative is also working on a concept note to promote women’s political leadership across the electoral cycle.

<sup>79</sup> Sonia Palmieri (2016) *Innovating for impact: a Pacific regional consultation on women’s political empowerment and leadership: background paper*; Julien Barbara and Kerryn Baker (2016) *Improving the electoral chances of Pacific women through an evidence-based approach: A synthesis report prepared for the Centre for Democratic Institutions and the State Society and Governance in Melanesia Program, ANU*.

<sup>80</sup> ‘She Leads’ is an election-focused women’s empowerment program.

But other possible entry points on the issue of women's participation have not yet been considered for support. Globally, 128 countries (including Australia) have adopted some form of electoral gender quota<sup>81</sup>—being one of many temporary special measures promoted in Article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The nature of these quotas varies widely, as does the level of compliance. In five of the eight countries under review, there has been significant resistance to the adoption of temporary special measures (Table 11). Where quotas have been implemented (Afghanistan, Indonesia and Timor-Leste), weak compliance by parties (for example, placing women at the bottom of the candidate list) has reduced effectiveness.



Kristina Sogavare, Chair, Solomon Islands Young Women in Parliament Group.

Photo: Irene Scott for AusAID

<sup>81</sup> These include reserved seats and legislated and voluntary candidate quotas. See Country Overview, Quota Project, <http://www.quotaproject.org/country.cfm>.

Table 11: Adoption of temporary special measures to improve women's political participation

Country	Measures adopted
Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 68 of the 249 total seats (27%) in the Lower House (Wolesi Jirga) are reserved for women—at least two women for each province (Article 83 of the 2004 Constitution)</li> <li>✓ The Electoral Commission will determine the number of reserved seats for women in each of the 34 electoral constituencies (Electoral Law 2010, Articles 20 and 23)</li> <li>✓ Women candidates have to pay the same nomination fee as men, but it will be refunded to them even if they do not reach the stipulated vote thresholds (10% for presidential elections, 2% for provincial council elections).</li> </ul>
Fiji	✗ None.
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ At least one in every three candidates included on a political party list should be a woman (Article 55 of Law 8/2012 on general elections)</li> <li>✓ The electoral authority shall verify compliance with the quota requirement and, in a case where the candidate list does not include at least 30% women's representation, it shall provide the political party with the opportunity to revise the candidate list (Articles 58 (1) and 59 (2)).</li> </ul>
Myanmar	✗ None.
Papua New Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ None</li> <li>• First attempt in 2011, Equality and Participation Bill would have amended the Constitution to allow 22 reserved seats for women. Passed, but enacting legislation failed to pass the House</li> <li>• Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission recommended in April 2015 that 10% of all political parties' candidates be women. Not accepted.</li> </ul>
Solomon Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ None</li> <li>• If passed, the Political Parties Integrity Bill introduced in July 2013 would have required that at least 10% of a party's candidates be women and provided some financial incentives for women MPs.</li> </ul>
Timor-Leste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 2006 law required political parties to nominate one woman for every group of four candidates at national elections, increased to 'one out of every group of three' by the 2011 amendment to the Law on Elections, Article 12 (3)</li> <li>✓ 2009 law requires every <i>suku</i> (village) council to reserve two positions for women, and two for youth representatives, one male, one female</li> <li>✓ July 2016 law requires a female candidate to stand in every election for village chief.</li> </ul>
Tonga	✗ None.

Source: <http://www.quotaproject.org/>

In the main, Australia has been reluctant to engage directly with political leaders on temporary special measures, but has supported civil society advocates where applicable. In Solomon Islands, the Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI) routinely supported the National Council of Women and the Ministry of Women to advocate on temporary special measures reforms. Reform strategies were largely technical and did not support civil society partners to engage the prevailing political economies. Research by the Pacific Leadership Program on temporary special measures at the municipal level in Vanuatu has underscored the need for politically responsive engagement strategies.<sup>82</sup>

Other barriers to women's political participation have not commonly been removed by assistance, but Australia could in future broach these through a more holistic approach, particularly to include legal reform. Legal reform to support women's political leadership may, depending on each country's circumstances, include advocacy on:

<sup>82</sup> It is noted that temporary special measures do not have bipartisan support in Australia.



- **Campaign finance and expenditure legislation:** Reviews should assess the feasibility of women meeting existing legal requirements.
- **Political party regulations:** Programs could promote legal reforms to improve internal party democracy, including women's participation and leadership in parties.
- **Prohibiting violence against women in elections:** In some contexts, SCR1325<sup>83</sup> needs to be more stringently enforced, while in less conflict-affected countries, support could be provided to develop laws against sexual harassment and family violence, ensuring these relate to women's electoral and political participation.

## Supporting the participation of people with disabilities<sup>84</sup>

Australian assistance has supported electoral stakeholders in several study countries to improve people with disabilities' access to polling stations, and encourage independent voting. Disability inclusion was principally promoted through high-level policy dialogues<sup>85</sup> and support to disabled people's organisations (DPOs) in certain contexts for specific purposes.<sup>86</sup> These initiatives tended to be small-scale, and some suffered variable implementation locally, where decisions about how to conduct voting were actually made. Table 12 shows examples of assistance to improve participation.

Table 12: Assistance to improve electoral participation for people with disabilities

Participation challenge	Assistance provided
<b>Accessing the polling place:</b> Access is an issue both in terms of the location of the polling booth, and the design of the booth to accommodate internal mobility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In <b>Papua New Guinea's</b> 2012 election, dedicated facilities for voters with disabilities were established in a few locations, in collaboration with disabled people's organisations. These voters were also transported to and from the location.</li> <li>• In <b>Indonesia</b>, with Australian funding, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has worked with the General Election Commission (KPU) to develop and trial a model polling station for people with disabilities. Despite this effort, IFES estimated that only around 20 per cent of polling stations in 2014 were considered fully accessible (when rated against seven criteria of access).</li> </ul>
<b>Casting an independent ballot:</b> People with disabilities are particularly susceptible to assisted voting (in addition to women, the elderly and people who do not speak the official language). <sup>87</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In <b>Myanmar's</b> 2015 election, IFES partnered with a DPO to promote more independent voting, including piloting 18 poll stations with improved access and use of braille ballot papers.</li> <li>• During the same election, IFES—supported by Australia—developed voting materials in a number of ethnic languages, but distribution was patchy across regions.</li> </ul>

<sup>83</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

<sup>84</sup> Table 14 in Annex B suggests strategies for disability-inclusive electoral assistance.

<sup>85</sup> For example, the IFES-managed, DFAT-funded South Asian Regional Dialogue in Colombo, and the Pacific Dialogue on Disabilities in Elections in Suva.

<sup>86</sup> Such as to improve access to polling places, or involve people with disabilities in election observation.

<sup>87</sup> Subject to a country's electoral laws, ballots may be marked by another person on behalf of someone who has a physical impairment, is illiterate or is otherwise not able to vote without assistance. In such circumstances the vote is no longer secret, and it is difficult (if not impossible) to guarantee that assisted individuals are truly enfranchised (that is, able to exercise their vote as they wish) at the ballot box.



Disability programs to date have prioritised electoral accessibility of people with disabilities, rather than their political empowerment. The focus has been on ensuring that they are able to register, vote and observe elections, rather than on breaking down cultural barriers to their participation, and indeed on their election. The inclusion of disability-related activities was seen to depend on personal relationships within DFAT and individual champions, in contrast to the previous practice under the Australian aid program of embedding disability offices in geographical divisions, as well as retaining regional specialists at overseas posts.

## Other aspects affecting the quality of participation

In most study countries, a range of other institutional factors adversely affected the quality of people's participation in the electoral process, but these have not been consistently targeted. Among those, significant discrepancies in the relative size of constituencies (in some countries, more than a fivefold difference) can undermine the key principle of the equality of votes. Similarly, low thresholds for candidate eligibility coupled with low development of political parties in many countries effectively undermines voters' power to influence the formation and priorities of governments. Inadequate regulations on campaign finance and election-related anti-corruption measures are closely linked to the widespread and apparently growing challenge of vote buying and money politics in the region, which arguably limits people's ability to exercise a free vote.<sup>88</sup>

These challenges are generally well known and progress is difficult. In Indonesia, Australian aid through the Electoral Support Program (2011–15) did broaden engagement to include work with a plurality of actors on electoral integrity issues—including the issue of money politics. The program adopted a longer-term, deliberative strategy designed to help mobilise and foster improved cooperation backed up by research and evidence. In spite of delays at the start, the approach appears to have had some success in building support for reform—for example, in working with civil society partners to build public support to increase statutory funding for political parties (as a counter to the influence of money politics in elections).

## 4.3 SUPPORTING THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS

This section considers the effectiveness of operational support for elections and support for election observation. Operational assistance relates to the routine functioning and activities of election management bodies and other organisations involved in ensuring a country's readiness for a national election. By definition it has tended to involve short-term assistance, although (as noted earlier in Chapter 4, and in Chapter 5, below) value for money is optimised with longer-term planning of all electoral assistance, including assistance required close to election day. Australian assistance for election observation has mostly taken the form of contributions to international and regional election observation to independently assess the integrity of elections.

<sup>88</sup> For example, people may feel pressured to vote a particular way due to fear of the consequences of not complying with family or community expectations, or due to individual or community need for the resources being offered.



Voters and officials in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, July 2012.

Photo: Commonwealth Secretariat

## Support for election delivery

Operational support to deliver elections was provided in four of the eight study countries. It typically took the form of short-term programs initiated in the lead-up to an election (Indonesia 2009, Tonga 2010, Fiji 2014) or additional ‘surge’ support provided by the Australian Civilian Corps (ACC) alongside a long-term electoral assistance program (Solomon Islands 2014 and, most notably, Papua New Guinea in 2012).<sup>89</sup> In some cases, it involved recruitment or deployment of additional personnel for in-line positions on a temporary basis to assist, and to provide equipment and logistical support.<sup>90</sup>

**The effectiveness of surge support was reasonable when assessed against Australia’s interest in avoiding delayed or disorderly polling.** In each case, Australian assistance appears to have contributed to a better-run election than would otherwise have been the case. In Papua New Guinea in 2012, Australian surge support was a significant factor in ensuring elections adhered to the constitutional timetable. In Fiji, Australian-supported personnel also appear to have played a critical role in assisting with delivery, given the lack of elections experience in the newly established Fiji Elections Office. In Solomon Islands (2014) advisers sometimes stepped in to ensure key preparatory tasks were completed on time, though the impact of ACC surge support was less certain. It seems unlikely that Australian assistance in Indonesia was particularly influential on the delivery of the 2009 elections.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> The demands on an electoral management body around an election are such that even longer-term programs aimed at capacity building typically switch to the ‘hands-on’ approach when the election is imminent, albeit at a smaller scale.

<sup>90</sup> See Table 16, Annex D, for details.

<sup>91</sup> In Solomon Islands, effectiveness was limited, due to its small scale relative to operational requirements, with one ACC deployee per province. In the case of Indonesia, program effectiveness was limited by a late start and flawed design assumption.

The independent evaluation found the level of support provided may have been greater than necessary, in part because the nature and timing of some support limited its effectiveness.<sup>92</sup> A stiffer test of effectiveness (than the timeliness of elections) was whether potential delays or disorganisation averted by assistance would have mattered. Under normal circumstances, delays in a limited number of voting sites for a short period may not have posed significant problems; indeed this was the case in Fiji in 2014. But the situation in Papua New Guinea in 2012 meant there was real concern that any deviation from the constitutional timetable might exacerbate political tensions and potentially precipitate a constitutional crisis and civil unrest. The independent evaluation found divergent views on the likelihood of such an outcome, though most commentators tended toward the damaging end of the scale.

**The risks of election-related violence were a very real concern.** Many factors other than the quality of election management have been identified internationally as potential triggers of violence leading up to, during and after elections (Box 11):

### Box 11: Risk factors for electoral violence

International experience shows countries with the following features have a **high risk of election-related violence**:

- elections have been held on a regular basis but the ruling party has been in power for some time and appears to be somewhat entrenched
- the democratic system is new and not well embedded
- the results of the election are (expected to be) very close
- the results go against generalised expectations
- the opposition accumulates distrust during the electoral process and comes to believe, whether based on fact or not, that the ruling powers have manipulated the results of the election in their own favour
- the electoral system creates a ‘winner-takes-all’ contest
- there is no precedent for a peaceful switch from ruling party to opposition
- many of the disappointed voters have a low level of education
- the ruling power is taking measures to constrain or manipulate the results
- the institutional framework for managing the elections lacks political independence and technical credibility
- population is polarised and harbours historical grievances.

