

**Nauru Improved Education Partnership Investment Strategic End of Term Review  
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

**Project Summary**

Project Name	<b>Nauru Improved Education Partnership</b>		
AidWorks number	INI950; INI968 (17A759)		
Commencement date	1 July 2014	Completion date	30 June 2019
Total Australian \$	AUD15,000,000.00		
Delivery organisation(s)	DFAT		
Implementing partner(s)	Government of Nauru		
Country/Region	Nauru		
Primary sector	Education		
Project objective/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To support implementation of Nauru’s Education Sector Strategy to deliver education pathways that develop locally and regionally relevant skills with an emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– improving quality and increasing the number of teaching staff;</li> <li>– improving quality and access to primary and secondary school level education to ensure higher student retention rates and education attainment levels; and</li> <li>– improving access to good quality and relevant tertiary, technical and vocational education services.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

**Introduction**

In 2018, DFAT commissioned an in-house evaluation of its investments supporting improved performance and strategic planning of the education portfolio within the Nauru Aid Program. The review was limited to investments since 2014, the date of the most recent review. The purpose of the review was threefold:

- (i) **prove** – to assess the effectiveness of the Australian government’s current approaches to education programming in Nauru;
- (ii) **improve** – to recommend future strategic investment approaches and priorities for the Nauru Improved Education portfolio; and
- (iii) **generate knowledge** – to identify key strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in the education sector to help support the Government of Nauru (GoN) with human development by improving the quality of education.

The review addressed the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, monitoring and evaluation, and cross-cutting issues (gender, disability and climate change).

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The review focused on the four aid modalities through which DFAT funded its education investment in Nauru since 2014:

- **Direct Funding Assistance (DFA)** – DFAT supports implementation of Nauru’s Education Sector Strategy 2017-2021 with a DFA for the Department of Education and Training (DoET) through an operational account. DoET uses this account to implement their education strategy;
- **Technical Assistance (TA)** – Technical Assistance support to the DoET – Strategic Plan Implementation Advisor;
- **Infrastructure** – includes the Learning Village - Nauru Secondary School, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Centre, Learning Centre - University of South Pacific campus and Community Library; and
- **Scholarships** – each year DFAT offers around 8 Australia Award scholarships to Australian tertiary institutions and around 10 Australia Award Pacific Scholarships to Pacific regional institutions at technical, under-graduate and graduate levels.

The review team, from Clear Horizon, comprised two international specialists – an Education Specialist and a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist. The review methodology included:

- (i) a desktop review of documents;
- (ii) semi-structured key informant interviews;
- (iii) site visits;
- (iv) an in-country mission to Nauru in April 2018;
- (v) a preliminary findings briefing delivered at the end of the in-country mission; and
- (vi) a summit workshop conducted in June 2018 to present, discuss and finalise the review findings and recommendations with DFAT and GoN.

The Evaluation Team comprised Helen Rose (Lead Author) and Samiha Barkat (Monitoring and Evaluation consultant). As part of the evaluation process, DFAT and the Government of Nauru provided feedback on the draft report. The final Evaluation Report was agreed and accepted by DFAT and the Government of Nauru on 1 November 2018.

### **DFAT’s response to the evaluation report**

DFAT considers the evaluation to be of a good quality. It sufficiently addressed the questions in the Terms of Reference and Subsequent Evaluation Plan. The evaluation identified a number of areas to focus further improvements to DFAT-supported investments, particularly around

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monitoring and evaluation (M&E). While DFAT agrees with the majority of recommendations made in the report, we recognise and respect the Nauru Government's mandate and role in delivering education services to the people of Nauru, in line with the principles of Nauru and Australia's broader bilateral relationship. Australia's support to the Education sector in Nauru works to assist the Nauru Government in delivering education services, and not to substitute it. Consequently, Australia will look to implement these recommendations to the extent possible through those investments it funds and work with the Nauru Government to ensure better delivery of DFAT-funded education investments, across all the key areas of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Monitoring and Evaluation and Cross Cutting Issues.

