



REVIEW OF THE PACIFIC RESEARCH PROGRAM (PRP)

NOVEMBER 2021



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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this review is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, and Value for Money (VfM) of the Pacific Research Program (PRP) in the context of Australia's foreign policy interests in the region; and to draw on these findings to provide recommendations for the focus and delivery of a future phase of PRP. DFAT requested that this review also considers DFAT's policy relevance, gender equality, and disability inclusion, and the extent to which the PRP can enhance its focus on labour mobility into the future.

2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Six primary and six secondary evaluation questions were developed to guide this review.¹ These questions, and the associated evaluation criteria, were developed in cooperation with DFAT and the PRP stakeholders. Where possible the evaluation criteria DFAT uses for its Investment Monitoring Reporting (IMR) was used in the definition of the evaluation questions as this ensured that the data generated meets DFAT's information requirements. The evaluation questions included a combination of retrospective questions, with a focus on performance to date, and prospective questions, which aim to inform DFAT's decisions regarding a future phase of the program.

A utilisation-focused and collaborative approach was used for this evaluation. This involved engaging DFAT and the PRP stakeholders in framing this evaluation and defining the evaluation questions. Empirical information was collected via semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Forty-five key informants from DFAT, the PRP, academic circles and people in Pacific Island nations were interviewed using the semi-structured interview guides. Over 50 documents were analysed including: program related documentation, program outputs, DFAT program and strategic documentation, and academic literature on thematic areas relevant to this evaluation.

3. BACKGROUND

The PRP is a five-year, \$28.25 million investment that contributes to DFAT's goals of economic resilience, poverty reduction, security, and stability in the Pacific. The PRP is delivered by a consortium, comprising of:

- Department of Pacific Affairs (DPA) (as consortia lead)
- the Australian National University's (ANU)
- Development Policy Centre (Devpol)
- the Lowy Institute.

The PRP is designed to be a globally pre-eminent centre of excellence for research on the Pacific that:

- Produces high-quality, policy-relevant research that is available, accessible and communicated to policymakers and program designers in Australia, the Pacific and around the world.
- Plays a central role in fostering and facilitating a strong and vibrant Pacific-Australia-New Zealand-wide network of research on the Pacific.
- Is connected to Australia's broader engagement with the Pacific and fosters a greater knowledge and understanding of the Pacific among the Australian community.
- Demonstrates a high degree of effectiveness in contributing to evidence-based policymaking and program design primarily in Australia and the Pacific and around the world.

The consortium's research is organised around five core research programs that focus on regionalism and geopolitics; politics and the nature of the state; economic development, with a particular focus on labour mobility; gender, social change and inclusion; and urbanisation, land and natural resource management.

¹ The Evaluation Plan provides a comprehensive definition of these questions and should be read in conjunction with this report

The geographic scope of the PRP is the whole Pacific region, though Melanesia is a sub-region of particular interest, in line with, Australia's geographic location and national interests. The program commenced in September 2017 and is scheduled to continue in its current form until June 2022.

Prior to presenting the findings, it is important to briefly discuss the context of Pacific research and teaching in Australia, as this will provide important background for subsequent discussions. In 2009 a comprehensive review was undertaken that outlined the status of Pacific studies in Australia and the factors that have de-incentivised focus in this important area within the Australian university sector over time.² This review found that Pacific studies in Australia had been in decline for a number of decades. For example, between 1991 and 2009 there was a significant decrease in the teaching of Pacific courses within Australian universities, with course numbers plummeting from 68 undergraduate courses to 30 over that period – spread across 10 universities.³ The primary cause of this decline were the changes to university funding arrangements brought about by the implementation of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). Following the introduction of HECS, universities disestablished courses with low enrolments and replaced those with higher income-generating courses, a process that continues to this day. This led to the diminishment of Pacific studies teaching in Australia more generally.

As noted by experts interviewed in this evaluation, the reduction in Pacific studies teaching at the undergraduate level had flow on effects at the postgraduate level, and subsequently on academic study into the Pacific as the pool of potential Pacific studies researchers itself diminished. This helps explain the dearth of early career researchers in Pacific studies during the 1990s and into the 2000s. This demonstrates the fundamental importance of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching as the foundation of a sustainable Pacific studies research program – an issue that will be revisited in the discussion that follows.

At present only two of Australia's 43 universities offer Pacific-focused teaching programs. These are the University of New England, which offers a Bachelor of Education (Pacific Focus) developed specifically to upskill Pacific Islands' educators, and the ANU which offers a suite of Pacific-focused programs, including:

- Bachelor of Pacific Studies (which commenced in 2007 and is a stand-alone undergraduate degree or one that can be taken in combination with other ANU Bachelor degrees)
- Graduate Certificate and Masters of Pacific Development
- Graduate Certificate in Engaging the Pacific, and
- Pacific-focussed PhD program.

A stocktake of Pacific-focused undergraduate courses taught in Australia in 2021 noted that Pacific course numbers had further decreased to 28 from the 30 taught in 2009.⁴ Of these, 14 were offered by the ANU⁵ and the remaining 14 by a further 11 institutions throughout Australia.⁶ Only three of these 11 institutions have more than one such course, they are: Western Sydney University, Monash University, and the University of Queensland. A total of 686 students took DPA's Pacific-focussed undergraduate, post-graduate and PhD-level courses in 2021 – up from 280 in 2017 – See Figure 1. Due to the high number of courses and enrolments, the ANU clearly teaches a significant proportion of all the students in Australia

² See Rose, S., Quanchi, M., and C. Moore (2009) A National Strategy for the Study of the Pacific, Australasian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies

³ It should be noted that an additional 10 universities did teach courses that included Pacific content in areas such as geography and history etc but these could not be considered 'Pacific' specific courses

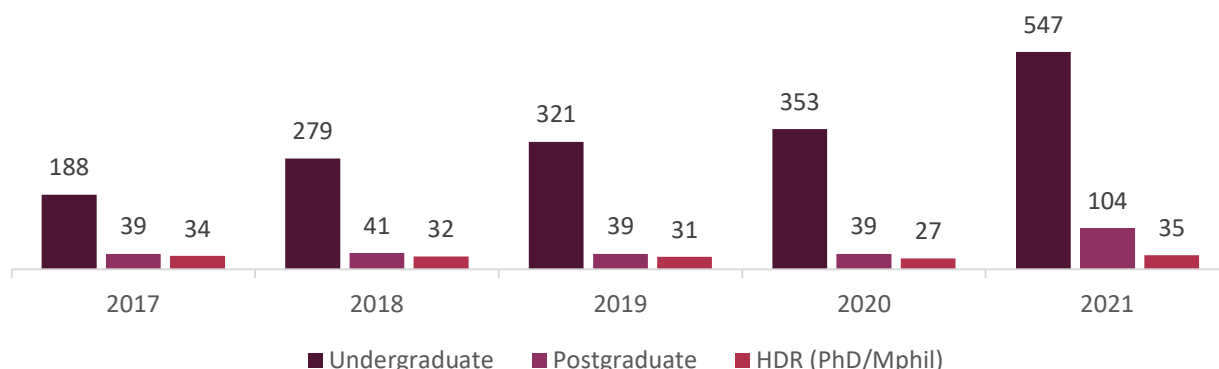
⁴ See DPA (2021) 'Pacific Studies in Australia' briefing paper

⁵ Including electives, which are offered in alternate years, there are 25 Pacific-focussed undergraduate courses offered as part of the ANU Bachelor of Pacific Studies, including four Tok Pisin language courses. There are also three field schools. These did not run in 2020 or 2021 due to the COVID-19 related travel restrictions.

⁶ These include Australia's Empire: Colonialism in Papua New Guinea (Deakin University); Colonialism in comparison: Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific and New Caledonia Study Tour: Post-colonial francophone culture in the Pacific (Monash University); Oceans of History: Exploring the Pacific (University of Wollongong); Politics of the Pacific (Swinburne University); Insurgency Movements in the Pacific and SE Asia (Federation University); Paradise Lost? Governance in the Pacific (University of New England); Theory and Society in the Pacific and Australia Pacific Indigenous Arts (University of Queensland); Melanesian Worlds: Old and New (University of Sydney); Ethnographies of Southeast Asia and the Pacific and Cultures of Southeast Asia and Oceania (Western Sydney University); Pacific Islands Laws (UNSW); and New Caledonia in the 21st Century: Study Tour (University of Melbourne)

who have an interest in Pacific studies. These courses are also accessed by many students from the Pacific who are primarily enrolled in postgraduate courses.

Figure 1. ANU Department of Pacific Affairs Course enrolments 2017–2021



Source: DPA enrolment data

The ANU’s primacy in Pacific-related education extends to its Pacific-focused research. This is a direct result of its historical mandate to focus on Pacific studies as defined in the Act of Parliament that established the university and the Research School of Pacific Studies (RSPAS) in 1946.⁷ The prominence of the ANU in this area of study has been clearly established over the decades through the research work of RSPAS and the ANU College of Asia and Pacific. As noted by experts interviewed for this evaluation, the ANU’s focus on higher degree research, coupled with its Pacific studies mandate, resulted in the production of many Pacific experts who, together, established the foundation of Pacific Studies in Australia, including ‘seeding’ such expertise in other Australian universities and around the world – including throughout the Pacific.⁸ The ‘anchoring’ role the ANU continues to play is discussed below.

The sustainability of foreign policy and development-oriented Pacific Studies at the ANU in what is a financially challenging funding environment is an ongoing issue, however. Pacific studies at the ANU includes a wide range of disciplines from economics to languages to archaeology for example. As a global university, with internationally recognised academic expertise in Pacific studies, ANU is required to adopt a balanced approach across these Pacific studies disciplines. DFAT’s grant funding ensures there is more focus on development and foreign policy-related disciplines than may otherwise be the case. External grant funding continues to be important in this context. These issues will be explored further below.