There is a high risk of increased **violence against women during elections** if:

- Increased participation of women (as candidates, or members of political parties and social or political movements) is perceived as a rejection of traditional gender roles and values.

Sources: Electoral assistance and politics: Lessons for international support. Department for International Development. 2010; G Bardall. ‘Violence, Politics and Gender’. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*. Forthcoming 2017; ODE evaluation team.

<sup>92</sup> For example, safety concerns restricted much of the significant personnel injection to Port Moresby during the 2012 elections.



**Surge support entails other significant risks, where Australia is the predominant donor.** In addition to implementation challenges, large-scale hands-on surge support may risk giving comfort that ‘the election will happen’ irrespective of timeframe, budget, or the population’s own understanding of the electoral process, with associated moral hazard risks for Australia in contexts where it is the only significant donor.<sup>93</sup> It may also risk legitimising and sustaining poor governance and extractive regimes.

Surge support may run counter to longer-term capacity building ambitions if not planned and coordinated carefully. In Fiji, Australian operational support may have had important demonstration or modelling value for a local staff lacking practical experience. In Papua New Guinea (2012) and Solomon Islands (2014), aspects of support augmented local capacity, but there were also examples of capacity substitution<sup>94</sup> and of local staff abdicating their duties as a result.

**The evaluation found some evidence of lessons from earlier short-term assistance informing more recent support for election delivery.** During the review period, there was evidence of a positive shift in short-term assistance toward:

- greater attention to forward planning, reducing the chance of poorly thought-through, last-minute support
- bolstering elections expertise on the roster of Australian Civilian Corps personnel and involving the Australian Electoral Commission in the selection process
- deploying surge support staff more strategically in partner countries, beyond the headquarters of the electoral management body
- increasing efforts to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment through Australian Civilian Corps deployments—this was a work in progress, with deployees critical of the lack of adequate training and a somewhat box-ticking approach.<sup>95</sup>

Chair of the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) and former Vanuatu Prime Minister Edward Natapei attends a press conference to deliver the COG’s Interim Statement on Papua New Guinea’s 2012 elections.

Photo: Geraldine Goh/Commonwealth Secretariat



<sup>93</sup> ‘Moral hazard’ is a situation in which one party is prepared to behave in a risky manner, knowing that it is protected against the risk and that the other party will incur the cost.

<sup>94</sup> For this evaluation, the team distinguished between capacity supplementation and capacity substitution. The former involves providing skills, know-how, resources and so on that would not otherwise be available, perhaps as part of an agreed program of long-term support; the latter represents an undesirable situation under almost all circumstances.

<sup>95</sup> This was evident from ACC deployee reports and validated during the short country visits.

## Election observation

Australia has supported a variety of forms of election observation in all the countries examined, albeit on a modest scale. The general purpose can be characterised as a perceived contribution to election integrity and broader democracy aims (Box 12):

### Box 12: Common purposes of Australian assistance for election observation<sup>96</sup>

The evaluation found that Australian assistance for election observation was typically provided to meet the following purposes:

- *legitimise an electoral process*, to gain international acceptance and recognition of a regime, normalise relations or access development assistance
- *build confidence* that an election is worthy of participation, particularly for founding elections or in countries with typically problematic elections
- *help to deter fraud* through external oversight—while valid, the influence of observation on fraud is frequently exaggerated in the case of small observation missions
- *help build and reinforce democratic practices and institutions*, for example by generating recommendations to be acted on in future elections, or by establishing new electoral practices as the norm
- *promote (indirectly) more inclusive elections*, for example, by using the observation mission to examine adherence to international standards of inclusion, or to empower people from vulnerable or marginalised groups by involving them not just as voters, but also as observers and commentators on the election.

Source: Evaluation team review of program documents.

DFAT election observation methodologies have usually been decided by posts and country desks without centralised guidance or oversight. The variety of observation missions funded have included:

- support to established observation groups, such as the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) in Afghanistan (2010), or regional organisations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum in Timor-Leste (2012)
- missions comprising multilateral delegations of officials (Fiji, 2014 and Tonga 2010, 2014), diplomatic observers (Myanmar, 2015) or professional peer (election officials) groups (Pacific Islands)
- support to domestic citizen-observers (Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste)
- support to researcher-organised initiatives (Melanesia, including Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands).

Australia has also facilitated informal election observation and monitoring activities through assistance to civil society organisations. The 2014 Indonesian Presidential elections witnessed unprecedented levels of transparency and civil society oversight of vote counting, using crowd-sourcing and social-networking technology on a significant scale. While this phenomenon was an entirely domestic initiative, it relied on direct access (via the internet) to the results from each polling station as they came in—access that was created by a collaboration between the General Election Commission (KPU) and the University of Indonesia's Computer Science Centre, funded by Australian aid.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Further details are provided in Annex C, Case Study C7.

<sup>97</sup> See also Box 6, under 'voter registration' above, and Case Study C2, Annex C.



There were selected good examples of Australian assistance for disability-inclusive election monitoring. These may be worth closer examination to draw lessons for more inclusive election observation and monitoring in other countries (Box 13):

### Box 13: Methodologies for inclusion-focused domestic election observation

Over successive national and *suco* elections in Timor-Leste, and with funding from both the US and Australian governments, Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) has worked to develop its own disability election monitoring form.<sup>98</sup> RHTO has trained and deployed people with disabilities across polling stations to monitor: participation levels of people with disabilities (PWDs); polling place accessibility; barriers and facilities available to PWDs in casting their ballots; and complaints procedures. The monitoring tool has been critical in enabling RHTO to present evidence-based recommendations to the electoral management bodies. As a direct result, improvements have been made at polling stations with high-gradient stairs (from 45% in 2012 to 16% in 2016), with ramps (from 10% to 22%), and with accessible entrances (from 57% to 71%).

Australian aid has also supported the General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA), which partners with organisations in Southeast Asian countries to conduct election monitoring to strengthen the evidence base for regional dialogue and policy. For the 2014 Indonesian national elections, AGENDA facilitated the work of 300 observers, visiting 470 polling stations in five provinces, observing 1,387 PWDs casting their votes, and undertaking interviews with 789 voters with disabilities. This monitoring work was subsequently channelled into a new BRIDGE module on disability rights and elections.

Source: Evaluation team interviews and program document review.

The variety of forms of observation supported, and the use of methodologies focused on the election day, means Australia has lagged behind international best practice on observation. The United Nations–convened Declaration of Principles on International Election Observation provides widely accepted guidelines for professional and credible election observation. The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Pacific Islands, Australia & New Zealand Electoral Administrators Association (PIANZEA) are signatories to the Declaration of Principles.

The declaration emphasises that election observation missions must have a robust and articulated methodology on which to base informed judgements about the quality of the process, and **'must be free from any bilateral or multilateral considerations that could conflict with impartiality.'**

'Robust' observation methodology means that fully fledged election observation missions should include:

- a long-term and countrywide presence
- comprehensive reporting frameworks
- qualified, experienced field presence and headquarters, with relevant competencies and country knowledge.

<sup>98</sup> Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (2017), *Timor-Leste 2016 Suco Council Elections Disability Inclusion Monitoring Report*, <http://www.counterpart.org/report-disability-inclusion-monitoring/>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

There is scope for Australia to develop a more strategic and fit-for-context approach to election observation. Although international observer missions often have a voice that is better heard, they have limitations for judging the quality of an election, given their scale and costs. National observer initiatives lack the international credibility, but may provide much better coverage of the election—geographically and temporally. Observers with good knowledge of a country can provide useful insights that complement those of electoral specialists. DFAT has not systematically examined the feasibility of linking international and national observation activities, and balancing the costs and benefits of each.

**Support for more extensive observation activities could also generate valuable learning about conditions in countries that are important to Australia.** DFAT has previously tried to share and learn from experience with election observation. The Centre for Democratic Institutions convened a forum for dialogue on election observation in 2012, but its recommendations were not followed up. Missions organised by the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) program have generated important learning about the intersections between gender, culture, governance and politics in Melanesia, but a similar approach has not been used in other geographic regions. SSGM is exploring innovative ways of incorporating cultural understanding into electoral observation, which has potential as a unique Australian-branded methodology. It will be important for this work to align with established election observation practice (as outlined in the Declaration of Principles).



Electoral observer Joel Fernandes (front left) at a polling station in Dili during the 2012 presidential elections in Timor-Leste.

Photo by Sandra Magno/ UNDP

## 5. EFFICIENCY OF ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

This chapter assesses the efficiency of Australian electoral assistance in 2006–16, considering: the modalities and implementing partners used; how the assistance was designed and managed, including the role and capacity of DFAT staff; costs and benefits; timeliness of assistance; and coordination with other donors. The breadth of this evaluation precluded a detailed analysis of the efficiency of the programs supported. Nevertheless, from a broader perspective, efficiency risks were identified in certain aspects of the approach to electoral assistance. The risks, and associated lessons, are summarised here to inform future management improvements.

**Compared to other donors (both bilateral and multilateral), Australia was well regarded by implementing partners and partner countries for the responsiveness and flexibility of its electoral assistance.** In contrast, the evaluation found examples of multi-donor programs that, once underway, proved difficult to modify to suit local conditions.<sup>99</sup> All things being equal, this characteristic should contribute to efficient assistance. But ensuring efficiency in Australian electoral assistance also requires continuing attention to likely risks to efficiency:

- Support must be planned and scheduled in good time.
- Program designs must be realistic and cost-conscious.
- Partners should be carefully selected, and decided through a careful assessment of their relative benefits and costs (including financial and non-financial aspects).
- Coordination cannot be assumed; it requires appropriate incentives and resources.
- Learning must be ongoing, and allow electoral assistance to be adjusted in line with what works best.

**Assistance that came too late in the electoral cycle almost always entailed significant efficiency losses.** Delayed or last-minute support to electoral management bodies has on occasion meant abandoning original capacity building objectives in favour of meeting immediate election delivery needs. This adversely affected the delivery and distribution of planned outputs, and resulted in wasted effort. Inadequate time to plan and implement voter awareness activities reduced scope for effective quality assurance, and in turn lowered likely effectiveness. Planned activities were implemented late, despite the presence in-country of long-term Australian support. Last-minute procurement of necessary equipment or services in the run-up to elections invariably raised costs, especially where it required suspending normal procurement rules due to urgency. The delays were not always of Australia's making—most notably, the decisions to introduce biometric voter registration systems in Fiji and Solomon Islands at very short notice were taken against Australian advice.

**Reliance on a set-menu approach to electoral assistance is also likely to have incurred efficiency losses.** The evaluation's analysis noted the similarity of assistance provided in the study countries, but also showed that similar support in different contexts had very different outcomes. While the more recent program documents offered examples of relevant and detailed contextual analysis, translating the implications of such analyses into effective interventions was much less evident.

<sup>99</sup> This of course is not a good reason for Australia to 'go it alone', but does point to the need for sufficient investment in the design process and careful review of the capacity to adjust course during implementation in the (likely) event that some design assumptions prove erroneous.

The following factors may help to explain the limited types of electoral assistance despite diverse political and development contexts:

- **Treating likely scenarios as risks:** Contextual analysis sometimes described constraints in the operating environment, for example: a deficit in political commitment to reform, opportunities for corrupt electoral practices, organisational and institutional capacity weaknesses. The evaluation found that these factors were often treated as risks in design documents.<sup>100</sup> Mitigating measures were typically discussed toward the end of the report, in a risk management matrix. In many circumstances, however, these were more likely certainties, which should have been addressed in the design of assistance.
- **In all the study countries, demand for electoral assistance from national governments tended to be poorly articulated, and DFAT struggled to adapt inputs to meet challenges during implementation.**<sup>101</sup> Electoral support programs were normally small relative to other aid investments in a country. In consequence, they were sometimes delegated to relatively junior members of staff, or staff who were new to their positions. This created excessive reliance on implementing partners whose strengths were technical rather than strategic. Such partners were not, by and large, willing or able to address political constraints, or to adapt their inputs to mitigate other risks during implementation.