DFAT's detailed response to the recommendations of the Review team is outlined in the table below:

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Recommendation	Response	Explanation and Proposed Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
<b>OVERALL EDUCATION SECTOR</b>				
<p><b>1. Overarching education strategy.</b> DFAT to develop a sector-wide strategy (as part of the re-design of the education investment process) that has a coherent Theory of Change across the multiple aid modalities and is harmonised with other sector interventions in Nauru (i.e. infrastructure, health and public-sector reform).</p>	<b>AGREED</b>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation without reservation.</b></p> <p>DFAT will develop a coherent and integrated education strategy, in consultation with the Department of Education and Training (DoET). This will capture any agreed priorities in the 2019-2022 Aid Partnership Agreement.</p> <p>DFAT will include in the Design Terms of Reference a requirement for a coherent Theory of Change that encompasses the range of delivery modalities and the breadth of sectors in which DFAT partners with Nauru.</p>	<p>2020</p> <p>2019</p>	<p>DFAT DoET</p>
<p><b>2. Donor coordination.</b> That there is improved donor coordination. This might include donors jointly agreeing on broad areas of funding support, and could be initiated as part of the DFAT re-design of its education programming in Nauru.</p>	<b>AGREED</b>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation without reservation.</b></p> <p>DFAT will continue to work with Nauru’s Planning and Aid Division to strengthen donor coordination in Education.</p> <p>DFAT will include requirements for a donor coordination system in the Terms of Reference for the Education Program re-design.</p>	<p>2018 – 2022</p> <p>2019</p>	<p>DFAT PAD (Nauru)</p>
<p><b>3. Education Working Group.</b> To reform the whole of education working group to ensure a more holistic approach to education from all stakeholders in Nauru, to provide an improved and inclusive approach to education improvement.</p>	<b>AGREED</b>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation without reservation.</b></p> <p>This recommendation was one of the recommendations of the DFAT Aid Program Performance Report (2016-2017) (the APPR). The APPR recommended establishment of this Working Group, which should include DoET, Youth Affairs, USP and donors.</p> <p>Although this group would need to be GoN driven, DFAT would be prepared to provide targeted support.</p>	<p>2020</p>	<p>DFAT PAD (Nauru)</p>

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<p><b>4. Increased emphasis on retaining quality Nauruan teachers.</b> Sector planning should take a combined approach to recruiting, training and retaining quality Nauruan teachers.</p>	<b>AGREED</b>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation in part.</b></p> <p>The Nauru Government’s Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identifies this as a major area of work and notes that Nauru intends to establish a Teacher Attraction and Retention Committee (TARC).</p> <p>TARC’s role, supported by NZMFAT funding, will be to review teacher attraction and retention, and make recommendations regarding improved pay, access to study leave, performance-based rewards, flexible employment, and addressing gender inequities.</p> <p>While NZMFAT has pledged to fund the TARC, DFAT will provide complementary support by continuing to support the training of qualified Nauruan teachers, including through scholarships.</p>	2018 onwards	DFAT DoET Other donors

**DELIVERY MODALITIES**

<p><b>5. Longer term DFAs.</b> Future DFAs should be a longer agreement (for example, three-year) with detailed performance expectations and reporting mechanisms clearly articulated. DFAs should contain guidelines of items that may not be funded by GoA funds. Utilisation of DFA funds should remain based on the Education Strategic Plan objectives. Reporting would continue to be annual and rolling annual plans developed with future forecasts.</p>	<b>AGREED IN PART</b>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation in part.</b></p> <p>DFAT will include requirements for consideration of the appropriate length, scope and implementation requirements of future Direct Funding Agreements in the Terms of Reference for the Education Program re-design.</p> <p>To maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia’s education investment in Nauru, DFAT will include a requirement in the Design Terms of Reference to examine alternative and mixed funding modalities. This includes use of managing contractors.</p>	2020 onwards  2019	DFAT PAD (Nauru) DoET Design Team
<p><b>6. Sector Focus.</b> DFA funds, along with other modalities, should be used in an agreed area of focus in order to achieve maximum outcomes. It is recommended that this focus remain on senior secondary in the short to medium term to consolidate gains while planning a strategy to move the focus to early years learning (Prep, Years 1 and 2).</p>	<b>AGREED</b>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation without reservation.</b></p> <p>As noted in response to Recommendation 8 (Infrastructure), early childhood education is an emerging priority area. Any strategy to realign Australia’s sectoral focus within the education portfolio should include a strong Theory of Change element, including clear milestones. It should also leverage changes in the regional TVET investment (see Recommendation 8) as well as development in Australia’s scholarship program (see recommendation 9), including access to secondary scholarships in Australia.</p>	2019 onwards	DFAT PAD (Nauru) DoET Design Team

