

Fiji and Tuvalu Tracer Study, 2008

Final Report
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Disclaimer

The evaluation and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of AusAID or the Government of Fiji or the Government of Tuvalu.

Fiji and Tuvalu Tracer Study - Final Report

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Executive Summary

The *Tracer Study for Fiji and Tuvalu Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) and Australian Regional Development Scholarships (ARDS) 2005-2007 Alumni* examined the impact of the scholarship schemes in Fiji and Tuvalu, in terms of their immediate outcomes in the first year(s) after award completion. The study team interviewed a range of stakeholders (including alumni, government officials, private sector and civil society contacts and alumni line managers) in both countries to assess the effectiveness of the ADS and ARDS schemes. A pilot Tracer Survey was designed for completion by ADS/ARDS awardees who graduated between 2005-2007. This survey was emailed or handed out to those alumni whose contact details were able to be established by AusAID staff. The study team also conducted focus group discussions for alumni in both Fiji and Tuvalu.

Contact details were only available for 24% of the total Fiji alumni 2005-2007 cohort, most of whom were contacted through their work email addresses in Suva. No contact details were available for the majority of the Fiji alumni, many of whom may be living outside of Suva, unemployed or have migrated overseas. Although 67% of the contacted alumni responded to the survey, this further reduced the survey respondent sample size to 16% of the total alumni cohort. Given the above factors, the sample of Fiji survey respondents is not considered representative of the total 2005-2007 alumni cohort. Nevertheless the Fiji survey data still presents some useful findings as a basis for further consideration and analysis. No significant limitations were experienced in undertaking the Tracer Study in Tuvalu, with a representative sample of alumni (62.5% of the total 2005-2007 cohort) able to be surveyed.

Contributing to the human resource needs of Fiji and Tuvalu

In both countries, the level of value ascribed to the AusAID scholarships was high. Overall, there was widespread stakeholder agreement that ADS (for study in Australia) and ARDS (for study in the region) have contributed to meeting human resource development (HRD) needs in support of Fiji and Tuvalu's long-term development. Of the Tuvalu survey respondents, 89.5% reported that their studies were highly relevant in addressing their country's priority development needs. It is noted however that only 61% of the Fiji alumni survey respondents felt their studies were highly relevant, although a further 32% thought their studies were of some development relevance. This Fijian finding needs further analysis based on a large sample size in future surveys.

Based on data from AusAID's SIMON/SOFEA, the rate of course completion by the 2005-2007 ADS alumni was 100%. However whilst 92% of the Fiji ARDS alumni completed their course, only 78% of the Tuvalu ARDS awardees did so. It could be argued that this high Tuvalu non-completion rate reduces the effectiveness of the scholarships as a mechanism to contribute positively to Tuvalu's development, however public service non-completers are able to remain employed in the position they had prior to the scholarship so are at least able to contribute as they did prior to their departure. The rate of return of awardees to their home country after graduation is reportedly very high for both Tuvalu and Fiji alumni.

ADS/ARDS graduates are in strong demand in the workplace in both Fiji and Tuvalu and alumni line managers are clear that their alumni employees have added value to their place of employment. Of the Fiji alumni surveyed, 93% were in employment at the time of the survey and 82% had found work within six months after award completion. 87.5% of Fiji respondents said that their study/training was absolutely necessary or helped a lot in finding them employment. Of the fifteen Fiji survey respondents who returned to their previous employer, 87% were promoted to a new position or assumed new responsibilities. Fiji survey respondents indicated that their study/training was highly relevant to their job (88% of ADS and 81% of ARDS), with none saying that it was of very little or no relevance.

The majority of the 2005-2007 Tuvalu ARDS (77%) and ADS (66%) alumni cohort are currently working. 75% of all surveyed alumni returned to their previous employer, of which 47% assumed new responsibilities or were promoted and the remainder returned to the same position. Tuvalu survey respondents indicated that their study was highly relevant to their job (100% of ADS and 82% of ARDS), with only one respondent stating that their study was of very little relevance to their work.

ADS and ARDS alumni in both countries reported making a contribution outside of the workplace to civic society. The value of the scholarships in generating links between Australia and the partner countries was also confirmed. ADS alumni in both Fiji and Tuvalu reported maintaining substantial links with contacts made in Australia, and the vast majority of both ADS and ARDS awardees were interested in maintaining contact with Australia through an alumni association.

The surveyed alumni were also overwhelmingly positive when outlining the benefits they have achieved for themselves and for their work as a result of their scholarship. Despite this, scholarship effectiveness is reduced by the difficulties experienced by alumni in applying their new knowledge and skills in their current job (primarily due to lack of required equipment, different working practices compared to their country of study and resistance from employers/colleagues).