**Programs providing support across the electoral cycle should be tailored to reflect the varying workload.** In Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, Australia was the lead donor and provided long-term capacity building and institutional development assistance. The chosen delivery model—sizeable support maintained in the respective Commissions at a fairly constant level over the electoral cycle—was a significant part of the relatively high unit costs in those countries (see Table 9 in Chapter 3). The long-term adviser presence in Papua New Guinea amounted to nearly 10 per cent of the Commission’s permanent staff during 2008–12. In the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, since 2013 there have been as many as five international advisers working on capacity building. This seems a disproportionate way to strengthen an organisation with fewer than eight professional staff, and no permanent chief electoral officer at the head.

There is no clear reason for maintaining the same level of support to the electoral management body across the electoral cycle. There are tasks to do between major election events, but these are not particularly costly. In situ advisers have done some useful work in these periods, but the same outputs could have been provided with fewer inputs. It is true that building relationships and trust is an important aspect of effective aid, particularly in the Pacific. But the means to maintain those links between elections should be in proportion to the sphere of feasible action. Although the context is very different and not directly comparable, the experience in Timor-Leste provides an example of an alternative and more efficient approach (Box 14):

<sup>100</sup> An exception to this was the 2015 elections in Myanmar, where strong emphasis was placed on active risk assessment during the engagement.

<sup>101</sup> The exception to this is Myanmar and possibly Fiji, where the general lack of experience in running elections created clear demand for technical assistance.

#### Box 14: Cost-effective and sustainable capacity building in Timor-Leste

Between 2000 and 2001, in close cooperation with the United Nations and with the support of AusAID, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) designed and implemented an intense capacity development program. The program sought to develop a cadre of electoral officials able to conduct the country's first elections under the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, and rebuild the country's electoral institutions. This was the foundation for the renowned Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) program.<sup>102</sup>

From that intense engagement until 2012, the AEC maintained support with a relatively low-cost, arms-length and periodic exchange program to engage the emerging Timorese electoral institutions. The AEC also supported the nationalisation of the BRIDGE curriculum. After the UN completed its mandate in Timor-Leste (December 2012), increasingly modest Australian support focused on sustaining institutional relationships, through visitor programs, secondments, and engaging Timor-Leste's election officials in PIANZEA and the regional roll-out of BRIDGE.

The quality of elections in Timor-Leste improved over this period—the result of many factors. Nevertheless, the approach adopted by the AEC and UN was critical to building and sustaining a cohort of young recruits. Many of these now run Timor-Leste's electoral institutions. These individuals attribute their subsequent career trajectories to this early nurturing of their knowledge and skills. BRIDGE continues to be used widely in Timor-Leste, and the professional and personal relationships established with the AEC remain highly valued among counterparts.

Source: Evaluation team document review and interviews.

**The cost–benefit associated with different implementing partners requires careful appraisal.** Most Australian electoral assistance has been delivered through a limited set of primary implementing partners. These have been highly competent organisations, but with different strengths and weaknesses according to subject matter and geography. In the Pacific, many international organisations have frequently lacked experience, personnel and established management systems. This may have resulted in higher unit operating costs. DFAT has commonly justified the additional cost of international partners (such as the United Nations Development Programme) on the grounds that it would reduce the appearance of Australian involvement and limit Australia's risk exposure. However, whether such dividends have accrued in practice requires examination: the risk reductions gained by working through an international organisation are, at best, likely to be partial, and the (implicit) assumption that international partners are willing to assume more risk than Australia in promoting reform may not hold in practice.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> BRIDGE is a professional development program for electoral administrators, the media, political parties and electoral observers. It is delivered through five implementing partners: the AEC; International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES); International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and United Nations Electoral Assistance Division.

<sup>103</sup> For example, a review of DFID's electoral assistance provided through UNDP found that the mandate of UN resident representatives—to maintain very close relations with the government of the day—made them reluctant to deliver hard messages on behalf of the international community and engage actively with opposition parties and civil society, which may be critical of government.



**The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has been engaged for its technical and regional knowledge, and for the value it adds to Australia's bilateral relationships.** This is something an international partner cannot provide. In some operating environments, higher unit costs for the AEC compared with alternative organisations have been justified by the relationship value-add. From the 1990s, the AEC built a reputation as a trusted counterpart for Australian electoral assistance, as an expert partner for United Nations peacekeeping missions, and a valued mentor institution for its regional election management peers. The lasting legacy of the BRIDGE curriculum for election administration (conceptualised and nurtured by the AEC, now used worldwide), the popularity of the AEC visitors' programs, and the longevity and activity levels of the PIANZEA network of Pacific regional election administrators (hosted by the AEC) attest to the AEC's importance.

The AEC stepped back from its role as a leader in electoral assistance to focus on domestic priorities and institutional restructuring in the aftermath of the re-run of the Western Australia elections in 2013–14. This coincided with a period where major funding cuts to Australian development assistance affected AEC international operations. The decline in commitment, resources and capacity of the AEC (coinciding with the period of scrutiny for this evaluation) left a noticeable gap. In interviews, DFAT officers at post, BRIDGE partner organisations, and PIANZEA members noted diminished high-level AEC engagement (peer-to-peer mentor role), diminished access to expert advice from the AEC (to guide DFAT electoral assistance programming or induct officers), and uncertainty regarding the future of partnership initiatives.

**In the meantime, the modalities of aid have shifted and the range of potential implementing partners for electoral assistance has expanded.** Other development assistance providers are establishing in the region, including Korea (through the Association of World Electoral Bodies), the European Union and UN agencies. It cannot be assumed that the previous level of demand for Australian expertise holds true; demand may need to be carefully reassessed considering the perspectives of new entrants, and changes in the capacity and interests of traditional partners.

**Interviews with AEC officials, and evidence of new projects underway, indicate that the AEC is now actively re-engaging in its international work.** The AEC has clear potential to make an important contribution, although—as an independent, technical electoral organisation—it faces some constraints on the type of engagement possible. It remains an asset to Australia's bilateral relationship with countries in the region, and more broadly for its support to global public goods in the field.

**Realising its potential would require the AEC to renew its commitment and re-invest in capacity to engage effectively overseas,** while acknowledging the changing nature of needs since establishing its international reputation. DFAT may be able to enhance the AEC's renewed contributions through closer dialogue, longer-term planning for engagements and commitment of resources (subject to thorough needs and capacity assessments).

**Under-resourced coordination arrangements can undermine overall efficiency.** In a number of cases, Australia adopted a mixed strategy, engaging multiple implementing partners through different channels to deliver the package of electoral assistance. Frequently this has sought to blend technical support to election management bodies, assistance to civil society organisations and bilateral relationship interests (usually through the Australian Electoral Commission). However, coordination requirements have not always been adequately considered. At best, this resulted in significant demands on in-country staff—a hidden cost of design. At worst, the evaluation found examples of missed synergies between civil society organisations (which do not automatically coordinate even if funded by the same donor), duplication and waste.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> This had consequences such as: excess or unused information materials; failure to re-use relevant materials where it would have been sensible; and total funding exceeding what was initially requested (without a documented reason).

Operating efficiently also requires a systematic approach to learning and continuous improvement. Independent Progress Reviews and Independent Completion Reviews have been conducted for most of the electoral assistance programs covered by this review. Nevertheless, the broad remit of the studies meant they could not examine implementation in any depth. Australia has supported a diverse but relatively consistent range of activities across different contexts, and in those different settings, different approaches have been tried. To date, comparative analysis—for example of alternative options for voter registration, the relative efficacy of different voter awareness campaigns, effective means of engaging civil society organisations in election—has not been systematically undertaken.

To enable such analysis, DFAT must ensure evaluation of the major elements of support (such as voter registration, strengthening EMBs, voter awareness) is built into the design of that assistance. Such learning could inform the design of future electoral assistance, and the decisions of electoral stakeholders in the region.



Women in Ainaro participate in the second round of presidential elections in Timor-Leste, on 16 April 2012.

Photo: Sandra Magno/UNDP

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation highlights the contribution that Australia has made to supporting elections in the region for a decade. In all the elections covered by this review, the evaluation found evidence that Australian assistance made a positive difference to the quality of elections in some respect. It also found substantial risks in providing effective, inclusive and efficient electoral assistance. These arise from the operational challenges posed by elections themselves, and constraints imposed by the institutional, political and cultural environments in which elections take place.

To assist DFAT in better managing the considerable and complex risks of electoral assistance, this chapter provides conclusions and recommendations that follow from the lessons discussed in Chapters 3–5. Electoral support programs can be highly context-specific, characterised by relatively high levels of uncertainty. The evaluation acknowledges that the nature of Australia’s relationship with the countries concerned, and sensitivities around governance and elections, may constrain the scope for DFAT to change the approach to electoral assistance.

Subject to contextual feasibility, the conclusions and recommendations are intended to improve the effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency of Australian electoral assistance in two respects:

1. **strategic improvements:** a limited number of central actions to inform and bolster DFAT’s broader approach to providing more effective, inclusive and efficient electoral assistance
2. **program management improvements:** practical suggestions for programs to improve the effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency of specific areas of electoral assistance.

### Strategic improvements

The evaluation’s overall findings confirm that improving technical support alone, although important, is unlikely to improve electoral processes when operating in challenging institutional, political and cultural environments. This is not an argument that little can be achieved in such environments. Nor is it an argument that technical support for high-quality elections is inappropriate. But stand-alone, technical electoral assistance projects are unlikely to deliver sustainable gains in all but the most favourable environments, while entailing other risks. This signals the need for broader programming choices and more strategic political engagement.

In at least half of the countries examined, it was difficult to determine any positive trajectory of improvement in the integrity of elections over the period; in some there have been signs of reversals. The primary objective of electoral assistance in these settings appeared to be to support orderly elections as a contribution to maintaining stability and a functioning state.<sup>105</sup> In some countries, the risks of instability may have been a very real concern that warranted overriding attention. However, other

<sup>105</sup> We refer to the apparent objective because it is often not clear. For example, the 2013 design document for the Electoral Systems Strengthening Program (Phase 3) in Solomon Islands identified the potential impact of national elections on security and stability as justification for ‘continuing modest and timely electoral support [as] a sensible investment in national stability which complements our substantial security support ...’ But the document also noted that ‘[i]mproving the integrity of elections has the potential to contribute to improvements in governance by supporting government accountability and underpinning an effective social contract between citizens and their state as a basis for improved public policy over time’. The stated goal of the program was ‘to contribute to the enhancement of representative democracy and accountable government’, while the program purpose was ‘to support improvements in the conduct *and integrity* of elections’ [emphasis added].

challenges for electoral assistance in poor governance environments, left unaddressed, may diminish the effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency of assistance (see Table 13: Challenges for electoral assistance).

**Table 13: Challenges for electoral assistance**

Challenge	Implications for electoral assistance if not addressed
Tensions between support for elections and the aims of DFAT's other governance investments, such as those that aim to build local, accountable institutions.	If it provides a mechanism to further entrench illiberal governance structures, the election process may actively work against support to improve local accountability, and possibly undermine Australia's wider aims.
Maintaining the effectiveness of electoral assistance in the face of wider governance constraints.	The evaluation found the design of electoral assistance has typically been technically focused, even when informed by in-depth analysis of the challenging political and institutional environment. Sensitivities around issues of national sovereignty may partially explain this, but the extent to which this narrowness was observed suggests that DFAT faces a broader challenge in moving away from a set-menu approach to electoral assistance. <sup>106</sup>
Properly mainstreaming inclusion in electoral support.	In all the countries reviewed, the evaluation noted the challenge that programs faced in mainstreaming inclusion in electoral support strategies. The objective of inclusive elections has mostly been pursued on a targeted, activity-focused basis, focused on simple quantitative measures and predominantly involving women and people with disabilities. There is no policy guidance on mainstreaming inclusion more generally, meaning that ethnic and religious minorities, young people, elderly people and others are often not targeted in electoral assistance. The evaluation also found limited recognition of the interrelatedness of different aspects of social inclusion (such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, disabilities) in the design of electoral assistance.
The moral hazard risk associated with supply-driven assistance, particularly in countries where Australia is the largest donor. <sup>107</sup>	Concerns about the risk posed to stability by poorly administered elections need to be weighed carefully against the moral hazard risk, through both electoral assistance programs and surge support close to election events. This is not an easy balance to strike. Effectively managing this complex interrelationship requires a careful mix of informed technical, economic and diplomatic engagements, over time and not solely in the run-up to elections. An emphasis on predominantly technical or operational support to election management is likely to have limited effectiveness in addressing the multifaceted causes of election-related violence and instability.