4. EFFECTIVENESS

DFAT defines effectiveness as the extent to which the expected results (i.e., outputs or outcomes) of an aid activity have been achieved.⁹ DFAT’s definition of effectiveness includes four criteria which are pertinent to this evaluation¹⁰:

1. Whether outcomes are realistic and clearly defined
2. Whether the outputs delivered have been of sufficient quality and quantity to contribute to the achievement of the stated intermediate and End-of-Program Outcomes (EOPOs)
3. Whether the M&E system has supported effective delivery

⁷ See: [Australian National University Act 1946 \(legislation.gov.au\)](https://www.legislation.gov.au)

⁸ See DPA (2021)

⁹ See DFAT Investment Monitoring Report Guidance

¹⁰ See DFAT IMR Ratings Matrix

4. Whether results are sustainable. Four corresponding secondary evaluation questions were developed that incorporate these criteria; the findings from these are discussed below.

4.1 Are the Pacific Research Program's outcomes realistic and clearly defined?

This question explores the extent to which the PRP's End of Program Outcomes (EoPO) are realistic, well-defined and measurable. In order to assess this there is a need to review the PRP's design and the initial program logic. It is beyond the scope and resources of this review to conduct a thorough critique of the design however, some major issues warrant attention in this section.

First, there are a range of issues with the high-level outcome statements in the design document. In accordance with DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) standards, outcome statements are supposed to be expressed in terms of performance outcomes as opposed to general outcome statements.¹¹ The PRP's outcome statements are far too general. It should be clear from the outcome statement what change in behaviour or other benefit will be brought about by the investment and by when. The design states that the highest-level outcome is the 'achievement of a globally pre-eminent centre of excellence for research on the Pacific' that:

- Produces high-quality policy relevant research that is available, accessible and communicated to policy makers and program designers in Australia, the Pacific and from around the world.
- Plays a central role in fostering and facilitating a strong and vibrant Pacific-Australia-New Zealand-wide network of research on the Pacific.
- Is connected to Australia's broader engagement with the Pacific and fosters a greater knowledge and understanding of the Pacific among the Australian community.
- Demonstrates through external mid-term peer review a high degree of effectiveness in contributing to evidence-based policy-making and program design primarily in Australia and also the Pacific and around the world.

The high-level outcome statement, namely: '*a globally pre-eminent centre of excellence for research on the Pacific*', is not a performance-oriented outcome statement, as it does not state which specific individuals, groups, organisations, or institutions will be doing what differently by the end of the investment.¹² This statement also suffers from circular logic as one could argue that the ANU was already such a *pre-eminent centre of excellence* for the reasons discussed under 'Background' and throughout the subsequent discussion. As this review argues, the history of Pacific studies, coupled with the context of the Australian university sector, means that such a centre could not be located anywhere other than at the ANU.

The EPOs that support the highest-level outcome statement are also problematic. For example, EPO 1 seems to consider the production of high-quality research as an outcome, when it should be considered an output in this context as it is the product of a research activity. According to the Australian Research Council, the outcomes of research are the findings, conclusions and recommendations emerging from a research activity.¹³ The new ideas, insights and knowledge generated by research are its outcomes. It is these outcomes that can influence policy and program design. The confusion over research 'outputs', 'outcomes' and 'impacts' leads to an array of issues as will be further discussed under various sections to follow. This is something that needs to be very clearly thought through during the design of the next phase of the program.

Another problematic aspect of EPO 1 is that it is duplicative. For example, the reason for ensuring research is 'available, accessible and communicated to policy-makers and program designers in Australia,

¹¹ See DFAT (2017) DFAT M&E Standards for Investment Design – Standard 1.8

¹² This is a requirement for all DFAT aid investments as highlighted in the DFAT M&E Standards

¹³ See Australian Research Council [Research Impact Principles and Framework](#) | Australian Research Council

the Pacific and from around the world’ is to improve evidence-based policy making and program design, if it is, then this is already covered by EOPO 4. Having research available and accessible is not an outcome in itself: it is a pre-condition for effectively communicating research outcomes to policy makers.

The design does note that delineating the policy influence of research is very difficult due to ‘the invariably complex and frequently opaque¹⁴’ nature of policy making, but that, despite this, the program ‘will track its contribution to the end-of-program outcomes (not just outputs) to the extent possible’. However, while there is no doubt that policy making is complex, the policy context the PRP seeks to be influential in is arguably not as complex or opaque as that in PNG or other places where Australian aid programs seek to influence policy through the generation of new ideas and concepts. The issue is the pathway to such influence has not been mapped out or the level of performance clearly specified.

The problems associated with very general outcome statements also pertain to the other three EOPOs, which also suffer from a lack of an adequate performance orientation. For example, playing a ‘central role in fostering and facilitating a strong and vibrant Pacific–Australia–New Zealand-wide network of research’ is not an outcome statement, nor is being ‘connected to Australia’s broader engagement with the Pacific’.

Second, aside from the generality and lack of performance orientation at the EOPO level, another issue is the absence of the cascading logic that underpins quality aid program designs. These provide detail of the outcome trajectory from the output level, through to intermediate outcomes and onto end-of-program outcomes for each of the separate intervention logic areas. This, alongside the high-level outcome definition issues are the main problems with the PRP’s logic.

The PRP design identifies six intermediate outcomes:

1. Accessible research products and in-person interactions effectively communicate and make available relevant research findings to Australian and Pacific Island policymakers and program designers.
2. Research products are publicly available.
3. An international network of researchers is cultivated.
4. The next generation of Australian researchers of the Pacific region is developed.
5. Greater research and communication capacity among Pacific Island country researchers.
6. Accessible research products and media interactions effectively communicate relevant research findings to the Australian public.

These intermediate outcomes are not well defined and do not align to each intervention area in a clear manner. Intermediate outcomes are interim steps or pre-conditions for the achievement of higher order outcomes¹⁵, they are not just restatements of aspects of those higher order statements. Further, they should be distinct from each other and be complementary; intermediate outcomes 2 and 6 above are essentially the same thing. Further, these intermediate outcomes also suffer from circular logic as you could argue that the ANU was already fostering the next generation of Australian researchers in the Pacific, for the reasons discussed under (‘Background’) and cultivating an international network of researchers. Again, the absence of clear performance orientation is missing in these outcome definitions.

Realistic is defined as ‘having or showing a sensible and practical idea of what can be achieved or expected¹⁶’, it is clear from the above discussion that the PRP’s outcomes statements were not realistic in this sense as they did not appropriately specify a practical idea of what could be achieved by the PRP, this was due to a number of issues with the definition of key terms and the underpinning weakness of the logic. It is important to note that this does not mean outcomes were not achieved, they clearly were (see below), it just means it was much harder to track these and communicate them due to deficiencies in the logic, which was ultimately a design issue.

¹⁴ See p.14 PRP design

¹⁵ See DFAT (2017) DFAT M&E Standards for Investment Design – Standard 1.10

¹⁶ Oxford English Dictionary

4.2 Are the PRP's outputs of sufficient quality and quantity to contribute to the achievement of outcomes?

This question examines the quality and quantity of the program's results at the output level and the factors that enable the PRP to generate these outputs. Firstly, with regard to research, the PRP conducts research under five thematic areas, as agreed with DFAT at program inception, these are politics and the nature of the state; geopolitics and regionalism; economic development; urbanisation, land and natural resource management; and gender, social change and inclusion. In addition to these themes, PRP has also conducted new streams of research in important emerging areas, including: governance and ICT; the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, climate security, social inclusion of Pacific diaspora and labour mobility (in response to DFAT's requests and additional funding provided in this area). The PRP uses the quarterly governance meetings with DFAT to provide an update on research progress and to understand DFAT's emerging research priorities.

The PRP's research output in these areas has been voluminous and far-reaching and it is, in effect, the backbone of Pacific research scholarship in Australia. Each member of the consortium has its own specific research outputs suited to its comparative advantage and institutional mandate. The majority of what could be called traditional academic research is undertaken by DPA, which leads in four of the five thematic research areas (excluding economic development) as well as additional work in ICT governance, social inclusion and climate security. DPA's research products include:

- Research reports: which present the findings from large research projects funded by PRP or other funding sources (recent examples include findings from the Bougainville referendum, Solomon Islands Election Observation and Family and Sexual Violence Research in PNG)
- Peer-reviewed books and book chapters: published by ANU e-press and by international publishers, in a wide range of Pacific-focused areas (recent topics include: Chinese aid to the Pacific and Trilateralism, Pacific security, maritime resource management, policing in PNG, politics of the Pacific islands)
- Peer-reviewed journal articles: published primarily in Pacific-focused journals (recent topics include: mobile phones and development, women's leadership in the Pacific, small island states and climate negotiation, sorcery-related violence in PNG, organised crime in the Pacific)
- DPA Discussion Papers: which are large (8,000–12,000-word) double blind peer-reviewed papers that focus in-depth on contemporary issues in the Pacific (recent topics include: politics in Fiji, smallholder coffee producers in PNG)
- Working Papers: which are substantial papers reporting on ongoing research, including conference papers, these are not double-blind peer reviewed (recent topics include: geopolitics in the Pacific, national development planning in PNG, seasonal worker health care and tourism in PNG)
- In-Briefs: which are short (1300 word) evidence-based products (not opinion pieces) that address a very wide range of topics (recent topics include: seasonal workers, Chinese aid to the Pacific, ICT in the Pacific, Gender relations, land management, politics participation, climate aid, provincial-level governance, electoral politics and Bougainville referendum)
- Policy briefs: which are infrequently published compared to the above products.¹⁷

Devpol also produces a voluminous number of outputs in a wide range of policy-related areas, especially labour mobility, with its academic work focusing on the PRP's economic development priority area.