Sustainability of development outcomes from the scholarships is reduced if the alumni do not remain in their home country. The majority of the Fiji and over half the Tuvalu persons consulted during the study supported AusAID's two year embargo before alumni can return to Australia. These people felt that the embargo should be continued in order for their country to benefit from the alumni utilising and transferring their skills. The embargo would seem to be particularly relevant in countries where there is likely high rates of emigration of skilled alumni, such as was reported by Fiji employers. Of the Fiji survey respondents, 27.5% stated that they were not likely to remain in Fiji for the next five years. Conversely there was a high intention for Tuvalu survey respondents to remain in their country for the next five years (with only 3.4% not likely to remain in Tuvalu).

Recommendations to improve ADS/ARDS effectiveness in Fiji include for AusAID to:

- require shortlisted in-service public sector applicants/employers to submit re-entry action plans with scholarship applications to indicate the career plan, responsibilities, skills utilisation and transfer that would happen on completion of the award;
- review whether to continue to award Distance and Flexible Learning scholarships;
- develop a profiling approach to attempt to be able to best identify the profile of applicants who are most likely to remain in their home country after completion of the two-year return to Australia embargo, thereby contributing to sustainability of scholarship outcomes; and
- undertake further research and analysis as to the feasibility of including rural, socio-economic, location or physical disadvantage factors in the selection criteria.

Recommendations to improve ADS/ARDS effectiveness in Tuvalu include for AusAID to:

- undertake research to determine reasons for the high non-completion rate of ARDS awardees and what could be done by institutions, AusAID and/or the Government of Tuvalu to increase completion rates;
- investigate options for increasing post-secondary technical/vocational training scholarships for Tuvalu citizens;
- research the progress of students who start tertiary training upon completion of the Augmented Foundation Program at USP Tuvalu to see if there is related performance improvement in subsequent overseas study, and therefore whether it would increase award effectiveness for all ARDS awardees to undertake the program; and
- undertake research into the specific post-secondary training needs of the private sector and civil society, along with the rates of application and acceptance of awardees from these sectors.

Achievement of Country Objectives

The strengthening of human resource capacity is included in AusAID's country strategy for both Fiji and Tuvalu and support for ADS/ARDS tertiary level study is a significant component of each country's annual bilateral allocation. However, given the breadth of training priorities identified by Fiji and Tuvalu government agencies responsible for national planning and human resource development, scholarship awardees have historically been selected to meet a broad range of HRD needs.

More recently, AusAID has selected Fiji awardees for areas of study that are common to the partner government lists and to AusAID sectors of bilateral cooperation. Although selected prior to the current Fiji Engagement Framework, the 2005-2007 Fiji alumni are broadly contributing to its pillar of facilitating future economic growth, with 54% of the tracer survey respondents now working in and increasing the capacity of the public sector and 31% working in the private sector. It is also noted that some 32% of the total alumni cohort have completed health or education degrees, although it was not able to be assessed as to whether they are directly supporting the pillar of building a resilient community.

The Tuvalu alumni in this study were awarded scholarships on the basis of broad, mainly public sector, HRD needs as determined by the Joint Selection Committee at the time of selection. The majority of the alumni are now working in the public sector in areas related to their field of study. Although the alumni were selected prior to the Tuvalu/Australia/Asian Development Bank Joint Country Strategy in 2007, five of the twenty Tuvalu alumni surveyed undertook finance/accounting related degrees and are working in the public sector, one of whom is working in the Tuvalu treasury. If utilised effectively, these alumni would be able to contribute to the Strategy's objective to ensure financial stability through effective management of Tuvalu's recurrent budget. However, only 15% (3 out of 20) of the Tuvalu alumni surveyed are now working in the private sector, in potential support of the Strategy's second objective to improve access to income generating activities in the local and international labour markets.

In order to more effectively contribute to their respective country programs, to demonstrably increase their effectiveness and to more readily be able to assess their medium to long-term impact at the institutional level, it is recommended that the ADS/ARDS schemes in Fiji and Tuvalu be integrated more closely with their country program strategy.

Three scholarships objectives that relate to the pillars of the Fiji Engagement Framework, 2008-2010 are proposed for Fiji. The interim objectives, pending further analysis as to more specific training priorities to be targeted, are that ADS and ARDS scholarships provide relevant training to:

- increase the number of Fiji public servants with relevant post-secondary education and training in priority areas;
- increase the skilled workforce as critical to improved economic growth in Fiji; and
- increase the skilled workforce in civil society organisations

In the case of Tuvalu, two scholarships objectives that relate to the Tuvalu/Australia/Asian Development Bank (ADB) Joint Country Strategy 2007-2011 are proposed. The objectives are that ADS and ARDS scholarships provide relevant training to:

- increase the number of Tuvalu public servants with relevant post-secondary education and training in priority areas; and
- increase the skilled workforce in Tuvalu to support income generation activities.