The nature and scale of the challenges suggest a need for better integration between electoral assistance and wider efforts to improve governance. A more integrated approach is not a panacea. Change in some partner countries will be gradual, and opportunities for reform will be constrained by the political and institutional realities at any time. DFAT's *Election handbook* states that in fragile environments, electoral assistance should be 'one strand of efforts to improve wider governance: elections alone are not

<sup>106</sup> DFAT's Effective Governance Strategy also notes: 'it is challenging to translate high quality analysis into the way aid is delivered' (DFAT 2015, *Effective governance: strategy for Australia's aid investments*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 12).

<sup>107</sup> Moral hazard is a situation in which one party is prepared to behave in a risky manner, knowing that it is protected against the risk and the other party will incur the cost.



sufficient for effective governance or a reduction in violence in fragile or conflict-affected contexts’.<sup>108</sup> The evaluation endorses this principle, but found limited evidence of such interweaving, outside the period immediately before and during elections. Even where multi-stranded support has been given to create broader democratic statebuilding programs, donors’ experience indicates that the elements are unlikely to combine to contribute to more accountable governance environments without continuous development and diplomatic engagement. These synergies typically do not develop without a degree of coordination and continual management.

**An integrated approach would entail better matching of the assistance strategy to the problem diagnosis, and fostering coherence across governance support.** This does not preclude programs specifically with key electoral actors, such as electoral management bodies. It may need to involve more creative use of existing programs and channels to advance specific elements of the assistance strategy, rather than creating a stand-alone, comprehensive electoral assistance program. Existing channels may include programs or relationships with central ministries in the countries concerned, who may be better placed to address key external constraints on the capacity of electoral management bodies—such as insufficient or untimely release of funds for critical election preparations, or legal or regulatory frameworks constraining the scope for independent action. For the challenge of money politics, it could involve complementary governance initiatives, such as: strengthening procurement systems; anti-corruption and anti-money laundering initiatives; and maintaining registers of politicians’ assets and pecuniary interests. Such initiatives may offer alternative means to reduce—albeit indirectly or partially—the incentives for politicians to invest in elections, by reducing the likelihood of returns.

To address the strategic challenge of operating in countries where the form and substance of democracy are divergent, and address the programming challenge of building inherently flexible assistance, the evaluation recommends:

### Recommendation 1

Electoral support should be located within DFAT’s wider strategy for effective governance in a country, and more clearly integrated with other governance programs, supported by effective coordination, management and diplomatic engagement.

In order to support country programs to deliver more integrated assistance, clearer central policy guidance would assist. In this respect, DFAT’s *Election handbook* should be amended to stress more prominently the interrelatedness of electoral support with wider governance efforts and set out programming expectations (see Recommendation 5, below).

**Gender-equality objectives have typically been addressed in electoral assistance through stand-alone initiatives to support women’s empowerment, rather than through holistic responses informed by comprehensive analysis.** DFAT’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy<sup>109</sup> and Effective Governance Strategy<sup>110</sup> require that gender issues are incorporated into programming. While

<sup>108</sup> DFAT 2017, *Election handbook: guidance on developing policy and delivering assistance*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 13.

<sup>109</sup> DFAT 2016, *Gender equality and women’s empowerment strategy*, DFAT, Canberra. The strategy applies to the work of DFAT and other Australian government agencies delivering Official Development Assistance, and explains how the Australian government works on gender equality and women’s empowerment in foreign policy, economic diplomacy and Australian aid.

<sup>110</sup> DFAT 2015, *Effective governance: strategy for Australia’s aid investments*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 14. *Effective governance* provides guidance to operational teams on how to design, implement and assess governance programming.



Australian aid has had some success in designing and implementing these programs, the focus has been commonly on numbers—increasing the number of women candidates, polling officials, voters and elected officials.

Improving women’s ability to participate is a matter of human rights, and is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition in the promotion of gender equality. Efforts to promote temporary special measures—particularly in the Pacific—demonstrate this point well. In the absence of any social acceptance of women’s role in leadership, measures to require increased participation by women continue to fail. Such measures might be more usefully promoted through a more holistic focus on social norms around women in leadership in these countries.

To support a more holistic and strategic approach to gender equality, the evaluation recommends:

## Recommendation 2

DFAT should adopt a structured approach to mainstreaming gender equality in electoral assistance, by developing a policy or guidance note on women’s electoral participation and leadership (linked to the *Election handbook*) that would assist program managers in considering:

- structural and institutional approaches to mainstreaming gender equality in electoral assistance, instead of the current focus on individual women
- how to position electoral support aimed at gender equality within broader strategies to advance gender equality or women’s leadership.

Despite strong (and internationally renowned) DFAT policy guidance on disability inclusion, disability mainstreaming in electoral assistance has been a significant challenge. *Development for all* commits DFAT to providing disability-inclusive development assistance.<sup>111</sup> Inclusion of people with disabilities has been promoted through high-level policy dialogues, and targeted support to civil society for specific purposes (for example, access to polling places, observation), but has fallen well short of mainstreaming. As with gender equality, there is scope to adopt a more structured and holistic approach in this area of electoral assistance.

To encourage more holistic and comprehensive attention to disability inclusion in electoral assistance, the evaluation recommends:

## Recommendation 3

DFAT should extend the current range of disability-inclusion programming objectives from the promotion of electoral participation and access for people with disabilities, to their political empowerment and representation.

The importance of a deep understanding of the political and institutional context in which assistance is provided is a foundational principle in DFAT’s Effective Governance Strategy, and is recognised in the literature on governance and democracy:

<sup>111</sup> DFAT 2015, *Development for all 2015–2020: strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia’s aid program*, DFAT, Canberra.

[Donors] need to focus in on the key political patterns of each country in which they intervene, rather than trying to do a little of everything according to a template ... based on the vague assumption that they all contribute to some assumed process of consolidation. Democracy aid must proceed from a penetrating analysis of the particular core syndrome that defines the political life of the country in question, and how aid interventions can change that syndrome.

Carothers, T 2002, 'The end of the transition paradigm', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 5–21.

**Australia's considerable expertise and deep knowledge on governance and elections are not well coordinated or systematically accessed to inform the design, management and evaluation of electoral assistance.** Australia has much relevant expertise on electoral assistance, gender equality and social inclusion, and deep knowledge about the political and institutional situation in neighbouring countries, but these are not well coordinated or systematically accessed in programming. This expertise is housed in individuals, different parts of academia and public sector bodies (including the Australian Electoral Commission and DFAT). While there are examples of elements of this resource being accessed by particular programs, in practice the use made of it in programming is variable, both in breadth and depth. The evaluation concurs with DFAT's Effective Governance Strategy that developing the necessary understanding of the institutional environment 'requires investment in staff',<sup>112</sup> but such understanding requires multidisciplinary, longitudinal analysis within countries, spanning electoral cycles, while program staff are likely to be in their positions for less than a single cycle.

Many other countries who actively provide electoral assistance have developed more formal organisational responses to shape and deliver their assistance.<sup>113</sup> These institutions differ in form and in the extent to which they adopt an overtly political or developmental stance.<sup>114</sup> However, setting aside any possible merits of such formal approaches, there is much that could be done to better marshal existing expertise and build on available research and analysis more systematically, including cross-program learning.

DFAT is well placed to establish and coordinate a sustainable, accessible resource through its electoral reference group.<sup>115</sup> It should include experts external and internal to DFAT, knowledgeable about the social, cultural, political and technical dimensions of elections, with the opportunity to access international expertise where appropriate. In keeping with DFAT's Effective Governance Strategy, the focus should not be framed narrowly on support to elections *per se*, but instead examine the range of factors undermining the credibility of elections—to consider what actions could help build more accountable governance systems more broadly. Many of the factors affecting elections and electoral integrity equally impact on broader democracy and accountability institutions, and the state in general. The explicit goal would be to bring existing knowledge and new learning together more coherently and systematically, to build DFAT's institutional knowledge base and make that accessible to DFAT staff.

<sup>112</sup> DFAT 2015, *Effective governance: strategy for Australia's aid investments*, DFAT, Canberra, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> See Annex E: Examples of democracy assistance institutions.

<sup>114</sup> Carothers, T 2009, 'Democracy assistance: political vs. developmental?', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 5–19.

<sup>115</sup> Governance and Fragility Branch established an Elections Reference Group to inform the first *Election handbook* in 2015, and maintains a registry of DFAT electoral expertise. Posts and program areas may use the register to identify staff who have experience in leading or managing electoral assistance in particular regions, or who have a particular technical focus.

To improve how DFAT accesses and applies electoral knowledge and expertise, the evaluation recommends:

#### Recommendation 4

DFAT should seek to build a sustainable electoral assistance capability outside any single program, and enhance the analytical and advisory resources available to staff responsible for designing and managing electoral assistance.

Such enhanced resources may incorporate:

- convening a broad base of relevant expertise to identify upcoming major electoral events over the next five years in countries where DFAT has an interest, and engage with program staff well in advance to help develop their strategies for assistance
- mainstreaming objectives, specifically, supporting strategic gender and diversity mappings or assessments<sup>116</sup>
- harnessing available expertise, to support programs' risk monitoring in the years immediately before major elections
- deploying experts immediately after elections, and on completing major electoral assistance investments, to review what happened, the lessons learned and the options for shaping more effective support in the future.

### Program management improvements

The lessons on effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency of electoral assistance cannot be adequately addressed through centralised actions alone. Deciding on the most appropriate type and scale of assistance, engaging strategically with stakeholders, delivering timely assistance, adapting to implementation challenges, managing risks, and using evidence to support continuous improvement are the responsibilities of DFAT staff on geographic desks and at overseas posts. Improving these aspects of electoral assistance requires practical suggestions for those who are charged with the design or oversight of electoral assistance programs. A key source of existing guidance for staff who manage electoral assistance is DFAT's *Election handbook*.<sup>117</sup> The handbook is conceptually strong and is an important resource to sensitise officials to issues that arise when elections are on the horizon. To incorporate lessons from this evaluation into improved electoral assistance management and practice, the evaluation recommends:

#### Recommendation 5

Governance and Fragility Branch, in consultation with the Elections Reference Group and other key stakeholders, should augment and strengthen the guidance available in the *Election handbook*, with reference to the evidence-based suggestions provided in Annex A (Table 13).

<sup>116</sup> For gender-equality mapping, the Electoral Gender Mapping Framework may prove a useful tool, available at Annex C of Ballington, J, Bardall, G, Palmieri, S & Sullivan, K 2015, *Inclusive electoral processes: a guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women's participation*, UN Women & UNDP, New York, pp. 106–17.

<sup>117</sup> DFAT 2017, *Election handbook: guidance on developing policy and delivering assistance*, DFAT, Canberra. The *Election Handbook* provides internal guidance for DFAT posts and country desks on developing a policy approach and delivering development assistance to other countries conducting electoral processes.

## ANNEX A: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM MANAGERS

To incorporate lessons from this evaluation into improved electoral assistance management and practice, the evaluation recommends that Governance and Fragility Branch, in consultation with the Elections Reference Group and other key stakeholders, augment and strengthen the guidance available in the *Election handbook*.

Electoral support programs can be highly context-specific, characterised by relatively high levels of uncertainty and risk. The evaluation acknowledges that the nature of Australia's relationship with the countries concerned, and sensitivities around governance and elections, will affect what is feasible in each case.

Subject to contextual feasibility, Table 13 provides specific evidence-based suggestions (Recommendations 1.1 to 8.2) on how to improve particular aspects of electoral assistance.

