



Australian Government  
AusAID

# **Pre – Tender Industry Briefing: Access to Quality Education Program 2011-2016 (Program Background)**

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# Education Sector in Fiji

- > 721 primary schools, 17 special schools and 172 secondary schools in Fiji. More than 98% of schools in Fiji are owned and managed by non-government organisations, e.g. religious groups, community groups.
- > Approximately 700 pre-school centres in Fiji, all of which are non-government managed.
- > However, all teachers with the exception of early childhood teachers are paid by Government.
- > Government also provides tuition grants, building grants and per capita grants directly to non-government schools.
- > MoE is responsible for the administration and management of education policy and delivery of education services. It provides the curriculum and assessment frameworks, policy guidelines/directions and qualified teaching personnel.



# Previous support to Fiji Education

- > Australia provided support to Fiji's education sector during the 1990s through a number of projects that targeted teacher training and upgrading of physical infrastructure and library resources in rural schools.
- > The previous Fiji Education Sector Program (FESP) 2003-09 shifted the focus of Australian assistance to strengthening systems and building capacity of MoE central office to improve service delivery.
- > Key achievements:
  - Leadership/management training to over 93% of principals and 86% of school managers
  - Development of the first Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for Fiji
  - Increasing stakeholder participation in MoE planning and policy development
  - Increasing enrolments in FESP supported vocational courses
  - Introduction of the Fiji Education Staffing Appointments (FESA) database
  - Strengthened ECE and Primary Teacher training courses at Lautoka Teachers College (now part of the Fiji National University)



## Key findings from AusAID Education Sector reviews

- > Student learning outcomes have not significantly improved over the last 10 years of Australian supported assistance.
- > Multiple investments covering school leadership, curriculum and assessment and pre-service teacher training have not yet raised the overall quality of education for children.



# Current assistance to Fiji Education

- > Australia remains engaged in the education sector during the tender phase of the AQE program.
  
- > Activities currently funded include:
  - UNDP Pacific Financial Inclusion Project (PFIP) – Enterprise and Financial Education in Curriculum (EFEC) Project
  - UNICEF – support to Ministry of Education (MoE) for implementation of the new National Assessment Framework; improved Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in schools
  - Support to Hilton Special School and Fiji Society for the Blind to increase the ability of children with disabilities to access a quality education
  
- > [Fiji Inclusive Education Video](#)



# Access to Quality Education Program, Fiji

- > The AQE program represents a continuing Australian presence in Fiji after the end of Australia's long term assistance – the Fiji Education Sector Program in December 2009.
- > **Goal:** work with MoE and other relevant stakeholders to improve the ability of children from very poor communities, including those with a disability, to access a quality school education.
- > **Objective:** work with MoE and other education service providers to adequately support poor families to mitigate financial and social barriers that limit access to school education for poor boys and girls, including those with a disability.
- > The AQE will operate through three related components.



- > Increase access to education by reducing financial barriers to education.
- > Increasing unemployment, poverty and urbanisation to squatter settlements demonstrate the importance of reducing financial barriers to education.
- > Financial barriers to education include a wide range of school levies, cost of uniforms, foot-wear, school stationery and textbooks.





## Component Two: Improve School Facilities and Learning Environments

- > Investing in school infrastructure in the poorest communities to ensure school facilities are adequate and safe, and contribute to improved learning outcomes.
- > On average, only 5% of the MoE recurrent budget is allocated to capital works/maintenance.
- > In 2009, Cyclone Mick damaged 146 schools while flooding affected 66 schools; and in 2010 Cyclone Tomas damaged 153 schools, highlighting the risks of damage to poorly maintained school infrastructure from natural disasters.
- > Many schools, particularly those in rural/remote locations, do not have a reliable/safe water supply or proper ablution blocks. Poor water and sanitation facilities within schools contribute to the spread of communicable diseases e.g. typhoid.





## Component Three: Support to MoE Strategic Priorities

- > This component will provide demand-driven technical assistance to support strategic priorities of MoE e.g. curriculum development, assessment and database support, and also assistance to MoE key thematic areas relevant to its ongoing sector planning.
- > The FESP Independent Completion Review found that while FESP resulted in important achievements, a significant risk to the sustainable improvement of educational outcomes is that without continued external assistance, many of the system benefits introduced by FESP will not be transmitted to the classroom level.
- > The key areas proposed include strengthening the curriculum reform process, provision of quality teaching and learning resources, supporting assessment for learning and improving teacher quality through pre-service and in-service programs.

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## Program timing

- > The AQE program will be a five year program aimed at reducing the barriers for children to accessing education in Fiji. The program has been prepared to help safeguard gains and achievements in the education sector by mitigating negative impacts of the financial crisis on the poorest families in Fiji.
- > It is anticipated that the AQE program will commence in July 2011 with an initial two year contract (Phase 1), including an option to extend for a further three years at AusAID's discretion, pending additional financial approval and based on program outcomes and contractor performance.



- > The program is designed as a Framework for Delivery to include the necessary flexibility to change as circumstances require. This will allow real-time analysis on the best interventions within the inception stage of the program.
- > Phase 1 expected outcomes:
  - Implementation of systems which reduce the costs of schooling for the poor.
  - A national plan for improved school facilities, including water and sanitation, in operation with works underway in up to 90 schools per year, and large scale repairs in up to 5 schools affected by natural disasters.
  - Progress towards the achievement of the broader outcomes for the whole 5 year program.



## Program Governance

- > A Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) will provide high-level oversight of the program.
- > The PCC will meet every six months to review program implementation and to decide on the annual workplans. The PCC will also be able to meet on an ad hoc basis to attend to any urgent matters that may arise out of the regular meeting schedules.
- > The PCC will consist of representatives from MoE, AusAID, the Managing Contractor, and may also include representation from the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Provincial Development, and other Donor/NGO agencies.



# Monitoring and Evaluation

- > Important that the program maintains a constant focus on objectives and outcomes to ensure program effectiveness.
- > The M&E Framework will be based on MoE's own database systems to monitor student attendance, performance and school infrastructure upgrades.
- > However, these systems need work particularly to include socio-economic indicators in the MoE Disadvantaged Schools Index.
- > The Program will strengthen these systems to ensure they are able to satisfy AusAID's accountability requirements and improve MoE's ability to assess the effectiveness of its school grants and student performance.
- > The M&E Framework will ensure that the program has the capacity to monitor and report on:
  - The impact of the AQE program on access to education;
  - The effectiveness of Australian assistance in terms of value for money;
  - The appropriateness of targeting mechanisms; and
  - The impacts of the deteriorating economic situation in Fiji on schools and within the education sector more generally.