Consideration could be given to adding a third objective for the Tuvalu scholarships that directly supports the current development process for the Tuvalu Education Sector Program.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The tracer survey proved an effective method of gathering information on scholarship outcomes in the year after award completion, provided that contact details of alumni are kept up to date and a representative sample of alumni can be surveyed. The survey designed for this study was able to be completed quickly either electronically or on paper. Whilst the pilot Tracer Survey produced reliable results, some minor changes/enhancements are proposed to enhance its effectiveness for future use.

To improve scholarships M&E in Fiji and Tuvalu, it is recommended that AusAID:

- set up a survey centre on the AusAID web-site for routine collection of tracer survey data;
- undertake data cleansing of Fiji and Tuvalu ADS/ARDS data;
- institute processes to systematically record and maintain contact details of Fiji and Tuvalu alumni;
- annually collect and analyse tracer survey data on the immediate outcomes (1 year after award completion) of the scholarships;
- develop and undertake written surveys of alumni employers; and
- undertake five to ten year out tracer surveys and other analysis of medium and longer term outcomes of the scholarships to Fiji's development (and against agreed scholarship objectives), conducted every 3-5 years.

As part of the Study, an initial outline of an M&E plan for the Fiji and Tuvalu ADS/ARDS has been developed including possible indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the scholarships. It is recommended that this M&E plan be reviewed and completed for Fiji and Tuvalu by adding in any baseline data and targets, by including suitable indicators for the specific objectives agreed for the scholarships schemes and by adding appropriate risk management indicators.

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1 Background for Tracer Study

1.1 Background

Scholarships for tertiary education delivered through Australia's overseas aid program enable Fiji and Tuvalu citizens to undertake studies at higher education institutions in Pacific Island countries and Australia. These scholarships provide educational, research and professional development opportunities to support economic growth and human resource capacity in the home countries and the Pacific region at large. The management of regional scholarships also incorporates assistance and support to regional institutions, including guidance on the provision of quality student services.

The Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) and the Australian Regional Development Scholarship (ARDS) programs are a key aid modality, and one that partner government's value and are highly dependent on. In the financial year 2007/2008, scholarships value was approximately A\$1.95m¹ and A\$0.9m² for Fiji and Tuvalu in their respective bilateral programs. However, their impact and influence on the skills base of recipient countries has not been effectively measured. This tracer study will assess the ADS/ARDS programs offered to Fiji and Tuvalu, in terms of their effectiveness in supporting the development of skills of graduates and broader human resource capacity of these countries, as well as their contribution to the bilateral program objectives. It will also help to inform a strategy and performance framework for future scholarships.

1.2 Goal of the Tracer Study

The goal of the AusAID Fiji and Tuvalu Tracer Study is to assess the effectiveness of the existing bilateral Australian Scholarships Programs in Fiji and Tuvalu:

- in contributing to the human resource needs of Fiji and Tuvalu, in support of their long-term development;
- in contributing to the achievement of the Fiji Engagement Framework and Tuvalu Country Strategy objectives;
- to provide recommendations on possible indicators or measures for assessing effectiveness of/impact of future scholarships; and
- to design a tracer survey questionnaire to be trialled on Fiji and Tuvalu completers and make recommendations on its ongoing use to award completers six months after the completion of their award, to provide data for future evaluation of the program.

The Terms of Reference for this Tracer Study are contained in Annex B.

¹ Senate Estimates – Fiji Overview, 4 June 2008

² End of Financial Yr Report - Aidworks

2 Methodology

2.1 Methodology

The Tracer Study is to assess post-award outcomes of the ADS and ARDS awards provided to Fiji and Tuvalu citizens. The Study focused on awardees that completed their scholarship (alumni) between January 2005 and December 2007. The Study's methodology is consistent with AusAID Australian Scholarships Group's (ASG) Scholarships Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework which includes assessing the quality and effectiveness of training outcomes through a tracer survey of alumni 1-2 years after award completion and asking key M&E questions:

- Have awardees returned to their home countries?
- Are awardees reintegrated back into the workplace successfully?
- Are awardees applying the skills they gained effectively?