Table 14: Practical recommendations for DFAT electoral assistance managers

<i>Election handbook</i> advice	Evaluation recommendations
Using the electoral cycle approach: '... recognise elections as part of a cycle rather than a single-day event, requiring engagement at different points over the long term (at least one electoral cycle) to be effective' (p. 4).	<p>The evaluation endorses this advice on the electoral cycle approach, with the following additions. While every intervention should be based on an assessment of the local context, risk and what is feasible, in principle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 The assistance strategy should engage a wider range of <b>key actors</b> affecting the conduct of elections than just long-term support to the electoral management body.</li><li>1.2 The design of assistance across the cycle should be <b>flexible</b>—the volume, type and channels of engagement needed at different times (including political engagement by DFAT) will vary, while the best opportunities for substantive progress will be hard to predict at the outset.</li><li>1.3 Across the cycle, staff should pay close attention to see that key tasks for election delivery are undertaken in a <b>timely</b> manner. Elections are largely predictable events and the administrative and logistical requirements are well known. Late implementation of key activities poses significant risks to the efficiency and effectiveness of DFAT assistance, adversely affecting the quality of delivery while increasing costs.</li></ol>

## Election handbook advice Evaluation recommendations

Analysing the context and assessing risks: ‘The extent to which Australia engages with and/or strengthens the conduct of an election should be predicated on a robust analysis and risk assessment’ (p. 4).

For program staff, we recommend two practical steps to strengthen the approach to contextual analysis and risk assessment:

- 2.1 Design documents should include projected risk ratings before and particularly after proposed mitigation measures have been taken, with a system to periodically review proposed mitigation measures.
- 2.2 As far as possible, risk assessments should be conducted with local stakeholders. This would strengthen the quality of assessment and help build mutual understanding. It may also enhance risk management skills locally.

In addition to DFAT risk reporting requirements, program staff can usefully refer to the *Election Risk Management Tool* (International IDEA),<sup>118</sup> which provides a **good checklist** for risk assessments.

Deciding on specific interventions: a range of interventions are possible across [the electoral] cycle (p. 5).

The *Election handbook* is clear that the choice of areas to support should be based on detailed analysis of needs and context. In the most challenging environments for Australia, the analysis should look at the specific needs and risks for the type of assistance planned, for example:

- 3.1 For **capacity building**, support should be predicated on and shaped by detailed analysis of where capacity constraints are most limiting (whether individual, organisational or institutional capacity) and the most effective and sustainable means of alleviating those constraints, informed carefully by the lessons of previous assistance. Analysis of inclusion issues should be an integral part of the capacity building analysis and strategy.
- 3.2 For **voter awareness** programs, future assistance should:
  - a) build the evidence base regarding the sub-groups under-served by conventional voter awareness activities and the most effective channels for reaching them
  - b) include quality controls to ensure that delivery to voters is adequate, given that overall effectiveness is heavily influenced by the quality of the communication approach
  - c) ensure that broader civic education efforts are part of wider, ongoing initiatives; the effectiveness of limited, episodic efforts around election times is likely to be very low.
- 3.3 For **voter registration** assistance, political sensitivities can limit Australia’s ability to be practically involved. Nevertheless, Australia could make an objective contribution by **formally evaluating** voter registers, to obtain objective, quantitative estimates of their quality. The results could be shared (confidentially, if need be) for discussion among domestic stakeholders, and to inform future assistance.

<sup>118</sup> [www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/electoral-risk-management-tool](http://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/electoral-risk-management-tool)



## Election handbook advice Evaluation recommendations

**Managing likely last-minute requests:** ‘... there will be occasions when countries submit last-minute requests for assistance as elections approach ...’ (p. 6).

We acknowledge the reality of last-minute requests, and agree that in practice what is feasible or desirable will depend on local circumstances and the nature of the requests. Nevertheless, it is not the case that such requests are entirely unpredictable. In cases where they can be anticipated:

- 4.1 To manage the associated risks of delayed assistance, program staff should discuss—through aid and diplomatic channels—the nature of any short-term, operational assistance that may be necessary well in advance of an election, to allow a planned and more integrated approach.

**Mainstreaming gender equality and inclusion:** ‘... support gender equality and social inclusion through elections ...’ (p. 7).

We endorse the objective of promoting **inclusive elections**, but recommend the following important elaborations to the guidance:

- 5.1 The phrase ‘social inclusion’ should be understood to include ethnic, religious and other minorities, as well as people with disabilities.
- 5.2 Gender equality and disability inclusion should be considered separately, as programming responses differ: distinct programming strategies for disability inclusion and gender equality are provided in Tables 14 and 15 respectively (Annex B) of this report.

The guidance should align with and refer to: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the DFAT strategies Development for All, and Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy; and international best practice in *Inclusive electoral processes: a guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women’s participation*.

**Deciding on election observation or monitoring:** ‘DFAT officers should consider whether the [election observation] request serves Australia’s prevailing foreign and/or development policy interests and priorities’ (p. 8).

The *Election handbook* discusses **election observation** extensively, and includes practical tips on how to organise observation missions. There are a number of key messages on election observation that should be emphasised:

- 6.1 Support to **international election observation** missions may be appropriate in certain circumstances—for example when there are likely to be competing narratives about the fairness of an election, and where a trusted, experienced, external arbiter can make an evidence-based, appropriately nuanced, case. In such cases, DFAT support should: align with the Declaration of Principles on International Election Observation; and involve organisations not linked to any geostrategic interests, with a solid track record, deep knowledge of the issues of contention, and a comprehensive (long-term, skilled) methodology. Support to **domestic election observation** efforts can be one effective tool on the ‘demand’ side for accountable and inclusive electoral processes, but there are risks. For example, inflammatory, misunderstood or ill-informed commentary may destabilise an electoral process.
- 6.3 Other forms of **monitoring** during elections—election day field visits by embassy staff, Australian parliamentary visits, regional professional election exchange visits—should not be framed as election observation missions.
- 6.4 Any judgement, of any kind, on an electoral process has political implications, sometimes serious. A superficial statement, or a plethora of competing statements, can dilute the impact of a considered one.

## Election handbook advice Evaluation recommendations

Obtaining evidence and reflecting on experience: reporting by DFAT posts, for ‘... capturing lessons learned to improve our approach to electoral engagement’ (p. 12).

6.5 There is scope for DFAT to develop a more strategic approach in this field. For example, linking international missions with national observer initiatives, or supporting more extensive, expert observation (such as the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia’s programs, which have generated important learning about gender, culture, governance and politics in Melanesia).

We endorse the importance attached in the handbook to learning lessons. To realise this ambition:

- 7.1 All major strands of assistance—such as voter registration and voter awareness—should include, as part of their design, **post-activity evaluation** to determine the effectiveness of support. Where necessary, this should also involve:
  - a) establishing baseline data (including sex-disaggregated data) to inform design of support and subsequent assessment
  - b) using designs for the assistance that facilitates rigorous evaluation
  - c) collecting data through methods that can detect differential effects between stakeholder groups.
- 7.2 For **voter registration** specifically, Australia has amassed significant regional experience. DFAT should commission a systematic, comparative analysis of different registration systems in the region to consolidate its learning and help inform countries in the region who may be considering different technology options for their own systems. It is important that the assessment is outcome-focused and, as well as the technical, looks also at the political economy that has conditioned the success of efforts to introduce reforms.

Deciding between potential partners: External Partners ... Annex 2 (pp. 18–20).

The *Election handbook* outlines a range of **potential implementing partners** and indicates relative areas of strengths. Many of these partners have featured strongly in the programs we have reviewed. We would endorse the handbook’s broad message about relative areas of strength, but would add the following broad recommendations:

- 8.1 Anticipated risk dividends by involving international partners—particularly in countries where Australia is the predominant donor—should be **carefully assessed**, including the risk appetite of potential partners to address any sensitive or difficult challenges.
- 8.2 Where a blend of implementing partners is the best option, the **coordination** necessary and the **resources and responsibilities** needed to effect that need explicit attention.

## ANNEX B: INCLUSIVE ASSISTANCE ACROSS THE ELECTORAL CYCLE

Table 15: Strategies for supporting disability-inclusive electoral processes

Strategy	Stage in electoral cycle		
	Pre-election	Election	Post-election
Empowering people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit people with disabilities as electoral leaders and managers</li> <li>Accredit people with disabilities as observers</li> <li>Train people with disabilities as election managers and officials</li> <li>Ensure voter registration and polling locations are accessible or that alternative methods and assistive devices are available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include people with disabilities in roles such as observers, officials, polling staff, counters</li> <li>Ensure polling stations are accessible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw on insights from people with disabilities to make future elections more inclusive.</li> </ul>
Making government institutions more inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure EMB policies, structures and materials are accessible and inclusive</li> <li>Check the policies, structures and materials of other organisations involved in delivering the election (for example provincial governments).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure election information, codes of conduct (including police and security), observation checklists, results, and complaints process are accessible and inclusive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include people with disabilities in identifying and addressing barriers to their influence in EMBs and other organisations that plan and deliver elections.</li> </ul>
Involving DPOs as partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve DPOs in election planning and budgeting</li> <li>Encourage other CSOs to strengthen DPOs' capacity to influence electoral processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve DPOs in election education, outreach and observation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage CSOs to work with DPOs on election law reform and acting on lessons from the election.</li> </ul>
Ensuring political leadership and campaign assistance is inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure leadership and campaign assistance includes people with disabilities (directly and indirectly)</li> <li>Train media, CSOs and government in inclusive, accessible training and communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit candidates with disabilities</li> <li>Conduct political debates in inclusive formats</li> <li>Monitor the inclusiveness of campaigning and voter information during the election.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve leaders with disabilities in identifying and addressing lessons for including people with disabilities as political candidates and voters.</li> </ul>

Source: International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and National Democratic Institute (NDI), 2014, *Equal access: how to include persons with disabilities in elections and political processes*, pp. 35–37.

Table 16: Strategies for supporting gender-inclusive electoral processes

Stage in electoral cycle	Strategy		
Pre-election	<b>REGISTRATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a mapping of registration procedures</li> <li>Ensure provision of sex-disaggregated data</li> <li>Ensure need for proof of identity is not a barrier</li> <li>Consider need for flexibility in regulations for displaced peoples</li> <li>Consider need for taking registration to the people</li> <li>Consider need for women-only registration teams</li> <li>Include gender-sensitive actions in the role descriptions, checklists and training</li> <li>Deliver gender-sensitive outreach about registration as needed.</li> </ul>	<b>NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES &amp; PARTIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the enforcement of nomination rules regarding number of women candidates</li> <li>Ensure enforcement of campaign finance rules regarding gender equality</li> </ul> <b>VOTER OUTREACH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan gender-sensitive voter outreach programs—message, audience and delivery method</li> <li>Deliver voter outreach programs for women that give consideration to best delivery methods</li> <li>Work with media on gender-aware outreach and reporting</li> <li>Work with civil society organisations on gender-aware outreach.</li> </ul>	<b>PLANNING FOR ELECTION DAY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a mapping of polling procedures</li> <li>Consider polling place location and provision of equipment</li> <li>Consider need for women-only polling stations or booths within the polling station and/or mobile polling stations</li> <li>Plan how to recruit women and men to work in polling places</li> <li>Conduct gender sensitivity training for polling staff</li> <li>Include gender sensitivity in role descriptions and checklists</li> <li>Ensure ballot paper and instructions are made accessible for people who cannot read</li> <li>Consider need for flexibility in regulations for displaced people.</li> </ul>
Election day	<b>POLLING PLACE MANAGEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure safety of polling station staff and voters by adopting appropriate measures</li> <li>Give mothers and pregnant women priority in queues</li> <li>Organise women-only queues and/or polling stations or booths within the station (where appropriate)</li> <li>Deliver mobile polling stations (where needed)</li> <li>Consider arrangements for collecting sex-disaggregated data.</li> </ul>	<b>VOTER INFORMATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver voter outreach about election day (planned and designed in pre-election period)</li> <li>Give consideration to best delivery methods.</li> </ul>	
Post-election	<b>ELECTION ASSESSMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include gender issues in the assessment of the past election</li> <li>Review operations manuals and outreach materials from a gender perspective</li> <li>Include sex disaggregation in data analysis.</li> </ul>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGULATORY FRAMEWORK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess whether any regulations require revision, including to ensure enforcement (for example, candidate quota)</li> <li>Assess whether any regulations or processes require review to produce sex-disaggregated data.</li> </ul>	<b>STRATEGIC AND ACTION PLAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a mapping of EMB policies and processes to identify any gender inequalities</li> <li>Set gender-related goals for registration and voting</li> <li>Set voter outreach policy and goals</li> <li>Include internal gender mainstreaming goals</li> <li>Consider appointment of gender focal points or a gender unit.</li> </ul>

Source: Ballington, J, Bardall, G, Palmieri, S & Sullivan, K 2015, *Inclusive electoral processes: a guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women's participation*, UN Women & UNDP, New York, pp. 4–5.