Devpol's products include:

- Discussion Papers: which provide in-depth analysis on issues of policy relevance across the Pacific (topics include: labour mobility, PNG elections, trade policy, land management)

¹⁷ See: [Publication submissions | Department of Pacific Affairs \(anu.edu.au\)](#) for further details of the purpose and submission requirements for these different products

- **Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies Journal:** a peer reviewed, open access journal which targets research in policy studies in Australia, Asia and the Pacific in economics, political science, governance, development and the environment (recent topics include: aid dependency in the Pacific, Pacific economic surveys, aid effectiveness, and corruption in PNG)
- **Journal articles:** academic journal articles published in international academic journals
- **Submissions:** including to government inquiries on issues related to labour mobility, the Pacific and aid management
- **Pacific Labour Mobility and Migration Newsletter:** this monthly newsletter summarises blogposts on labour mobility, highlights recent news and events and provides links to labour mobility-related research
- **Devpol blog:** which is a highly productive blog and a well-known focal point for development-related opinion and research, and
- **Podcasts:** including interviews with Pacific experts in a wide range of areas.

Lowy's Pacific-related outputs include analysis papers; submissions and reports to government enquiries; articles in the Lowy Interpreter on a wide range of issues such as: China in the Pacific, COVID-19, aid effectiveness; and magazine and newspaper articles by Lowy staff on contemporary issues in the Pacific.

The quantity of the PRP research outputs delivered in any one year is significant, see Table 1 which provides details of the PRP's research outputs in the 2019–2020 financial year.

Table 1 PRP publication output, 2019–2020

Publication Type	DPA	Devpol	Lowy
Books	3		
Research Reports	3		1
Book Chapters	7		
Journal Articles	9	6	
Analysis Papers			3
Discussion Papers	3	5	
Submissions		2	1
Lowy Interpreter Articles			119
In-Briefs	35		
Pacific Blogs		92	
PNG Blogs		80	
Labour Mobility Blogs		47	
Podcasts		15	3
Analytical Work	9		
Working Papers	4		

As highlighted in Table 1, DFATs PRP funding contributed directly to the production of 447 discrete Pacific-related publications in the 2019–2020 financial year in a diverse array of areas. What is perhaps more important than the quantity is the diversity of products. The diversity of DPA products from formal, double blind peer reviewed publications to less formal (but nonetheless academically rigorous) shorter products, provides opportunities for publication for Pacific researchers from ANU and throughout the Pacific. The In-Brief series is a particularly important locus for collaboration between ANU academics and Pacific islands counterparts who feature prominently in these publications. This includes post-graduate students and others from the Pacific development community. Having such a diverse range of research products helps support capacity building outcomes as the work of Pacific academics (and Australian-based ones) are

subject to different levels of academic scrutiny. Such diversity is only possible as part of a broad-based research program.

The importance of diversity in research-to-policy output was highlighted by a number of experts from Australia and the Pacific interviewed for this review. The structure of the Devpol, ANU, Lowy consortium allows for the publication of a wide range of Pacific-related knowledge products that target different audiences. This diversity is, itself, a strong attribute of the program.

In order to generate quality research outputs, there is a need to conduct high quality research activities in the first place. In this case, this involves conducting high quality research in the Pacific context. It is important to identify those factors that facilitate the conduct of such research in the Pacific context, which is a challenging place to conduct research for a variety of reasons, including: lack of data, remoteness, human capital constraints, socio-cultural issues etc. Experts from the ANU and elsewhere, highlighted how conducting research in the Pacific is a skill, and something that, like everything else in the Pacific, relies upon trust, high levels of social capital, and a sound understanding of socio-cultural issues. These factors, alongside technical skills in research, are the foundation for high-quality research in the region. With its long history and deep links through the region the ANU clearly has significant capability in this area.

While the issues with the program logic (as discussed under 4.1) and M&E (as discussed under 4.3) have led to difficulties in tracking the PRP's contribution to development outcomes, this does not mean that such outcomes have not been achieved. There are a range of such outcomes and some of these are discussed below.

First, is the contribution that the PRP makes to high-level aid effectiveness outcomes. PRP can be considered a 'governance'-type investment in that it seeks to improve decision-making regarding aid expenditure in Australia and throughout the region. Through its research, high-level analysis and research-to-policy communication, PRP seeks to improve aid effectiveness, and through that, development impact. It does this in a number of ways, including, by seeking to improve the institutional environment through which aid is designed and delivered; creating public spaces for transparency, accountability and discourse; providing data, analysis, information, and recommendations for improved decision-making and implementation; and by helping the aid ecosystem work more effectively.

Devpol plays a particularly prominent role in the aid effectiveness space. With the abolition of the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE), and with few impact evaluations being conducted by DFAT, there is limited evidence, analysis, and data on the effectiveness and impacts of many Australian aid investments. Devpol is a key contributor to such analysis and provides a platform for researchers and institutions across the region to engage in aid effectiveness discourse. In terms of benchmarking against competing other ODA, one key contribution of the PRP is helping to understand whether aid and development programs actually work. As an example, DFAT has adopted Devpol's methodology for measuring the transparency of its aid program in determining its own aid transparency efforts. These high-level aid effectiveness contributions help improve the quality of Australia's aid delivery more generally.

Second is the contribution that the PRP experts make at the thematic and intervention levels. This can include through the provision of advice to DFAT on design and implementation issues; participation in design processes and evaluation studies; and augmenting DFAT capability in important cross-cutting areas, such as gender. One particularly important contribution is the generation of evidence-based advice emanating from research activities in areas such as elections, decentralisation and family and sexual violence, and supporting other large DFAT funded initiatives such as the Women's Leadership Initiative, Asia-Pacific Security College, Pacific Labour Facility and Pacific Women Supporting Pacific Development.

Third, in addition to the above there are also the more direct development outcomes that emerge from the work of the PRP, particularly those around building individual and institutional capability in the Pacific (and Australia). The PRP's research, education and training activities deliver new and improved human capital (e.g. knowledge, skills and experience) that enables individuals and organisations to effect positive change and address development challenges in the region. The PRP's direct contribution to building human capital

is through the delivery of high-quality HDR courses that train the next generation of Pacific scholars and development professionals, and through the Pacific Research Colloquium, which focusses on building the research capacity of early career researchers and policy makers in the Pacific region. At the institutional level, the PRP supports partnerships between ANU and Pacific tertiary institutions which build the capacity of these institutions. This includes through the deployment of ANU staff who work with Pacific universities to enhance curriculum and improve teaching outcomes and through the conduct of large-scale research projects with Pacific universities (which builds capacity in research project management as well as technical research skills).

The PRP's capacity building work also extends to DFAT. By supporting a pool of Pacific-focused experts, ANU has been able to support capacity building activities for DFAT and regional policy-makers that directly benefit the aid program. For example, DPA's highly regarded *Understanding the Pacific* and *China in the Pacific* courses, delivered through the Diplomatic Academy, are amongst DFAT's most popular courses and helps build the Pacific literacy of Australian policy-makers and diplomats. This improved literacy supports the development of more informed aid policy.

4.3 To what extent has the PRP's Monitoring and Evaluation System supported effective delivery?

The PRP's M&E system has adequately tracked performance at the output level but for a number of reasons it has not effectively captured the full extent of outcomes delivered by the program. Initially the PRP M&E Framework was developed around the four main components of the program's Theory of Change (ToC), these were: mobilising research to influence policy and practice; extending research and research capabilities; shaping the terms of the debate; and efficient and effective portfolio management. Together these components were seen to contribute to the overall goal of the program. Various output-level indicators were identified in each of the component areas. Over the course of implementation, it became evident that DFAT was not satisfied with this approach, as the framework was too broad and did not include sufficient outcome-level indicators.¹⁸ DFAT's suggested areas for improvement including:

- structuring the M&E Framework and reporting according to the four EOPOs rather than the PRP's component areas
- capturing more quantitative and qualitative data on cross-cutting issues, including gender, diversity and social inclusion, and
- focusing more on outcome-level indicators and measures to demonstrate progress towards the EOPOs rather than focussing on activity and output-level indicators.

In response to these suggestions the PRP conducted a rapid review of its M&E system and made a suite of changes, this included developing a new M&E framework that included outcome-level indicators for the outcomes in the initial program logic, and outlining the methods of assessment that would be used to collect data against these indicators to assess performance. Suggested methods of assessment included: contribution analysis, surveys of alumni, partnership mapping, qualitative data collection, impact pathway analysis and assessment of VfM.¹⁹ A new M&E reporting template was also developed that focused on reporting against the EOPOs. However, despite these changes, the PRP has not been able to tell a compelling story of its achievement against the outcomes in the program logic, there are various reasons for this.

First, are the issues with the program logic as discussed under section 4.1. This logic is seriously flawed and does not, in fact, have any performance-oriented outcomes to actually report against for the issues discussed in that section – this is the primary cause of the M&E problems faced by the program.

¹⁸ DFAT (2019) Aid Quality Check for INM 397

¹⁹ PRP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Revised May 2020

Second, the PRP did not have an M&E Plan as is required under DFAT's M&E Standards²⁰, nor did it conform to a whole range of DFAT M&E requirements as outlined in those standards around M&E resourcing, capability, clearly articulated outcomes, evaluation etc. The absence of an M&E Plan was a secondary, but important part of the problem. An M&E Plan describes how an M&E system functions, it includes a program logic or Theory of Change; it defines monitoring, evaluation and research; asks key questions in all these areas; provides details of how data will be collected; outlines roles and responsibilities; includes an annual M&E workplan (amongst other things); and includes an M&E Framework (usually as an appendix).