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<p><b>7. Technical Assistance.</b> DFAT should continue to provide technical assistance to GoN and the DoE. However, an update of the current Terms of Reference for the Strategic Plan Implementation Advisor could help address some of the implementation, monitoring and reporting challenges of DFAT-funded activities. Moreover, DFAT could also consider providing targeted capacity building (M&amp;E, statistical data analysis and reporting) support to DoET staff.</p>	<p><b>AGREED</b></p>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation without reservation.</b></p> <p>DFAT will review the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Plan Implementation Advisor to include a focus on ensuring delivery of DFAT-funded activities.</p> <p>DFAT will consider additional targeted capacity-building support to DoET, including in M&amp;E, data analysis and reporting.</p>	<p>2019</p> <p>2020 onwards</p>	<p>DFAT PAD (Nauru) DoET</p>
<p><b>8. Infrastructure.</b> DFAT could consider supporting physical enhancements for the TVET Centre to accommodate Certificates III and IV training.</p>	<p><b>AGREED IN PART</b></p>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation in part.</b></p> <p>DFAT accepts the review’s findings that infrastructure investment is required to facilitate the TVET Centre delivering Certificate III and IV courses. However, any investment should carefully align with TVET capacity development under the Pacific Skills Partnership - a partnering agreement between University of the South Pacific and the Australia Pacific Technical College. It will be important to align allocation of bilateral and regional funds effectively.</p> <p>While DFAT notes the importance of TVET training, it recognizes that early childhood education is an emerging priority area for the GoN. EMIS data indicates that primary classes are overcrowded. Hospital and Gazette records indicate strong population growth. Additionally, the Nauru Gender Country Plan supports scoping for pre-school and childcare facilities. This would indicate a potential requirement for support to construct additional infrastructure needed to support effective early childhood education.</p> <p>Any planned infrastructure development should also leverage available funding opportunities offered through international financial institutions and multilateral development program donors.</p>	<p>2020 onwards</p>	<p>DFAT Home Affairs (Nauru) DoET PAD</p>

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<p><b>9. Scholarships.</b> DFAT should endeavour to align its scholarship awards to a well-considered priority list based on the needs of the projected requirements of the Nauru education sector and improve the monitoring, reporting and adjustment of the scholarship program with evidence gained.</p>	<p><b>AGREED IN PART</b></p>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation in part.</b></p> <p>DFAT accepts scholarships awards could better align to a well-considered priority list. However, the education sector is not the only sector in which Nauru experiences capacity and development gaps. As examples, a chronic shortage of qualified Nauruan staff impedes delivery of health and medical services; narrow capacity in building services and facilities management constrains the built environment; and limited experience in governance, jurisprudence, data management, IT, public and public sector management, impact economic growth.</p> <p>DFAT accepts that improved monitoring and evaluation would allow for stronger evidence-based decisions on scholarship pipelines.</p> <p>DFAT intends to commission a review of its scholarship program.</p> <p>DFAT will closely examine how a more holistic scholarship program can incorporate the secondary scholarships program announced in November 2018.</p> <p>DFAT would consider supporting a research into modelling on Nauru’s future workforce planning needs, subject to GoN interest.</p>	<p>2019 onwards</p>	<p>DFAT PAD DoET</p>
<p><b>10. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) and Capacity Building.</b> Monitoring and evaluation of program results with required adjustments to strategy based on learning should be prioritized.</p>	<p><b>AGREED</b></p>	<p><b>DFAT accepts this recommendation without reservation.</b></p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation remains a challenge in delivery of effective development programs in Nauru. Government systems have limited absorptive capacity for additional M&amp;E. The Education design will need to consider carefully how it will build capacity to meet any new demands on partner systems.</p> <p>It will be important to build strong, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems into the redesigned education program. This will require a significant investment in upgrading existing systems, and supporting human resource development.</p> <p>While building capacity in Nauru systems (e.g. EMIS) is a clear priority, the Terms of Reference for the design team will need to include a requirement to look at the most appropriate M&amp;E system for each element of the new education investment.</p>	<p>2019 onwards</p>	<p>DFAT PAD DoET Design Team</p>

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