## ANNEX C: CASE STUDIES

### Case Study C1: Myanmar—contributing to high-risk elections in a strategic and politically sensitive way

As Myanmar's first potential credible election in living memory, the 2015 general election was held amid high expectations, even though it was starting from such a low base. Australian aid contributed pooled funding with other donors to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supporting the Union Election Commission (UEC). Australia co-financed IFES to mentor the UEC and support civil society engagement in the elections; it also funded the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to train trainers of poll workers, and gave flexible funding to The Asia Foundation to support several innovative voter education apps for the elections.

Australia's engagement was underpinned by strong political analysis—built on in-country knowledge and networks. Officials applied lessons learned from supporting Myanmar's first census to guide the AEC and IFES to promote inclusion of ethnic minorities. Australia also encouraged IFES to bring conflict management expertise into their program.

Early on, the Australian Embassy, Myanmar, commissioned the AEC to host the UEC's leadership under a visitors' program during Australian elections; the UEC went on to adopt some of the practices seen, with the visit forming the basis for a trusting relationship with Australia and the AEC. Supported strongly by IFES, Australia—alongside international partners—lobbied on issues ranging from voter lists to the advance voting of the military.

However, there were limits to the influence of the international community: they were unable to ensure that the Rohingya were properly enfranchised or to ensure the transparency of votes made by military personnel.

From 2013 to 2015, DFAT effectively combined a political and development approach in planning and implementation, and maintained an integrated 'one team' approach throughout the election.

Source: Evaluation team review of program documents and telephone interviews.



## Case Study C2: Transforming Indonesia's voter register (Sistem Informasi Data Pemilih, SIDALIH)

For several years, observers and political parties had complained about significant inaccuracies in Indonesia's voter register. That this did not prove more problematic during the 2009 elections reflected the widespread popularity of the incumbent president, who subsequently won by a landslide. The 2014 presidential election, however, was expected to be a much closer contest. With the incumbent stepping down, the stakes and attention on the elections were much higher.

The Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU) commenced an overhaul of the voter registration system in 2011, involving: consulting widely to build support for streamlining complicated regulations; establishing a new IT system that connected 530 KPU offices; training and deploying more than 500,000 staff to go door-to-door and verify everyone's voter information in 80,000 villages and communities; educating citizens about the new registration process; and compiling and publicising a voter list to allow the public time to check its accuracy.

By the parliamentary elections in April 2014, the KPU had purged hundreds of thousands of duplicate names and tens of thousands of deceased voters from the list, and added millions of missing national ID numbers. From a system that was managed via a collection of more than 70,000 spreadsheets stored on computers across the country, the KPU created the world's largest national centralised voter registration system—SIDALIH.

Stakeholders attribute the success of the project largely to the breadth of support for the reforms and the cooperative, collective approach to implementation. With the tone set from the top by the commissioners, the KPU established memorandums of understanding with the national organisations Perludem (for voter outreach, regulatory reform) and the University of Indonesia (for IT), involved 24 civil society organisations and universities in the voter registration advocacy program and forged stronger ties with counterparts in the Ministry of Home Affairs, as well as prominent voices on electoral reform in civil society and academia.

KPU was assisted by the Australia Indonesia Electoral Support Program—the sole source of external assistance for the reform effort.<sup>119</sup> The program funded the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) to broker and support crucial partnerships between KPU and others, support the development of the underpinning IT systems, and provide KPU with access to flexible, timely and rapid services and expertise in what was always a hugely time-pressured project. Although the resources (\$4.8 million) were little more than 1 per cent of the Government of Indonesia's commitment to the project, Australian funds and IFES' expertise added significant value through a highly strategic contribution, acknowledged by KPU.

Source: Evaluation team review of program documents and interviews.

<sup>119</sup> See <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/electoral-support-design-doc-pd.pdf>

### Case Study C3: Supporting diversity-sensitive electoral management bodies

Australian aid has promoted diversity in electoral management bodies (EMBs), but not through a coherent or comprehensive strategy.

**Most progress was evident in developing gender policies for the EMBs, and recruiting and training women as temporary and permanent electoral staff.** With Australian assistance, the Union Elections Commission in Myanmar and Electoral Commission in Papua New Guinea developed gender policies, while the Independent Election Commission in Afghanistan updated electoral procedures to reflect gender issues. Australian contributions through programs such as 'She Leads' in Indonesia and Myanmar built the skill base and talent pool of women as electoral managers. Quotas for women polling officials were set for Timor-Leste's elections in 2007 and 2012. In Papua New Guinea, nearly all 22 temporary assistant election managers funded by Australia for the 2012 elections were young women, who were subsequently made permanent staff. In Fiji, mixed-gender voter registration teams were used.

However, election delivery is mostly devolved to local government, so **these centralised efforts to improve the gender balance of electoral staff in EMBs had limited influence on recruitment practices at the polling station level.**

**There was no evidence of strategies or activities to support women's access to leadership positions within EMBs.** Australian program designs and other documents demonstrated awareness of gender imbalances at senior levels. But the absence of any specific measures to address the imbalance suggested it was considered an issue outside Australia's influence.

**The evaluation also found little evidence of establishing mechanisms dedicated to mainstreaming diversity issues.** The Independent Election Commission (Afghanistan) established a gender unit but this was relatively short-lived and ultimately unsuccessful. In Solomon Islands, Australian Civilian Corps deployees were required to collect diversity-disaggregated data without a clear purpose or adequate training. The subsequent use made of this data remains unclear.

Inclusion of **people with disabilities** as permanent or temporary election staff at any level was insufficiently addressed in all electoral assistance programs.

Source: Evaluation team review of program documents and interviews.

#### Case Study C4: Reach in voter awareness programs in Indonesia and Myanmar

In advance of the 2014 elections in Indonesia, Australian aid funded:

- a comprehensive voter awareness program led by The Asia Foundation that worked with a wide range of national civil society organisations and was estimated to have reached 106 million Indonesians, including: a weekly radio program that aired on more than 80 stations; radio broadcasts and related television content and use of social media networks to reach approximately 5.7 million Indonesians in 27 provinces
- the first publicly accessible archive of elections data including datasets on candidates, made available through an Elections Application Programming Interface—more than 45 mobile and web election apps were developed through sponsored hackathon events; these resulted in more than 81 million hits and requests for election data from more than 16 million unique users
- face-to-face training and education ‘primarily among marginalised groups such as women, voters living with disability and overseas voters’, reaching approximately 45,000 direct beneficiaries
- engaging 508 legislative candidates (including 194 women), both presidential candidate teams and numerous officials from the General Election Commission at the national and regional levels
- training 173 journalists (22 women) who published 71 in-depth investigative features and more than 200 articles, estimated to have reached an audience of up to 39 million people.<sup>120</sup>

For the elections in 2015 in Myanmar, Australia supported the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), The Asia Foundation and their local civil society partners to:

- engage an estimated 200,000 individuals directly through their voter education program
- support public information campaigns with television, radio and visual tools, such as vinyl posters, and IT and social media for the first time
- launch a Facebook voter education campaign to target youth voters, called ‘Vote for Myanmar’, gaining more than 177,000 followers
- organise the MaePaySoh (Let’s Vote) Hack Challenge competition to develop web and mobile applications providing voters access to essential information, with more than 12 million hits on the application
- produce 20 voter education materials in nine different languages.

Source: Evaluation team review of program documents and interviews.

<sup>120</sup> Van de Velde, M, Harjanto, N & Collins M 2015, Australia Indonesia Electoral Support Program (AIESP) independent completion review, DFAT, Jakarta, p25.

### Case Study C5: Evaluating the reach and limits of voter awareness programs

Three ex post studies of voter awareness in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands reviewed during the evaluation revealed the achievements and limitations of activities supported.

In **Indonesia**, six provinces (priorities at that time for Australian aid) were surveyed before and after the 2014 presidential elections, to examine voter knowledge, attitudes and practices. Respondents' top four sources of election information were: television, friends and neighbours, family, and newspapers.

The survey was not designed to assess the effects of particular awareness initiatives but nevertheless highlighted greater understanding on a range of topics, including: the correct way to mark a ballot paper; where to check for inclusion on the voter register; and who is responsible for voter registration. However, results also indicated continuing confusion regarding eligibility to vote with a valid ID card (even if names were not on the voter register) and on the role of voter invitation letters issued by local election committees.

To assess the large-scale voter awareness campaign for the 2012 elections in **Papua New Guinea**, the Electoral Commission and Australian aid funded before-and-after surveys of voter knowledge. The study estimated that 55 per cent of voters had seen, read, or heard the media and advertising campaign (48 per cent of people in rural areas)—suggesting a reach of some two million people. The most common source of election information was the radio, followed by family and friends, and newspapers.

People's understanding had increased significantly after exposure to the campaign across a range of election topics, such as enrolment, how to vote, and what democratic government is. Reported increases in knowledge on how to vote were substantiated by before-and-after ballot paper tests, administered during both surveys. Improvement in understanding, however, was less evident on the more complicated topics of 'the limited preferential voting system' and 'composition of parliament'.

In Solomon Islands an 'after-only' survey following the 2014 elections examined levels of recall of some key messages from voter awareness programs. When asked unaided, fewer than half of respondents could remember any messages, but the best recall was for the biometric registration exercise (40 per cent) and 'how to vote' (27 per cent). Around 10 per cent of respondents could recall messages regarding 'why to vote' and 'election offences'.

Source: Evaluation team review of program documents and interviews.

### Case Study C6: Changing attitudes through civic education requires continual reinforcement

A survey of voter attitudes in six Indonesian provinces following the 2014 elections revealed that many people still held views that ran counter to anti-corruption and pro-inclusion messages provided by a civic education program run before the elections.

- Presented with the prospect of receiving money or gifts from candidates in return for their vote (and in the absence of intimidation), 59 per cent of respondents would accept the money or gifts for their vote, though only 16 per cent said they would actually vote for that candidate.
- Respondents were evenly divided on the statement that vote buying was acceptable since it 'equally benefits the giver and recipient'. Some 46 per cent agreed with this statement and 47 per cent disagreed, even though respondents by a large majority believed that candidates who distributed money and goods during the campaign tended to be corrupt.
- Some 58 per cent of respondents preferred to vote for male candidates (up from 38 per cent in the 2013 baseline survey), with the primary reason being that men were stronger and natural-born leaders, and 20 per cent of respondents stated that women should follow their husbands' choice of candidate.
- Some 85 per cent of respondents would not vote for a candidate living with disability (compared to 77 per cent in the 2013 baseline survey).

Source: Asia Foundation 2014, *Survey of voter knowledge, attitudes and practices: Aceh, Jakarta, East Java, East Kalimantan, NTT and South Sulawesi*, The Asia Foundation, Jakarta.



### Case Study C7: Common purposes of Australian assistance for election observation

The evaluation found that Australian assistance for election observation was typically provided for the following reasons:

**Legitimise an electoral process:** The need for legitimacy was sometimes internal, where an electorate's distrust of the process rendered a respected external judgement useful, and sometimes external. In some cases, free and fair elections were an indispensable requirement for international acceptance and recognition of a regime, to normalise relations, or for access to development assistance (for countries whose external aid was linked to human rights and democracy).

**Build confidence:** This was particularly true in founding elections, when opposition parties were weak, inexperienced and distrustful of the intentions of the ruling party. But it also included countries where elections were typically problematic. Having international actors participate in the electoral process was also deemed useful to signal support for the democratic process, foster confidence and ensure participation of opposition parties.

**Help to deter fraud:** The argument that observation can deter fraud is valid, although frequently exaggerated in the case of smaller observation missions. Fraud prevention is linked with presence. In most cases, only large, long-term initiatives with significant resources can effectively reduce fraud and manipulation.