Third, in addition to a weak program logic and absence of an M&E Plan, the PRP did not focus enough on evaluation (primarily because of the absence of an M&E plan that explained its role alongside monitoring in an M&E system). A range of evaluative methods were outlined in the M&E Framework, as noted above, and these could have generated some insightful information on progress in key areas, including the influence of research on policy-making or program design, but these were never undertaken in a systematic way to the level required to determine such influence.

4.4 Is it likely the PRP's results will be sustained?

The sustainability of the PRP's results emerges from the 'anchoring' role the ANU plays as the hub of Pacific research and teaching in the region. This issue was raised by a number of senior ANU and non-ANU academics interviewed for this review from within Australia and across the Pacific. These respondents described how ANU's Pacific studies programs and courses foster the next generation of post-graduate students and researchers who then go on to advance the field, 'seeding' other Australian and Pacific universities with Pacific studies expertise. In this way the ANU provides a sustainable human resource base for Pacific studies in the region. Furthermore, the quality of its teaching generates high-quality graduates. The dominant role the ANU plays in this area arises because it teaches 50 per cent of all Pacific studies-related courses in Australia – as noted in section 3. In addition, ANU's multidisciplinary Pacific research program provides opportunities for collaboration with implementing partners, and thus access to finance and research opportunities; this helps build sustainable academic careers in Pacific studies, including notably for women (see section 0). Finally, the opportunity to collaborate with the ANU builds capacity within Pacific institutions in particular, who can then draw on that improved capacity and experience to source other research income, which helps build the financial sustainability of those institutions.

The PRP continues to support the re-invigoration of Pacific research capability through its education and research training programs, institutional relationships with Pacific tertiary partners in the region, and through the convening role it plays facilitating large networks of researchers. DPA's Higher Degree Research (HDR) program is training the next generation of Pacific experts in Australia. Four of DPA's early career academics: Kerry Baker, George Carter, Denghua Zhang and Colin Wiltshire, all completed their doctoral studies at DPA and continue to establish themselves as experts in their fields, contributing to PRP research, education and policy engagement activities. According to senior academics interviewed for this review, the involvement of these early career researchers in the teaching of Pacific studies has contributed to student growth in these courses (see Figure 1), alongside changes to curriculum and course structures.

The 'seeding' of the next generation of researchers also extends to Pacific scholars. For example, three of DPA's incoming PhD students are Pacific Islanders who have participated in the Pacific Research Colloquium. These students have benefitted from the structure of ANU's Pacific studies post graduate programs, which has allowed them to progress to the PhD level. Teaching programs of the quality offered by ANU (undergraduate, postgraduate and higher degree research training) are not being delivered by universities in the region (e.g. UPNG, USP, SINU or NUS). It is also the case that many of their teaching staff have not undertaken higher degree research training, do not hold a research Masters or PhD, and have heavy teaching loads, making it exceedingly difficult for them to train and nurture the next generation of

²⁰ See DFAT M&E Standards: Standard 2 Investment Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Pacific researchers. In this context the ANU plays a critical anchoring role producing the next generation of high-quality Pacific graduates.

One of the key sustainability indicators of any research program is enrolment in undergraduate teaching programs. The DFAT–ANU investment in Pacific studies sustains undergraduate teaching courses that would otherwise not be viable in the tertiary sector for a range of financial reasons (see section 5.3 which explains the financial reasons for this). Although enrolments in Pacific courses continue to grow, Pacific studies has never attracted the same number of enrolments as large courses structured along disciplinary lines that attract the high student numbers required to maintain their viability. It is for this reason that Pacific-focused teaching programs in the social sciences are increasingly less viable, have disappeared, or are under threat in Australia and New Zealand. Core and niche teaching programs of the kind offered by the ANU can only be delivered with significant co-investment. A high proportion of academics interviewed for this evaluation (including non-ANU academics) were of this view.

The discussion in Section 3 highlighted the challenging historical context within which Pacific-related education and research has taken place in Australia. This challenging historical context has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent analysis²¹ suggests Australian universities are facing their greatest financial challenge since the Great Depression. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on university revenue as a result of the loss of international student fees, amongst other things. Revenue losses within the Australian university sector amounted to \$3.8 billion in 2020. The immediate response of universities has been to cut staffing costs, as, on average, 57 per cent of university costs are staffing-related. In 2020, 5,600 FTE staff have been cut from Australian universities.

Noting the historical challenges with the sustainability of Pacific studies per se, and the extreme financial challenges occasioned by COVID-19, it is highly likely that without continuing support from DFAT deep cuts to the PRP would occur, this would obviously affect the sustainability of the PRP's results and ANU's 'anchoring' role. An analysis of internal ANU staffing arrangements, teaching loads and curriculum structure suggests that if DFAT decided not to fund the PRP in its current form, this would, in all likelihood, result in the disestablishment of the Bachelor of Pacific Studies, Graduate Certificate in Pacific Development and the Masters in Pacific Studies as there would no longer be the staff to service these courses, as approximately half of the Pacific teaching staff are funded directly or indirectly through the PRP.

5. FINDINGS – EFFICIENCY

5.1 How efficient are the PRP's organisational systems and procedures?

In order to implement a research program of this magnitude that seeks to work collaboratively with Pacific partners and offers opportunities for Pacific researchers, there is a need to ensure organisational procedures are customised to allow for efficient implementation in the Pacific context. The PRP has done this very well, and the ANU has demonstrated a high degree of flexibility in the adaptation of its centralised systems and processes. This has produced an organisational environment within the ANU that allows the PRP to be efficiently implemented while mitigating risks for DFAT and the ANU.

The PRP has developed a range of processes that enable it to efficiently engage individuals, companies and tertiary organisations from across the Pacific to deliver research, education and outreach activities. Take for example the conduct of research with Pacific partners. There are a range of personal and professional liability issues associated with the conduct of any research activity that need to be managed. In order to

²¹ See Tija, T., J. Beard, and E. Bare (2020) Australian university workforce responses to COVID-19 pandemic: reacting to a short-term crisis or planning for longer term challenges? LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne

avoid a blanket approach to insurance against such liabilities, which may be a significant barrier for Pacific-based individuals and institutions, particularly on smaller projects. The PRP has developed a contextually relevant and project-specific risk assessment and mitigation process that allows risks to be managed to a level that's acceptable to university delegates while not passing unreasonable liabilities on to Pacific partners. This is a fundamental pre-requisite for conducting research in the Pacific. Understanding risks within the Pacific context is important in this regard.

Regarding financial management, the PRP has developed a range of financial processes that are suited to the Pacific context, including procedures that allow researchers in the Pacific to be paid swiftly and directly, for example through Western Union. This has proven instrumental in some of the larger research projects in PNG where ongoing local research support is crucial for the conduct of a successful research project. The PRP professional staff have also worked closely with Pacific university partners to develop project and financial management processes that are customised to partners' capacities and workloads but which also meet ANU's standards in these areas. One key informant from the Pacific who works closely with the ANU on a large research project noted:

".... they [DPA partners] understand us, they understand that we need to build capacity in certain areas, including in project administration, but working with them has helped us, we are now capable of managing projects better".

Another Pacific researcher noted:

".... some of these other partners are very prescriptive and their requirements place a burden on us considering our capacity.... our ANU partners are considerate and have a good understanding of our context".

On the human resources side DPA has worked with ANU Human Resources in the development of two mechanisms for supporting long-term fellowships for Pacific Island scholars: Pacific Island Research Fellows (ANU salaried appointments) and Pacific Island Visiting Fellowships. Through these two appointment types, DPA can offer Pacific Island-based researchers and development professionals opportunities to work with the department on collaborative research and writing projects in areas of relevance to the PRP. This has significant capacity building outcomes. These fellowships are only open to researchers with Pacific Island heritage. Establishing the Pacific Research Fellowships as 'designated positions', to which only researchers with Pacific Island heritage can apply, required special approval from the ANU Human Resources Director. Establishing such positions has also required the development of position descriptions and selection criteria that recognise non-academic experience in the development sector.

5.2 How well has the program been managed?

From a work-planning and financial acquittal perspective the program has largely stayed on track despite the impacts of COVID-19. There were slight delays during program inception establishing the PRP Advisory Board and delays in establishing the 1.5 Track Dialogue with these activities pushed to the subsequent financial year²², these delays resulted in some minor underspends in 2017/18. In 2018/19, the PRP expended 89 per cent of its modified budget and worked proactively to adjust that budget in line with new priorities and shifts in its work plan; there was less than 10 per cent variation between budgeted and actual expenditure across most budget lines in that year.²³ In 2019/20, the PRP experienced the unanticipated effects of COVID-19, which disrupted research projects, fellowship placements, travel, conferences and a range of other activities in Australia and throughout the Pacific. Despite these disruptions the program managed to expend 82 per cent of its 2019/20 budget (which included a \$300,000 re-allocation from 2018/19), with the remainder of funds allocated to the 2020/21 financial year.²⁴ On the issue of financial

²² DFAT (2019) Aid Quality Check for INM 397

²³ DFAT (2020) Aid Quality Check for INM 397

²⁴ DFAT (2021) Aid Investment Monitoring Report for INM 397

reporting more generally, there was a need for DFAT program managers to work closely with the PRP to improve various aspects of financial reporting in order to trigger the annual tranche payment. This resulted in improvements to DPA and Devpol's budget management systems, which means they now more effectively meet DFAT's financial reporting requirements. The PRP has clearly managed its finances well on what is a complex and multi-faceted program with many moving parts and implementing partners; and particularly considering the impacts of COVID-19.

