

DFAT Management Response to the Evaluation of Youth With A Mission Medical Ships Australia

Youth With A Mission Medical Ships Australia (YWAM MSA) has been providing health services to PNG since 2010. For most of this time the Australian Government, through AusAID and later DFAT, has made a contribution to YWAM MSA's service costs. This evaluation was commissioned to review YWAM MSA's activities between the last quarter of 2015 and December 2017, with a particularly focus on Western Province. It sought to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of YWAM MSA's approach to health service delivery, to identify lessons and provide recommendations that might inform DFAT's future engagement with YWAM. DFAT wishes to thank YWAM MSA for the cooperative and open spirit with which it approached the evaluation, and for the support it provided to the evaluation team during its mission.

DFAT accepts the main findings of the evaluation report, while noting the caveats in relation to the financial analysis that have been raised by YWAM MSA and are noted in its Management Response (published as a separate document on the DFAT website). The evaluation team found that YWAM MSA has delivered on its contractual obligations and exceeded the quantitative targets for service delivery under the funding agreement, with the organisation developing strong relationships across all levels of government in PNG. In particular, YWAM MSA has contributed to improving access to primary health care services in a number of remote locations of PNG. DFAT also notes the finding that YWAM MSA's operational coordination at the provincial and national levels could be improved to enable better coordination and use of services, and that further work should be done to strengthen monitoring and evaluation to inform program operational decision-making.

The evaluation team provided four recommendations to DFAT and fourteen recommendations to YWAM MSA. DFAT's responses to these recommendations are provided below.

Recommendations for DFAT	Response	Explanation and Action	Timeframe
1. Consider developing a costing model for remote patrol based health services in PNG.	Partially agreed	<p>DFAT notes that, because of the limited data available, the health service delivery cost comparisons able to be provided by the evaluation team were only very rough approximations of the actual costs of delivering health services in these parts of PNG, and are therefore of limited utility in assessing relative service efficiencies. This point is also made in the preamble to YWAM's Management Response.</p> <p>While recognising that it would be useful to gain a better understanding of the costs involved in delivering health services to remote areas of PNG, DFAT believes that any work of this nature should be undertaken with the agreement of and in collaboration with the PNG Government.</p>	August 2018

		DFAT is aware that some years ago the PNG National Economic and Fiscal Commission (NEFC) undertook studies to estimate the costs of patrol-based health services. DFAT has therefore sought the views of NEFC on the potential benefits of updated estimates, and will consider working with the NEFC to commission further research to update and extend these studies.	
2. Invest in partnership with YWAM MSA by providing a more thorough review and response to submitted reports and by working with YWAM MSA and GoPNG to agree on mutually beneficial priorities and outcome areas.	Agreed	In its discussions with YWAM MSA on options for further financial support, DFAT will consider the most appropriate mechanisms for setting priorities and for the provision and thorough review of reports.	August 2018 onwards
3. Prioritise mid-term evaluations for new partner organisations to support stronger partnership and improve learning.	Agreed	Mid-term reviews are usually included in all medium and longer-term DFAT grants, and this approach will be continued in any future funding agreement with YWAM MSA.	Ongoing
4. The competitive grants program presents an opportunity to consider YWAM MSA's appetite for responding to findings and recommendations in this evaluation and to strengthen coordination and collaboration with GoPNG.	Agreed	DFAT will consider the appropriateness of its competitive grants program in relation to possible future support to YWAM MSA.	Ongoing