**Help build and reinforce democratic practices and institutions:** Observation activities sometimes aimed to put in motion changes that would outlast the electoral process, by generating recommendations to be acted on in future elections, or by establishing new forms of engagement and freedoms during the electoral process that could become the norm.

**Promote (indirectly) more inclusive elections:** International and domestic observation was sometimes used to examine adherence to international standards of inclusion. It sought to be an accountability mechanism for marginalised groups to voice concerns and recommend future improvements. It also tried to work as an empowerment strategy by giving vulnerable and marginalised groups an important role in the electoral process (besides voting).

Source: Evaluation team review of program documents.

## ANNEX D: DESCRIPTION OF ELECTION DELIVERY ASSISTANCE

Table 17: Australian assistance for election delivery

Absolute ranking	Elections reviewed	
Papua New Guinea	2007, 2012	Short-term assistance was a feature in both elections. In 2007, this included support for: planning, logistics, coordinating security, managing finances and communicating results. In 2012, the scale of assistance increased markedly to include: Australian Civilian Corps (23 personnel in March 2012); and Australian Defence Force resources (military personnel, 13 helicopters and two fixed-wing aircraft). An additional capacity building program funded temporary positions to assist the Electoral Commission (including 22 assistant election managers).
Solomon Islands	2010, 2014	Long-term assistance was provided for the Electoral Commission in 2008–17, with no additional support for the 2010 elections. In the lead-up to 2014 elections, Australia funded short-term locally engaged staff to enhance the Commission's administrative capacity, procurement and logistics. This included assistance from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), and eight Australian Civilian Corps specialists deployed to support administration and logistics in the provinces.
Fiji	2014	In the context of Fiji's return to democracy, following the 2006 coup, Australia supported delivery of the 2014 elections through salary supplementation for two in-line positions in the Fiji Elections Office (including Deputy Supervisor of Elections), and four additional experts in ballots, logistics, operations and human resources.
Tonga	2010, 2014	In 2009 the AEC assisted the Tongan Electoral Commission to prepare for the 2010 elections, including to: develop an election plan and procedures; deliver training; and assist on polling day. AEC capacity building continued through 2014, with limited hands-on involvement in delivering the 2014 election.
Afghanistan	2009, 2010, 2014	Australia commenced substantive funding in 2008–09 leading up to the 2009 and 2010 elections, but did not support delivery. Support continued 2011–16 through funding to the multilateral ELECT II program and The Asia Foundation. <sup>121</sup>
Indonesia	2009, 2014	Support for the 2009 elections began in 2008 through UNDP and the Australian Electoral Commission, focused on: electoral procedures and administration; training for election workers; assisting the General Election Commission with media and public relations; and establishing an elections results centre. The longer-term Electoral Support Program (2011–15) assisted the 2014 election, and did not involve explicit hands-on contributions.
Myanmar	2015	Australian assistance for the 2015 elections began in 2014, through a longer-running, multi-donor initiative. Support was also provided through the AEC one year before the elections to foster links with Myanmar's Union Elections Commission.
Timor-Leste	2007, 2012	Support during this period focused on developing capacity in the electoral management bodies. There was little direct support for delivering the elections.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of project documents and approvals.

<sup>121</sup> Enhancing Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) II was the second phase of a UNDP program to strengthen the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission, including: electoral facilities, systems and infrastructure; institutional capacity; legal and institutional environment; national voter registration system; and broader framework for engaging with civil society on elections and electoral observation.

## ANNEX E: EXAMPLES OF DEMOCRACY INSTITUTIONS

In the USA, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was set up in 1983 as a private, non-profit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. NED is governed by a bipartisan board and supported by four non-profit, non-partisan implementing institutes, including the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) was subsequently added, to advance good governance and democratic rights through technical assistance to election officials, empowering the under-represented and applying field-based research.

In 1995, the United States Agency for International Development (Office of Democracy and Governance) established the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening as the principal contractor for its democratic governance programs worldwide. The Consortium includes IRI, NDI and IFES.

In the Netherlands, the seven political parties came together in 2000 to create one organisation—the Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). NIMD is designed to provide democracy assistance to improve the functioning of young, multi-party democracies abroad.

In the UK, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy was established in 1992 to support the consolidation of democratic practices and institutions in developing democracies. It is an independent public body sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, specialising in parliamentary strengthening and political party development. The Foundation draws directly on the expertise and involvement of all the Westminster political parties.

In Germany, the six main political parties have established their own foundations (Stiftungen) to promote principles of democratic governance. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, for example, is associated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany and concentrates on educational programs. The Hans-Seidel-Stiftung is associated with the Christian Social Union of Bavaria and promotes citizens' engagement in democracy, rule of law and the social market economy. The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung<sup>122</sup> is a policy and educational institution affiliated to the democratic socialist Left Party and produces analyses, proposals and information to enhance social and ecological sustainability and support progressive social movements worldwide. Several of these Stiftungen are active internationally, with offices and projects in more than 100 countries.

In 2002, Sweden established the Folke Bernadotte Academy under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development. The Academy works with Swedish development cooperation, conducting training and research to strengthen peacebuilding and statebuilding in conflict and post-conflict countries. It also recruits civilian personnel and expertise for peace operations and electoral observation missions.

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.rosalux.de/en/foundation/more-about-us/>

## ANNEX F: DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND SOURCES

Table 18: Data collection methods and main sources

Data collection method	Documents and stakeholders consulted
Scoping/evaluation plan	Consultations with Office of Development Effectiveness, Independent Evaluation Committee, and Governance and Fragility Branch, DFAT.
Document review	Review of: DFAT and international election policies, strategies and guidelines; DFAT election assistance strategies, approvals and designs; international and other election assessments (for example, observer mission reports); elections and related research and analysis; international election reviews and evaluations; and DFAT electoral assistance reviews and evaluations.
Remote interviews	Telephone interviews with: electoral assistance implementing organisation personnel (former and current); DFAT electoral assistance program managers (former and current); DFAT regional and global program managers whose work included election-related aspects (for example, Pacific Regional, Pacific Women and Australian Civilian Corps); researchers and commentators on electoral assistance; former and current Australian Electoral Commission managers and program participants; DFAT Canberra-based policy staff (fragility and governance, gender, disability inclusion).
Interviews in Solomon Islands	Interviews with: Australian High Commission representatives; electoral commissioners and Electoral Commission personnel; Electoral Systems Strengthening Program advisers and staff; officials from Solomon Islands Government ministries (Home Affairs; Ministry of Women, Children, Youth and Family Affairs; Office of Provincial Government; Office of the Prime Minister; Political Parties Commission); provincial officials in Tulagi, Central Province; other development organisations (EU Mission, UNDP, UN Women); and civil society representatives (BRIDGE participants and facilitators; People With Disabilities Solomon Islands; former female election candidates; Transparency International; Young Women's Parliamentary Group).
Interviews in Timor-Leste	Interviews with: current and former electoral commissioners, state secretary and 10 district coordinators (from the independent supervisory body Comissão Nacional de Eleições; and the technical secretariat Secretariado da Técnica Administrativa Eleitoral); the Gender Department, Timor-Leste Parliament; election assistance providers (including International Foundation for Electoral Systems; International Republican Institute and UNDP); civil society organisations (Alumni Parlamento Foinça'e Timor-Leste; Belun; Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening; Counterpart; Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan; Search for Common Ground; The Asia Foundation and Women's Caucus); and senior staff from the Australian Embassy in Dili.
Interviews in Indonesia	Interviews with: former and current electoral commissioners and officials from the Indonesia Electoral Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum), and the election supervisory body Badan Pengawas Pemilihan Umum/Bawaslu; other government officials, including Bappenas; academia (University of Indonesia); civil society groups (ASEAN General Election Network for Disability Access/AGENDA, Partnership for Governance Reform/Kemitraan, Perkumpulan Untuk Pemilu dan Demokrasi/Perludem, Indonesia Association for Media Development/PPMN, Indonesia Network for Investigative Journalism/JARING, Women's Solidarity for Human Rights/Solidaritas Perempuan); international NGOs (International Foundation for Electoral Systems/IFES, The Asia Foundation, Indonesia Corruption Watch/ICW); development partners (UNDP); and Australian Embassy staff in Jakarta.

Data collection method	Documents and stakeholders consulted
Interviews and discussions in Canberra	<p>Interviews with: Australian Electoral Commission (current First Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Electoral Commissioner, former Commissioner, and former Director of International Services); DFAT policy and program staff involved with electoral assistance (Governance and Fragility Branch; geographic sections for the eight study countries; Pacific Gender Equality and Disability Inclusiveness Section; Pacific Regional Organisations Section); other DFAT policy managers (Development Policy and Education Branch; Gender Equality Branch); Office of Development Effectiveness</p> <p>Focus group and roundtable discussions with: Australian Electoral Commission, International Office; DFAT Electoral Reference Group; State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) academic and research staff</p> <p>Workshop: team leader facilitated a workshop with team members to decide on report outline and evidence-based findings.</p>
Telephone conference with Independent Evaluation Committee	The team leader and Office of Development Effectiveness discussed the analysis, findings and recommendations with the Independent Evaluation Committee. The committee provided guidance to improve the quality and accessibility of the final report.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network 2017 *What is the electoral cycle?* <http://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/electoral-assistance/electoral-cycle> viewed on 2 November 2017.

Altai Consulting for InterNews 2014, *Afghanistan capacity for media and elections: first mid-term review*, DFAT, Canberra.

APHEDA 2015, *Australia Myanmar Election Observer Mission 2015 (election observation statement)*, APHEDA, Sydney.

Armour, DM 2015, *UNDP Tonga Governance Strengthening Programme final report*, UNDP, Nuku'alofa.

Asia Foundation 2008, *Building sustainable electoral administration for Afghanistan project: final report to AusAID*, The Asia Foundation, Kabul.

Asia Foundation 2014, *Elections in Indonesia*, The Asia Foundation, Jakarta.

Asia Foundation 2014, *Survey of voter knowledge, attitudes and practices: Aceh, Jakarta, East Java, East Kalimantan, NTT and South Sulawesi*, The Asia Foundation, Jakarta.

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) 2007, *East Timor 1st Round Presidential Election Observation Mission report, March–April 2007*, ANFREL, Bangkok.

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) 2009, *A decade of democracy in Indonesia: The 2009 legislative election: report of International Election Observation Mission*, ANFREL, Bangkok.

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) 2009, *Afghanistan presidential and Provincial Council elections 2009 report of the International Election Observation Mission (EOM)*, ANFREL, Bangkok.

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) 2009, *Indonesia presidential elections 2009: a short observation report on the conduct of the 2009 presidential elections*, ANFREL, Bangkok.

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) 2011, *Afghanistan elections 2010: Election Observation Mission (EOM) report*, ANFREL, Bangkok.

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) 2014, *Summary and findings of the Asian Network for Free Elections from the complete ballot audit in Afghanistan 2014*, ANFREL, Bangkok.

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) 2015, *ANFREL interim report on the 2015 Myanmar general and local elections*, ANFREL, Bangkok.

Attridge, E 2012, *Report on the Independent Completion Review of the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI)*, DFAT, Canberra.

Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) 2011, *Effective governance, Thematic Strategy November 2011*, AusAID, Canberra <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/effective-governance.aspx>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

Australian and New Zealand Election Observers 2010, *Tonga Legislative Assembly election 2010, joint statement*, Tongan Electoral Commission, Tonga.

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) 2014, *Progress report on November 2012 to December 2013 activities under Timor-Leste Electoral Capacity Building Project*, AEC, Canberra.

Baker, K 2015, *Women's under-representation and special measures in the Tongan Parliament*, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM), ANU, Canberra.