5.3 To what extent is the PRP value for money?

It is beyond the scope of this review to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the PRP's VfM. Such assessments are resource intensive and involve developing a conceptual approach, developing and testing theories of change, developing rubrics that explain VfM standards and criteria, calibrating such rubrics, integrating VfM considerations into activity decision-making and planning, and analysing a range of effectiveness, efficiency and economy-related data.²⁵ The following, comparatively brief discussion of VfM is designed to assist DFAT with its decision-making regarding the next phase of its investment in Pacific research. As such it focuses primarily on two specific issues that can assist DFAT in its deliberations; namely economy and productivity.²⁶ A general conclusion regarding the PRP's value proposition, which draws on the analysis below (and other factors), is included in Section 9.

Economy is a measure of what goes into providing a service. It is the cost of a program's inputs, usually expressed as a unit cost.²⁷ In the case of the PRP the majority of DFAT funding supports the employment of researchers and professional support staff who provide a range of research, teaching and education services as part of the PRP, as such this discussion of economy focuses on these substantial inputs. DFAT funding through the PRP directly supports the employment of 30 full time equivalent (FTE) staff at ANU. This includes 18 of 32 FTE staff at DPA and 12 of 20 FTE staff at Devpol. The majority of these staff are Level B-D academics and Professional Staff at Levels 5–8. DFAT also funds three FTE at the Lowy Institute, this includes the program lead, technical staff in various areas and support staff.

One criterion to consider when thinking about economy, and a research investment such as this, is benchmarking. There are two issues associated with this that warrant discussion here. The first is what to benchmark against. For the purposes of a program such as this it is safe to assume that only a university or a university-led consortium could effectively implement a program such as this noting its research and education objectives. The second issue then is to assess if the PRP's unit costs (the pay grades of its staff and an aggregation thereof) is high or low compared to a university benchmark. A brief review of such pay scales suggests there is less than 5 per cent variation in pay scales across the major universities²⁸; variation in professional staff salaries was of a similar scale. The structured, hierarchical nature of university staffing schedules is in this respect somewhat similar to DFAT's Adviser Remuneration Framework. On composition, the majority of academics in Australian universities are in the B–C category²⁹ so one imagines this composition would not change considerably in another university context. Indeed, as a number of tertiary experts interviewed for this review noted, other Australian universities would have to employ ANU academics (presumably at their existing levels) to implement the PRP anyway due to their comparable lack of Pacific research and education expertise.

Productivity is an efficiency criterion that simply measures how much of something you get based on what you put in, this often includes the assessment of input / output ratios and other measures.³⁰ It is beyond

²⁵ See King, J (2019) Evaluation and Value for Money, PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, Graduate School of Education; and See McGillivray, M. and D. Carpenter (2021) Australian Volunteers Program Value for Money Assessment, for a practical example of one such VfM study

²⁶ Note: for the purposes of this brief review DFAT's VfM principles have not been applied to their full extent for the resourcing issues noted above, instead the author has chosen two high-level VfM criteria that underpin DFAT's approach to VfM and used these to discuss PRP's VfM proposition

²⁷ Barnett et al (2010) Measuring the Impact and Value for Money of Governance and Conflict Programs – Final Report

²⁸ This included a review of six universities salary schedules at the highest Academic Level B as of early 2021

²⁹ See Universities Australia staffing data

³⁰ Barnett (2010)

the scope of this review to conduct a comprehensive productivity assessment of PRP but there are some important points to make about the structure of ANU's grant financing, and its own internal financing arrangements with DPA and Devpol, that suggest productivity is theoretically higher at the ANU, compared to a counterfactual institution, due to its ability to support a higher level of inputs than would be possible elsewhere.

The ANU receives funding from the Commonwealth through three funding streams: teaching based grants (based upon course loads and enrolments), research base grants (based upon research income) and special funding it receives as a national institute – the National Institute Grant (NIG). The ANU receives the NIG in recognition of the fact it is a national institute that facilitates key activities that are of national significance. The NIG policy statement highlights what these key activities are considered to be, these include:

- supporting the development of Australia's national unity and identity, including by improving Australia's understanding of itself and the history and culture of its Indigenous peoples, its Asia-Pacific neighbours, and its place in the international community; and
- providing a national, regional and international public policy resource to address major issues confronting governments, business and communities.³¹

Supporting an understanding of our Pacific neighbours and providing a public policy resource for issues confronting the Australian government (in this case DFAT) are two clear objectives of DFAT's PRP funding, which complement the NIG policy.

The money the ANU receives from the government in the form of research returns (including the NIG) and teaching income typically flows through to the Research Schools and local areas that generated this income (in this case DPA and Devpol). Since the commencement of the PRP, eligible research grants have returned 25–30c per dollar of research funding awarded. In DPA's case this has delivered approximately \$1.6 million per annum in research returns, which has been reinvested in staff appointments (continuing, fixed-term and casual) and in staff / student travel, fieldwork and other research-related expenses, these additional resources augment those directly funded by DFAT to a significant degree as explained below. In relation to research returns, the modality through which external funding is received is particularly important. In the case of the PRP, it is its status as a research grant that makes it eligible for research returns (i.e. the \$1.6 million per annum in flow-on Commonwealth government funding). Should the model change, and the PRP be awarded as say a service-based contractor and education-based contract, it would no longer qualify for research returns. This is an important consideration for DFAT as it considers the modality for the next phase of the PRP. In addition to research returns, it is important to remember that DPA also receives increased income if its courses have higher enrolments, such enrolments have increased considerably since 2017 (Figure 1 p3).

Another important issue to consider is the scale of ANU's co-investment. As with all universities the ANU recovers overheads from research grants and commercial contracts to support the indirect costs of research (e.g. maintenance of buildings and other infrastructure etc). In the case of the PRP a reduced indirect cost recovery rate that is 35 per cent below the usual rate is applied, and overheads are passed on in full to the ANU Schools within which DPA and Devpol are housed. Furthermore, these School-level overheads are passed on to DPA (in full) and to Devpol (in large part), with the residual amount retained by the Crawford School, used to support the *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies* journal and Devpolicy Blog. This is a significant departure from standard ANU policy and reflects the partnership basis upon which the PRP operates, and the basis upon which DPA's predecessor, the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program was established. As a result of these arrangements the ANU doesn't generate any profit in a commercial sense from the PRP. One could argue this is what it should do as it is in line with its national mandate as a NIG.

³¹ See [ANU Policy Library - Policy - National Institutes Grant](#)

As a result of these external and internal financing arrangements DFAT's \$28.25 million investment over five years will be matched by a significant ANU co-investment of \$17.25 million in direct funding and \$11.85 million in-kind. The direct co-investment figure includes the full cost (salaries & on-costs) of all ANU-funded staff working on the PRP, each of whom contribute to research, teaching and outreach related to the PRP, and a proportion of professional staff salaries. In total this funds 15 FTE who all work on PRP. This is in addition to the 30 FTE funded by DFAT. As such, DFAT funding is augmented by a significant amount of co-investment which clearly increases research and teaching inputs (and therefore activities) by a significant degree. This increase in inputs and activities is converted into the research, education and other PRP-related outputs discussed under section 4.2. It is questionable whether such a level of co-investment would be possible within another Australian university context, noting the unique circumstances of the ANU grant funding and internal financing arrangements.

5.4 To what extent does the consortium model represent VfM?

In addition to the high-level assessment of VfM conducted above, there is also a need to consider the extent to which the structure of PRP as a consortium represents VfM for DFAT. The consortium was established in recognition of the complementary research, education and public outreach strengths of the three members, and the alignment of combined research interests with the priority areas identified in the design. Devpol's economic, development and aid expertise complement DPA's deep engagement with, and understanding of, Pacific politics, society and culture; while the long-term research conducted at ANU informs and support's Lowy's public facing outreach. This complementary expertise allows the consortium to operate more effectively and efficiently than the individual capabilities and operating mandates of its members would allow through another structure – without the consortium structure the incentive for these complementary organisations to cooperate would be diminished.

One key benefit of the consortium arrangement is that it gives each partner access to research, teaching expertise and communication platforms that would not otherwise be institutionally available to individual consortium partners. For example, Devpol, which sits in the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy was able to establish and operate its successful blog in parallel with the ANU website, which does not support this capability. This blog is a focal point for development-related discourse in the region and draws on Devpol's research as well as DPA and Lowy inputs to a significant degree. DPA as a University Department, has been able to successfully establish new, fully accredited academic programs of direct relevance to Pacific partners, this re-invigorated curriculum draws on the research and policy-focussed outputs of all the consortium partners. The consortium structure also means there is no longer a disincentive for DPA staff to publish on the Devpol Blog or in the Lowy Interpreter as doing so directly supports the achievement of PRP's EOPOs.

Another key benefit of the consortium arrangement is that it facilitates enhanced cooperation between three separate institutions who each have a Pacific mandate. This maximises synergies, avoids potential duplication and optimises the use of scarce financial resources. Monthly meetings and regular informal communication ensure partners are aware of each other's research activities and pipelines, teaching commitments and research-to-policy communication priorities. The sharing of such knowledge allows various opportunities to be explored. These include:

- jointly conducting research activities, examples include: the consortium-wide collaboration on major research projects such as the 2017 PNG election observation, and the 2019 Solomon Islands Election Observation
- jointly supervising HDR students from the Pacific and Australia (and providing opportunities for such students to publish their work on the Devpol Blog, Lowy Interpreter and in DPA's research publications)
- jointly developing and delivering teaching programs, including the Graduate Certificate of Pacific Development, Masters of Pacific Development and executive education programs (including for DFAT)

- jointly organising Pacific-focused conferences, events, and roundtables and jointly hosting Pacific-based experts, politicians and policy makers.