- Baker, K 2016, 'Improving women's electoral chances through an evidence-based approach: bridging resourcing gaps', *State Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) In Brief 2016/39*, SSGM, ANU, Canberra.
- Bakrania, S 2012, *Helpdesk research report: management arrangements in UN-led electoral support programs*, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, Birmingham.
- Ballington, J, Bardall, G, Palmieri, S & Sullivan, K 2015, *Inclusive electoral processes: a guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women's participation*, UN Women & UNDP, New York.
- Barbara, J 2015, *Supporting elections in Melanesia*, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM), ANU, Canberra.
- Barbara, J and Baker, K 2016 *Improving the electoral chances of Pacific women through an evidence-based approach: A synthesis report prepared for the Centre for Democratic Institutions and the State Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) Program*, ANU, SSGM, Canberra.
- Beahan, N, Andrew, N, Bourne, V & Callan, P 2009, *Power to the people: Australia's support in strengthening political governance in developing countries*, AusAID, Canberra.
- Beasca, J 2011, *Mid-term evaluation of the Integrated Programme for Women in Politics and Decision-Making (IPWPDM): evaluation report*, Dili.
- Belt, R 2016, 'Contemporary Voting Rights Controversies Through the Lens of Disabilities', *Stanford Law Review*, Volume 68(6).
- Bishop, J 2017, 'Change and uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific: strategic challenges and opportunities', 28th IISS Fullerton Lecture, delivered in Singapore on 13 March 2017, DFAT, Canberra (viewed 10 August 2017 at [https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2017/jb\\_sp\\_170313a.aspx](https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2017/jb_sp_170313a.aspx)[https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2017/jb\\_sp\\_170313a.aspx](https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2017/jb_sp_170313a.aspx)).
- Bjornlund, E, R Ibrahim, & M Collins 2009, *Review of Australian assistance to the 2009 elections in Indonesia: final report*, AusAID/Oxfam, Canberra.
- Burn, T 2017, *Timor-Leste 2016 Suco Council elections: disability inclusion monitoring report: Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)*, USAID, Dili.
- Carothers, T 2002, 'The end of the transition paradigm', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 5–21.
- Carothers, T 2009, 'Democracy assistance: political vs. developmental?', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 5–19.
- Carrio J, Nelson S, Ruescas, CS, Claudio, M & Navarro C 2011, *Final evaluation: Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT)*, UNDP Afghanistan, Kabul.
- Carter Center 2007, *Timor-Leste parliamentary election observation 2007: final report*, The Carter Centre, Atlanta.
- Carter Center 2009, *Final report of the Carter Center Limited Observation Mission to the April 9 2009 legislative elections in Indonesia*, The Carter Center, Atlanta.
- Carter Center 2015, *Election Observation Mission, Myanmar General elections November 2015: preliminary statement*, The Carter Center, Atlanta.
- Carter Center 2015, *Preliminary findings of the Carter Center Expert Mission to Myanmar, December 2014 to February 2015*, The Carter Center, Atlanta.

Carter Center 2016, *Carter Center statement on the post-election environment and complaints resolution process in Myanmar*, The Carter Center, Atlanta.

Carter Center 2016, *Observing Myanmar's 2015 general elections: final report*, The Carter Center, Atlanta.

Center for Election Access of Citizens with Disabilities (PPUA Penca) 2013, *Accessible elections for persons with disabilities in five Southeast Asian countries*, AGENDA, Jakarta.

Combaz, E 2016, *Donor interventions on women's political empowerment: rapid literature review*, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, Birmingham.

Commonwealth Observer Group 2006, *Fiji Islands general election 6–13 May 2006: report of the Commonwealth Observer Group*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

Commonwealth Observer Group 2012, *Papua New Guinea national elections June to July 2012: report of the Commonwealth Observer Group*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

Commonwealth–Pacific Islands Forum Election Assessment Team 2007, *Papua New Guinea national election June–August 2007 (observation report)*, Port Moresby.

Counterpart International 2011, *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Support to the Electoral Process (STEP) Civic Education Program in Afghanistan*, USAID, Washington.

Democracy International 2010, *U.S. Election Observation Mission to the Afghanistan presidential and Provincial Council elections 2009: final report* (revised and updated), Democracy International, Bethesda.

Democracy International 2011, *Afghanistan parliamentary elections 2010: Election Observation Mission final report*, Democracy International, Bethesda.

Department for International Development (DFID) 2010, *Electoral assistance and politics: lesson for international support*, DFID, London.

Development Policy Centre, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University [2017], *PNG after the elections*, podcast, <https://itunes.apple.com/au/podcast/development-policy-centre-podcast/id576275861?>

DFAT 2013, *Solomon Islands Electoral Systems Strengthening Program (phase 3) design document*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2014, *Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2014, *Papua New Guinea (PNG) electoral support strategy 2015–18*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2014, *Solomon Islands election 2014 election observations report*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2015, *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: strategic framework 2015–2019*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2015, *Development for all 2015–2020: strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2015, *Effective governance: strategy for Australia's aid investments*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2015, *Strengthening the electoral cycle in Solomon Islands: mid-term review report*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2017, *Election handbook: guidance on developing policy and delivering assistance*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2016, *Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy*, DFAT, Canberra.

DFAT 2016, *Pacific Disability Regional Dialogue interim report*, DFAT, Canberra.

Economist (Online) 2016 'What is populism?', *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper NA, Inc, London.

Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index*, <http://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index>, viewed on 24 January 2017.

Electoral Commission and Supervisor of Elections (Fiji) 2014, *2014 general election: joint report by the Electoral Commission and Supervisor of Elections to the President of the Republic of Fiji and the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji*, Fiji Elections Office (FEO), Suva.

Ellem, G 2011, *Independent completion report: Australia Indonesia Partnership for Electoral Support: interim program*, DFAT, Canberra.

European Union Election Assessment Team (EU EAT) 2014, *Afghanistan presidential election 5 April and 14 June 2014: final report*, EU EAT, Kabul.

European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) 2015, *Myanmar general elections 2015: preliminary statement*, EU EOM, Yangon.

European Union Election Observation Mission 2012 (EU EOM), *Timor-Leste final report parliamentary election 2012*, EU EOM, Dili.

Finkel, SE (for IFES) 2012 *The Voter Opinion and Involvement through Civic Education (VOICE) Impact Evaluation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: final report*, USAID, Washington.

First Post 2014, *What's the price of an election? Here's a map on India vs other countries*. <http://www.firstpost.com/business/data-business/whats-the-price-tag-of-an-election-here-is-a-map-on-india-vs-other-countries-1964525.html> viewed on 24 July 2017.

General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA) 2016, *Disability access and inclusion in the political processes of four Southeast Asian countries*, AGENDA, Jakarta.

Gomes, A 2007, *Delegation to observe the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (6–11 April 2007)*, European Union Election Observation Mission, Dili.

Haley, N & Zubrinich, K 2015, 'Election observation in Solomon Islands', *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM)*, In Brief 2015/6, SSGM (ANU), Canberra.

Hampshire, J & Klugman, J 2013, *Independent review of two democratic governance programs in PNG—Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen (SPSN) and Church Partnership Program (CCP)*, AusAID, Canberra.

Henderson, S and Boneo, H, 2013 *Australian Aid For Electoral Assistance in Papua New Guinea 2000-2012 Independent Evaluation*, AusAID, Canberra.

Huntingdon, SP 1991, 'Democracy's third wave', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 12–34.

International IDEA 1997, *Code of conduct for the ethical and professional administration of elections*, International IDEA, [www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/code-conduct-ethical-and-professional-administration-elections](http://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/code-conduct-ethical-and-professional-administration-elections).

International IDEA 2014, *Funding of political parties and election campaigns: A handbook on political finance*, International IDEA, Stockholm.

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) 2014, *Case study—voter registration reform in Indonesia* (Attachment B to *Contributing to voter registration reform (CVRR) in Indonesia 2009 to 2014 report*), IFES, Arlington.

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) 2014, *Case study: 2014 election results in Indonesia—creating conditions for electoral success* (Attachment A to *Contributing to voter registration reform (CVRR) in Indonesia 2009 to 2014 report*), IFES, Arlington.



International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) (for USAID) 2014, *Equal access: how to include persons with disabilities in elections and political processes*, IFES, Washington.

Inter-Parliamentary Union 2017, *Women in National Parliaments*, <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010717.htm>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

Kekic, L 2007. 'The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy' in 'A pause in democracy's march', *The Economist* [http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWArticleVW3&article\\_id=1101515695](http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWArticleVW3&article_id=1101515695) (click on the link 'methodology').

Minority Rights Group International 2017, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Populations*, <http://minorityrights.org/directory>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

OECD 2014, 'Principles for international electoral assistance', in *Accountability and democratic governance: orientations and principles for development*, 79–83, OECD, Paris.

Palmieri, S 2016, *Innovating for impact: a Pacific regional consultation on women's political empowerment and leadership: background paper*, UN Women (Fiji Multi-Country Office), Nadi.

Pelto, M 2007, *Observing the 2007 PNG national elections*, Transparency International, Berlin.

People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE) 2015, *Preliminary report: election day* (Burma), PACE, Yangon.

Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) 2017, *Timor-Leste 2016 Suco Council Elections Disability Inclusion Monitoring Report*, <http://www.counterpart.org/report-disability-inclusion-monitoring/> viewed on 24 July 2017.

Rocha Menocal, A 2013, 'Emerging democracies: rising to the challenge', *ODI Briefing Paper 84*, ODI, London.

Sayara Research, *Afghanistan evaluation of Public Outreach Democracy and Election (PODE), final report*, January 2015.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) 2015, *Beijing + 20: review of progress in implementing the Beijing platform for action in Pacific Island countries and territories*, SPC, Noumea.

Solidarity Observer Mission for East Timor (SOMET) 2007, *Report of the SOMET on the Timor-Leste 2007 parliamentary election*, East Timor and Indonesia Action Network, New York.

Sustineo (for UNDP) 2015, *Solomon Islands Voter Awareness Survey and Voter Awareness Program evaluation*, UNDP, New York.

Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (R Whelan) 2011, *Election summary report, Burma parliamentary and local assembly elections, November 2010*, Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma, Bangkok.

Transparency International 2012, *TIPNG observation report: the 2012 national parliamentary elections*, (PNG), Transparency International, Port Moresby.

UN General Assembly 1979, *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*, UN, New York.

UNDP 2014, *Democratic governance: promoting gender equality in electoral assistance: lessons learned in comparative perspective 2011–2013*, UNDP, New York.

UNDP 2014, *Democratic governance: the longer term impact of UNDP electoral assistance: lessons learned*, UNDP, New York.

UNDP 2017, *Gender Inequality Index*, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>, viewed on 24 July 2017.



UNDP Evaluation Office (Nelson, S) 2012, *Evaluation of UNDP contribution to strengthening electoral systems and processes*, UNDP Evaluation Office, New York.

United Nations 1948, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN General Assembly, Paris.

United Nations 2005, Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, United Nations, New York.

United Nations 2006, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, United Nations, New York.

United Nations 2005, *Women and elections: guide to promoting the participation of women in elections*, United Nations, New York.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) 2016, *Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar*, A/HRC/32/18, UNHCHR, New York.

UN Women 2017, *Women's political participation and leadership*, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>, viewed on 24 July 2017.

USAID 2008, *Elections and political processes program in Timor-Leste: evaluation report*, USAID, Washington, DC.

Van de Velde, M 2012, *Solomon Islands Electoral System Strengthening Program independent progress report*, DFAT, Honiara.

Van de Velde, M, Harjanto, N & Collins M 2015, *Australia Indonesia Electoral Support Program (AIESP) independent completion review*, DFAT, Jakarta.

Voter Education Network for the People (JPPR) 2015, *2014 presidential elections in Indonesia: monitoring results from Aceh, Jakarta, Central Java, South Kalimantan and South Sulawesi*, JPPR, Jakarta.

Wheeler, C 2007, *Pacific Governance Support Program (PGSP) independent completion report*, DFAT, Canberra.

Whittington, S, Ospina S & Pollard AA 2006, *Women in government in Solomon Islands: a diagnostic study*, DFAT, Honiara.

Wolf, P 2017 *Introducing Biometric Technology in Elections*, International IDEA, Stockholm.

Wood, T 2014, 'Elections and electoral quality in Solomon Islands', *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM)*, In Brief 2014/40, ANU, Canberra.

Wood, T 2015, 'Aiding women candidates in Solomon Islands: suggestions for development policy', *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3.

Wood, T 2015, 'The three political economies of electoral quality in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands', *Crawford School of Public Policy, Development Policy Centre Discussion Paper No. 43*, ANU, Canberra.

World Health Organization (2011) *World Report on Disability*, [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/), viewed on 6 February 2017