Another important VfM consideration is the inter-operability of the consortium. Whilst it would certainly be possible for the consortium members to collaborate on specific research and teaching activities without PRP funding, it would clearly be more administratively complex and time consuming, as inter-organisational negotiations on a range of contractual, financial and human resource issues would need to take place on an activity-by-activity basis. This would be very inefficient compared to the current inter-operable arrangements. The current arrangements make collaboration seamless from an organisational perspective, which supports the delivery of more flexible and responsive research and teaching activities (this allows the consortium to better respond to DFAT's priorities). This flexibility would not be possible if consortium partners had to negotiate research and teaching activities across different institutional environments.

In addition to complementarity, enhanced coordination, and inter-operability, another key benefit of the consortium model is the access it provides to each of the consortium partners respective partners. While the consortium may be small, each member has diverse networks throughout the Pacific that each of the other partners can draw upon to support their various activities. These networks are vitally important in the Pacific context. This considerably expands the catchment of Pacific partners and Australia-based implementing partners.

An important final point to make about the VfM of a consortium model relates to the issue of comparative advantage. It is clear from the structure of PRP that each member is aware of its own comparative advantage, and that, as such, there is no intra-consortium competition for funds, which may be the case if there was not such a clear demarcation. For example, if each consortium partner was a separate university the VfM proposition would be significantly different, as there would more intense competition for scarce research funds, and each separate institution would also apply overheads to any grant monies received, which, as noted in section 5.3, would result in a significant increase in such overheads compared to the unique ANU arrangement.

6. FINDINGS – GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

6.1 To what extent is the Program contributing to gender equality and better outcomes for persons with a disability?

The PRP has made a substantial contribution to gender equality outcomes throughout the Pacific but its program logic and M&E system were not designed in a way that could meaningfully and systematically capture the full extent of this multi-faceted contribution. The weaknesses in M&E as it pertains to gender issues was identified by DFAT early on during program implementation. In 2019, DFAT applied a score of 1/6 for this in its Aid Quality Check for the program, this was upgraded to 4/6 in 2021 after the changes to the PRP M&E Framework in 2020 (as discussed under 4.3).³² Since 2020, the PRP has done much to improve the collection of gender disaggregated data in a wide range of areas through the identification and use of a range of indicators.

The PRP contributes to gender equality outcomes in a number of ways. First is through the conduct of research and the communication of the outcomes thereof. Gender, social change and inclusion is a research priority that is given substantial resourcing through the PRP. A total of 7.8 FTE staff are dedicated to this research priority within DPA, a number of other staff from Lowy and Devpol also make substantial contributions in this priority area. The PRP leads flagship research programs in Women's Leadership in the Pacific, Family Protection Orders, Family and Sexual Violence, and Women's Economic Empowerment. It also integrates gender and social inclusion issues across its large-scale research projects including surveys on Pacific Attitudes, Election Observation research and research on the Bougainville Referendum. The PRP is led by a renowned specialist in gender research and its multidisciplinary research teams include gender specialists who ensure gender issues are mainstreamed across its research projects. These research projects provide significant opportunities for Pacific women to participate in research activities. Such participation helps build capacity in key areas such as survey design and enumeration, data analysis and research communication, which in turn, helps Pacific women build research careers. The importance of these opportunities was highlighted by senior Pacific Island academics interviewed for this review.

Both Devpol and Lowy have also contributed to a better understanding of gender issues in the Pacific through their research and communication activities. Lowy's work has, *inter alia*, included analysis of women in the private sector, aid and gender inequality, and inequality issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Devpol's blog has, for many years, provided an avenue for the publication of gender-related research in a wide range of areas.

Second, aside from its research activities, the PRP has made a significant contribution to gender balance in the area of research publication. A range of initiatives have directly contributed to a significant increase in the number and proportion of female Pacific islanders who publish their research. For example, between 2006 and 2013 a total of 321 authors published their works in one of DPA's many publications, of these 34 per cent were Pacific Islanders, and 78 per cent of the published Pacific islanders were men. In 2013, DPA scaled up its publishing agenda and focused, in particular, on elevating the voices of Pacific women. This included encouraging submissions from Pacific women and ensuring their strong representation in research and capacity building activities and networking events. These efforts have been further reinforced in the current phase of the PRP. As a result of these activities the proportion of female Pacific island-based

³² DFAT (2019) PRP Aid Quality Check, DFAT (2020) PRP Aid Quality Check, and DFAT (2021) PRP Investment Monitoring Report

researchers publishing their work through DPA channels has now reached parity with male researchers.³³ This is a significant shift over an eight-year period.

Third, in addition to research output and publication, the PRP advances gender equality by fostering the next generation of female Pacific studies researchers. This includes through undergraduate and post graduate teaching. In 2019/2020 15 of the 29 HDR students at DPA were female, this included 13 female Pacific islanders. At the undergraduate level female representation is also strong, with women comprising approximately 60 per cent of enrolments in DPA's Pacific studies courses.³⁴

Another way the PRP advances gender equality in the Pacific is through collaboration with other DFAT-funded programs. This includes through in-kind work with the Women's Leadership Initiative; work on DFAT-funded interventions, such as Justice Services and Stability for Development in PNG; and through collaboration with the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program. A substantive output from the latter is the development of the Tok Save Gender Portal, which is hosted by the ANU.³⁵ Tok Save, which was developed for, and with, Pacific Island women, includes representation from senior female academics and development practitioners from Samoa, PNG and USP, and facilitates the publication of original and policy-based research on gender equality issues from across the Pacific. This portal focuses on publishing Pacific-centred subject matter generated by Pacific islanders on the Pacific islands.

One area identified by DFAT that requires additional attention is the area of disability inclusion. As highlighted in DFAT reporting³⁶, the design of PRP did not include a strong focus on disability. This resulted in a lack of focus in this area within the program. Some of PRP's research projects have contributed to a better understanding of the barriers facing disabled people in the Pacific, but there has not been a systematic focus on working with disabled people or their organisations in the Pacific, or maximising their involvement in the implementation of the program. The context in the Pacific is very challenging in this regard, due to a lack of disability disaggregated data and the limited work and study options for people with disabilities in the Pacific. This is something that can be strengthened in the design and implementation of the next phase of the program as noted in section 9.

7. FINDINGS – RELEVANCE

7.1 How relevant is the program?

This question explores the ongoing strategic relevance of the PRP (i.e. its relevance to DFAT's strategic priorities), its programmatic relevance (i.e. the extent to which its work is relevant at a programming level), and the extent to which its research addresses pressing development challenges in the Pacific. This section draws on the results of interviews with key informants from DFAT and experts from across the Pacific and discusses perceptions of the PRP's relevance, and how that relevance could be further improved.

On the issue of strategic relevance, DFAT key informants were asked to identify the high-level strategic priorities facing DFAT and to discuss the extent to which the PRP's activities were relevant in that context. The key high-level strategic priorities identified by senior DFAT respondents included:

- Sustainable economic development / economic resilience: understanding how best to support PICs in their economic recovery from COVID-19 (and related intractable and persistent economic and public financial management challenges such as how to drive economic growth in PICs, how to manage public debt etc; labour mobility, remittances and trade were seen as important research focus areas but within a broader strategy to address these economic and financial challenges)

³³ Pacific Research Program (2021) Supporting Diverse Authorship

³⁴ Pacific Research Program (2020) M&E Update Report, July 2019-2020

³⁵ See [About Toksave - Toksave \(toksavepacificgender.net\)](https://toksavepacificgender.net)

³⁶ DFAT (2021) Pacific Research Program, Investment Monitoring Report

- **Building human capital:** understanding how to sustainably build human capital through better investments in education and particularly skills (and how to tackle some of the intractable institutional issues that constrain achievement in this key area)
- **Pacific politics:** understanding regional geo-political and national political shifts in the Pacific region (e.g. the role of China as a major donor, shifts in political allegiances, the role of misinformation, Bougainville referendum etc.)
- **Changes in society and culture:** demographic, sociological and cultural shifts in Pacific societies (particularly around issues such as labour mobility)
- **Regionalism:** understanding the challenges to more effective regional governance in the Pacific and how best to support such efforts.

A wide range of other issues were identified, but these could mostly be considered sub-categories of the five priority areas listed above. The PRP's research and policy outputs were seen to be highly relevant in these areas. The policy-focused outputs of Lowy and Devpol were seen as particularly useful in the economic and political areas; while DPA's work was seen as useful in the areas of regionalism, society and culture, and politics. Some DFAT staff did note that the PRP was not considered a locus of expertise on education in the Pacific, which is a major priority for DFAT. Expertise in education and skills was sourced through other research and advisory modalities.

One issue raised by DFAT informants was the need to ensure the PRP's research and policy outputs could be delivered in a timely and targeted fashion noting the fast-paced environment within the Office of the Pacific, the abrupt shifts in policy thinking that often take place, and human resource constraints. DFAT executives highlighted the importance of informal briefings and other formal, but targeted, research-to-policy discussions as being particularly influential noting this context. At the same time, however, respondents highlighted the need to ensure a medium and long-term perspective was also adopted, because, as one DFAT respondent noted 'there is a need to ensure someone is thinking about these long-term issues [the five mentioned above] as we don't often get the time to'.

DFAT key informants did not think that the PRP's outputs were irrelevant, they gave numerous examples of how this was not the case, what they did call for was a greater focus on communicating in a timely and targeted fashion the key messages from long-term research projects in order to maximise policy relevance and influence. To be relevant, there is a need to understand the shifting strategic and policy dynamics within DFAT, the political-economic context of DFAT as an institution, and the specific strategic considerations of individual executives – these issues are further explored in Section 9.

One issue that was raised by DFAT key informants was the need to continue to maximise the programmatic relevance of the PRP's various outputs. This includes directly informing the design and delivery of aid programs through various entry points in the aid management cycle. Experts from the PRP already provide a range of advisory services for DFAT and support implementation in areas where they have expertise, but some informants thought this was a resource that could be used more systematically by DFAT through improvements in communication and closer collaboration. The PRP generates a high volume of research outputs in areas that are clearly of direct relevance to DFAT programs, the outcomes of these research projects (e.g. novel findings and conclusions) could assist with the framing of development challenges and the design of aid interventions that seek to address these challenges. The main issue is the temporal dissonance between the aid management cycle and the production of research findings from medium to long term research activities – this issue is further discussed in Section 9.

8. FINDINGS – LABOUR MOBILITY

8.1 How can the additional focus on labour mobility be strengthened and enhanced in a future phase of PRP?

In March 2019 DFAT amended the PRP contract, providing an additional \$4.5 million for an expanded program of research and engagement in the area of labour mobility, with such work to be undertaken by Devpol. Since then, Devpol has expanded its staffing in that area and the labour mobility program is now the largest program implemented by Devpol with six FTE staff allocated to that program. Devpol undertakes research and provides policy advice on the social and economic impacts of temporary labour mobility initiatives between Pacific Island countries, Australia and New Zealand, this includes through Australia's Seasonal Worker Program and Pacific Labour Scheme, and New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme.

Since the signing of the contract amendment Devpol's labour mobility-related outputs have increased considerably. These outputs include:

- A stepped-up program of research in a wide range of areas such as: re-integration, skills analysis, scheme governance, labour supply and demand and the impacts of labour mobility on sending and receiving communities.
- The publication of the monthly *Labour Mobility and Migration News*, which provides policy based analysis of contemporary labour mobility issues of relevance to the Australian government such as labour shortages, visa arrangements, and labour supply; and a summary of news and opinion from around Australia and the Pacific on labour mobility-related issues (including political opinion, views from Pacific leaders and stakeholders, union views and private sector perspectives) – readers of the newsletter can also subscribe to receive more frequent links to Pacific labour mobility news in the period between the publication of the newsletters.
- A range of publications including discussion papers, journal articles, research reports and submissions to government committees on labour mobility and related areas – productivity in the latter area has increased substantially with Devpol authoring nine such submissions since June 2020 in a wide range of areas and to a wide range of committees and inquiries in Australia and the Pacific.
- An expanded webinar series that targets labour mobility issues.
- A large number of blogs on labour mobility and related issues, including perspectives from Pacific Island stakeholders.

In addition to providing independent research and policy related advice, Devpol staff have also increased their direct engagement with the PLS and the SWP, including providing advice to DFAT on various aspects of those schemes. Devpol, and the ANU more generally, have also leveraged their convening power to develop and strengthen networks of labour mobility-related researchers and professionals including through participation in PRP's various conferences and outreach activities, where the theme of labour mobility has been prioritised. As such a result of these initiatives there has been a significant increase in knowledge and awareness of the impacts of Pacific labour mobility.

DFAT key informants interviewed for this review acknowledged the relevance and utility of Devpol's outputs in this area but highlighted the significant issues they face with being able to absorb the wide range of information and policy ideas generated by Devpol. The fast-paced policy environment coupled with human resource constraints created a situation where Devpol's outputs were potentially not being digested and utilised to their fullest extent. Informants also noted that they (DFAT) could provide clearer feedback on research priorities to ensure it better aligns to the policy agenda. Devpol staff were cognisant of DFAT's constraints and have devised a range of research-to-policy communication tactics to assist with the absorptive capacity issue. This includes through direct, informal engagement on emerging issues with

DFAT and other government counterparts, the development of policy briefs, participating in government inter-department committees and publishing a wide range of material such as that listed above.

Another key issue raised by senior DFAT informants and experts in the field was the need to develop an overarching strategy for Australia's various labour mobility and related investments to ensure these are coherent and complementary. In recent years there has been a significant expansion of programs that share very similar high-level strategic objectives. This includes labour mobility schemes, skills programs, and remittance-related programs funded bilaterally, regionally or multilaterally. These issues have also been elevated in the design of bilateral programs. However, there remains no overarching strategic objective against which these highly complementary activities can coalesce, furthermore the management of these complementary programs in DFAT is spread across different branches and divisions which is not conducive to fostering internal coherence.

In order to ensure the wide variety of labour mobility-related outputs generated by Devpol lead to improved outcomes, DFAT will need to elevate their engagement on labour mobility issues, this should include through stronger and more frequent engagement on policy issues, more direction for the research program, and the development of an overarching strategic objective for its labour mobility and related investments.

9. FINDINGS – FUTURE DELIVERY OPTIONS

9.1 Considering lessons learned and VfM, what are the options for the future delivery of the PRP?

This section discusses the conclusions and lessons emerging from this study and makes a range of recommendations regarding the future delivery of the PRP. This section begins with some reflections on the context and the current consortia's value proposition. First, this study has highlighted how the challenging Pacific teaching and research context that has existed for decades has been exacerbated by COVID-19. It is clear that without ongoing funding, Pacific studies, and the anchoring role the ANU plays therein, would erode over time, which would have ramifications for Pacific research and teaching for years to come. It would certainly result in reduced enrolments in Pacific undergraduate and post-graduate courses, the dis-establishment of certain courses, and a reduction in the scope of Pacific studies research. Noting the long lead time associated with developing new cadres of Pacific researchers this would take some time to rectify. Second, it is also clear that the ANU is the pre-eminent centre of Pacific studies in the region, and one of only a few across the globe; the structure of its Pacific research and education cannot be replicated in Australia by another university or consortium of universities. Third, due to its unique position as a national institute, and its favourable external and internal financing arrangements, it would not be possible for any other university, or university consortium, to deliver a program of this magnitude for the same VfM. Fourth, even if this was possible, it is highly likely that an alternate implementing partner would not have the internal capability (both in human resources and Pacific research expertise) to deliver such a program, and would, in all likelihood, have to 'poach' ANU staff to do so.

On the program more generally, there are also some important observations to make. First, there is a need to ensure that research designs have clear and meaningful overarching goals, articulate performance-oriented outcomes, and delineate between research activities, outputs and outcomes – this was a major flaw in the PRP design. Second, there is a need to invest more resources in M&E to ensure there is a quality M&E system that can track progress towards outcomes while also supporting improved performance and learning. M&E resourcing under PRP was inadequate. Third, there is a need to ensure DFAT's GEDSI priorities are more clearly and substantively integrated in a future design. Fourth, there is a need for DFAT to engage more proactively with the program, including finding ways to more systematically draw upon Pacific expertise.

At the strategic level, there is one other point to consider. As noted by several experts interviewed for this review, there is a need to ensure that Australia's significant research investment in the Pacific addresses the high level and fundamental challenges facing the Pacific, and that this research is more than the sum of its parts and has impact beyond the life of the investment. DFAT and the PRP need to work together to articulate more clearly what big picture goal PRP is contributing towards. It would be a shame if after many years of support, a story of how Australia's research contributed to resolving these problems, could not be told. One high level intractable problem that could provide some overarching strategic guidance is the continuing low levels of growth and high levels of aid dependence in the Pacific, and the implications this has for Pacific Island economies and societies into the future.³⁷ DFAT's research investment (and other aid investments) in the Pacific are substantial, as such, the ambition of its research should be commensurate to that investment and the spirit and intent of the Pacific Step-Up.

Noting the above, the following recommendations are made:

1. DFAT should consider providing the existing consortium with a research grant for a further phase of PRP from the ODA budget³⁸ - not doing so would have VfM implications for the reasons outlined in section 5.3, and would severely deplete Pacific studies research and teaching in Australia, for the reasons outlined above and under section 4.4.
2. DFAT should ensure the modality is a research grant as not doing so would reduce research grants returns, which would, in turn, reduce ANU's level of co-contribution thus reducing VfM.
3. DFAT should begin a process of co-design with the existing consortium members to ensure there is a smooth transition to the next phase.
4. The new design should explore ways to further improve research-to-policy communication and engagement between PRP and DFAT, including DFAT senior executives, taking into consideration DFAT's organisational context and absorptive capacity constraints.
5. The new design of PRP should examine ways to more systematically use PRP experts in the design and evaluation of aid interventions (and at other points in the aid management cycle).
6. The new design should also adopt an outcomes orientation, focusing on the communication of research outcomes (i.e. ideas, findings and conclusions) not just outputs; means to do this (such as focusing on problems and topics of expertise) should be explored.
7. DFAT should consider where best to locate the research program within its organisational structure, noting its overarching scope, and it should invest in improving the research section of its website (note: PRP is not even mentioned on the DFAT research webpage).
8. DFAT should develop an overarching strategic objective on labour mobility and related areas that clearly explains the objective of its fragmented investments in this area to which the next phase of the PRP can align.
9. The new design should consider supporting a high profile multi-disciplinary flagship research project that focuses on addressing a high-level intractable problem in the Pacific, such as that discussed above. This should include elevating its partnerships within prestigious research institutions and linking leading academics with partners in the Pacific.

³⁷ The Pacific Island region has suffered from the lowest economic growth rate of all regions over the last 20 years, and continues to have the highest rate of aid dependency (over 10 per cent) – see World Development Indicators

³⁸ For research to be ODA eligible, it must be research into the problems of developing countries and commissioned by a body with the aim of promoting development (e.g. DFAT). Note that research does not need to demonstrate development outcomes to be ODA eligible. See FAQ3 at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/FAQs%20ODA-eligibility%20of%20COVID-19%20related%20activities%20AUGUST%202021.pdf>

ANNEX 1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE PACIFIC RESEARCH PROGRAM (PRP)

Background and Orientation

Funded by the Office of the Pacific (OTP), the Pacific Research Program (PRP) (\$28.25 million, 2017-22) is an important part of Australia's Pacific Step-up. The Program aims to contribute to the goal of economic resilience, poverty reduction, security and stability in the Pacific region. It supports this goal by undertaking and effectively communicating high-quality research to inform evidence-based policy-making and program design by the Government of Australia and its partner governments and organisations (PRP's End of Program outcomes and Intermediate outcomes are provided at Annex A).

The Program is delivered by a Consortium comprising the Australian National University's (ANU) Department of Pacific Affairs (DPA) and Development Policy Centre (Devpol), and the Lowy Institute, with DPA as the Consortium lead. PRP funds support research and research capacity building activities, as well as the salaries and other costs for a large number of academics, research students and support staff, across the Consortium.

The Consortium's research is organised according to five core research programs that focus on: 1) regionalism and geopolitics; 2) politics and the nature of the state; 3) economic development, with a particular focus on labour mobility; 4) gender, social change and inclusion; and 5) urbanisation, land and natural resource management.

PRP's key research and research capacity building activities include: the Pacific Attitudes Survey, a popular attitudes survey currently being piloted in Samoa; Pacific Track 1.5 Dialogues; the State of the Pacific conference; the Pacific Update conference; outreach events hosted by the Lowy Institute; the Pacific Research Colloquium and Pacific Fellowships program; and faculty strengthening support for the Politics Strand in the University of Papua New Guinea's School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Program's broad research agenda, which includes "governance of information and communication technologies", the "influence of China and emerging players in the region", and assessing the "development impact of the Pacific Labour Scheme", is valued across DFAT.

The Program's research agenda is independent of the Australian Government, but the relationship between OTP and the Consortium is characterised by open, honest dialogue to ensure the Program's research remains relevant to the needs of policy-makers in Australia and the Pacific region.

The current four-year phase of PRP will operate from 2017 to 30 June 2021, funded via a \$23.25 million grant arrangement between OTP and ANU. This includes \$4.5 million provided via an amendment to the grant arrangement in 2019 to enable an additional focus on labour mobility. OTP recently extended the current phase of PRP for another 12 months until 30 June 2022 via a second amendment, with up to an additional \$5 million in grant funding. The second amendment brings the total value of the agreement to up to \$28.25 million.

PRP has not been subject to a full-fledged independent evaluation. Ahead of the development of a new phase of PRP that would commence 1 July 2022, and noting PRP was designed and began implementation when the Pacific Step-up was in its infancy, OTP is seeking to assess the extent to which PRP aligns with and supports the Australian Government's current foreign policy objectives for the Pacific. These current objectives include a series of new measures focussed on secondary schooling, tertiary partnerships and skills pathways.

The purpose of this independent evaluation is to:

- Assess the efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of PRP.
- Provide recommendations on the focus and delivery approach of a future phase of PRP in the context of Australia's foreign policy interests in the region. This will include considering OTP's ongoing interest in enhancing Pacific labour mobility as well as emerging work on enhancing education and skills pathways for Pacific islanders.

Key Evaluation Questions and Scope

Was PRP efficient and effective in achieving its intended outcomes?

1. To what extent were PRP's End of Program outcomes and Intermediate outcomes achieved?
2. To what extent were PRP's geographic focus and sectoral scope relevant to the Australian Government's foreign policy objectives for the Pacific?
3. Assess and provide recommendations on how the additional focus on labour mobility could be strengthened/enhanced in a future phase of PRP.
4. How effective are the existing governance arrangements in managing the Program to deliver outcomes?
5. How effectively did the Program respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on its objective and operations? Are there lessons or changes to the Program that could inform a future phase of PRP?
6. Assess and provide recommendations on how PRP's Program goal, End of Program outcomes and Intermediate outcomes could be strengthened and/or revised for the next phase of PRP.
7. Were there any unintended consequences and/or impacts (positive or negative) as a result of PRP?

Did the PRP delivery approach represent value for money?

1. Was the delivery approach (i.e. a single Consortium comprising DPA, Devpol and the Lowy Institute) an efficient way for delivering the Program?
2. Assess and provide recommendations on the pros and cons of possible alternative delivery approaches for the next phase of PRP. These possible alternative delivery approaches could include, but not be limited to, an expansion of the current Consortium and/or multiple Consortia, which include involving Pacific institutions. Provide a cost-benefit analysis for each of the possible alternative delivery approaches.

Was PRP inclusive with respect to women?

1. To what extent did PRP align with Australia's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment strategy?

Did PRP support disability inclusiveness?

1. To what extent did PRP align with DFAT's strategy on disability inclusiveness *Development for All 2015-2020*?

Was the PRP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework effective?

1. To what extent did the PRP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework align with Standard 2 of *DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards*?
2. Was the Theory of Change sound?

Evaluation Process

The methodology will be refined in consultation with the selected consultant. The evaluation is expected to include:

- A verbal briefing with OTP's Pacific Partnerships and Human Development Branch (PHB) and Pacific Economic and Labour Mobility Branch (LMB).
- A review discussion with OTP and the current PRP Consortium at the beginning of the evaluation process, facilitated by the selected consultant.

- A desktop review of relevant documentation.
- An Evaluation Plan.
- Interviews/meetings with internal and external stakeholders involved in PRP (including DFAT desks and posts, PM&C, PRP researchers and technical staff, and select Pacific institutions, researchers, academics, civil society representatives and Government officials).
- Aide Memoire and discussion.
- Analysis and synthesis of findings into an evaluation report suitable for publication and that conforms with DFAT's Web accessibility requirements.

Outputs

- Outputs should align with DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards.
- An Evaluation Plan that will define the scope of the evaluation, articulate evaluation questions, describe methodologies to collect and analyse data, propose a timeline linked to key milestones, propose a schedule for interviews/meetings, and outline costs. The plan will be developed in close consultation with the Pacific Skills and Education Section in OTP.
- An Aide Memoire that will present initial findings, seek verification of facts and assumptions and discuss the feasibility of initial recommendations. The audience for this document is internal.
- Draft Evaluation Report.
- Final Evaluation Report incorporating any agreed changes or amendments as requested by OTP. The final Evaluation Report will include an executive summary (of no more than 2 pages), a clear summary of findings and recommendations for future programming (no more than 20 pages) and relevant attachments. This report should be suitable for publishing and conform with DFAT's Web accessibility requirements.

Evaluation Timeline

Indicative dates	Activity	Indicative days allocated
12 July – 20 July	Initial document review and introductory brief with PHB and LMB	2
	Review discussion with OTP and Consortium	1
	Write Evaluation Plan (in consultation with PHB and LMB)	2
	Comprehensive document review	2
21 July	Draft Evaluation Plan due to OTP	
22 July – 10 August	Evaluation Plan finalised based on OTP's feedback	1
	Organise interviews/meetings with assistance from PHB and LMB	2
	Interviews/meetings	7
By 11 August	Aide Memoire with initial findings (for internal DFAT audience)	1
	Report writing	5
23 August	Draft Evaluation Report to OTP	
	Finalise report based on DFAT's feedback	2
20 September	Final Evaluation Report due to OTP	
Total		25

Team Composition

An Evaluation and Design Specialist will conduct the review. The Specialist will:

- Plan, guide, develop the overall approach and methodology, and write the Evaluation Plan for the evaluation;
- Ensure that the evaluation meets the requirements of the TOR and contractual obligations;
- Manage and direct evaluation activities; lead interviews/meetings with evaluation participants;
- Collate and analyse data collected during the evaluation;
- Lead discussions and reflection;
- Lead on the development of each deliverable;
- Manage, compile and edit inputs to ensure high quality of reporting outputs;
- Ensure that the evaluation process and report align with *DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards*;
- Finalise a succinct Evaluation Report.

Key Documents

OTP will make available to the Team Leader information, documents and particulars relating to PRP. These will include, but not be confined to, the following documents. OTP shall make available to the Team Leader any other reasonable requests for information and documentation relating to the evaluation. The Team Leader is also expected to independently source other relevant material and literature.

- DFAT quality reporting (AQC's)
- PRP Investment Design
- DFAT-PRP Agreement and Amendments
- PRP Reporting
- DFAT M&E Standards
- Australia's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment strategy
- DFAT's Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program (extended to 2021)
- DFAT's Ethical Research and Evaluation Guidance Note

Annex A (to Attachment A – Terms of Reference)

End of Program outcomes (as set out in the PRP design)

The PRP is designed to be a globally pre-eminent centre of excellence for research on the Pacific that:

1. Produces high-quality, policy-relevant research that is available, accessible and communicated to policymakers and program designers in Australia, the Pacific and from around the world;
2. Plays a central role in fostering and facilitating a strong and vibrant Pacific-Australia-New Zealand-wide network of research on the Pacific;
3. Is connected to Australia's broader engagement with the Pacific and fosters a greater knowledge and understanding of the Pacific among the Australian community;
4. Demonstrates a high degree of effectiveness in contributing to evidence-based policymaking and program design primarily in Australia and also the Pacific and around the world.

Intermediate outcomes (as set out in the PRP design)

Six intermediate outcomes will underpin those end-of-program outcomes:

1. Effectively communicate and make available relevant research findings to Australian and Pacific island policy-makers and program designers through accessible research products and in-person interactions
2. Research products are publicly available
3. An international network of researchers is cultivated
4. The next generation of Australian researchers of the Pacific region is developed
5. Greater research and communication capacity among Pacific island country researchers
6. Accessible research products and media interactions effectively communicate relevant research findings to the Australian public