Key components of the Fiji and Tuvalu Tracer Study's methodology included:

- preparation of a methodology plan and agreement of the plan with AusAID;
- desk review and analysis of existing documentation from AusAID files, policy documents, guidelines, program strategies and plans and relevant Fiji and Tuvalu specific reports and reviews (as listed in Annex C);
- analysis of the SIMON/SOFEA data on the 2005-2007 Fiji and Tuvalu ADS/ARDS alumni cohort;
- consultation with key AusAID staff in Fiji responsible for the ADS and ARDS schemes;
- selected and strategic semi-structured interviews and consultation in Fiji and Tuvalu with government officials responsible for scholarships management and national planning, and with private sector representatives;
- semi-structured interviews with a sample of Fiji and Tuvalu government and private sector employers of recent ADS/ARDS alumni;
- design and analysis of a tracer survey on alumni employment outcomes up to one year after graduation and recommendations on the survey's ongoing use;
- focus group discussions with a cross-section of available alumni in Fiji and Tuvalu;
- a debrief meeting with AusAID staff in Fiji at the end of the in-country field visits; and
- submission of a Draft Report to AusAID for their comments and suggestions for incorporation in the Final Report, as appropriate.

The Study was undertaken by external, independent consultants, Ceri Bryant (Team Leader, Fiji consultations) and Nicki Wrighton (Tuvalu consultations) with in-country consultations held during separate one-week field visits to Fiji and Tuvalu between 25 and 29 August 2008. A list of people consulted during the Study is provided in Annex D.

2.2 Tracer Study Overview

Although there were 210 ADS/ARDS Fiji and Tuvalu alumni for the period 2005-2007 recorded on the relevant AusAID SIMON/SOFEA databases, the Tracer Study sample was limited to alumni whose contact details were able to be identified by AusAID Suva. The prime source of these contacts was through the recently established Australian Scholarship Alumni Network (ASAN) database for Fiji and AusAID's professional/personal contacts in Fiji/Tuvalu. Table 1 shows the numbers of alumni contacted/interviewed during the Study.

Table 1: Alumni Numbers in Tracer Study

Country	Scheme	Alumni	Alumni in Focus Groups	Tracer Survey Requests	Tracer Survey Responses	Alumni Employers Interviewed
Fiji	ADS	20	4	15	8	0
	ARDS	158	16	28	21	11
Tuvalu	ADS	6	2	3	3	
	ARDS	26	9	17	17	4

As can be seen from the above table, the Study outcomes for Fiji were limited by a number of factors. The main limitation to the representativeness of the survey sample was the small proportion of the Fiji alumni cohort who were able to be contacted. Most of the alumni were contacted through their work email addresses in Suva and no contact details were available for the majority of Fiji alumni, many of whom are likely to be living outside of Suva, unemployed or have migrated overseas.

The Fiji survey questionnaire was only able to be emailed to 43 Fiji alumni (24% of the total alumni cohort), although as a back-up 17 hard-copy versions of the survey were completed at the Fiji focus group sessions. Unfortunately, this sample did not include those who now live outside of Suva or those who have migrated overseas.

Of those given surveys to complete, 67% of the Fiji alumni responded. Whilst this response rate is reasonable compared to other graduate surveys (such as the 32% response rate of the 2005 USP Graduate Destination Survey), it further reduced the respondent sample size to 16% of the total alumni cohort.

Although the Fiji survey respondents were representative of the total alumni cohort with respect to gender equity³, the survey responses represented 40% of the ADS but only 13% of the total Fiji ARDS cohort. The survey respondents were also more successful in completing their course (97%) compared with 92% of the total Fiji alumni group. This may result in the survey respondents having more positive perceptions of their institution and the benefits of their study than the alumni cohort as a whole.

Given the above factors, the sample of Fiji respondents is not considered representative of the total 2005-2007 alumni cohort. Nevertheless the Fiji survey data still presents some useful findings as a basis for further consideration and analysis.

No significant limitations were experienced in undertaking the Tracer Study in Tuvalu. All the Tuvalu alumni were physically handed their forms to be completed, resulting in a 100% response rate. As a result, a representative sample of alumni (62.5% of the total cohort) was surveyed and interviewed in focus groups. The survey responses represented 50% of the ADS alumni and 65% of the Tuvalu ARDS alumni of the 05-07 cohort. The Tuvalu survey was also representative in terms of gender equity with 50% of the respondents being female compared with 50% of the total Tuvalu alumni cohort. A representative sample of alumni employers and Tuvalu stakeholders were also available to be interviewed during the in-country consultations.

2.3 Tracer Survey Design

The Fiji and Tuvalu 2008 Tracer Survey questionnaire was designed to be completed by alumni six to 12 month after graduation. For the purposes of this pilot, and given the expected low sample size, it was however tested on alumni who completed their

³ 45% of the Fiji survey respondents were female compared to 48% of the total Fiji alumni cohort

awards within the past 1-3 years. The pilot survey form is provided in Annex E. Hard-copy and electronic versions of the survey were prepared. There were no indications from the responses to the electronic survey that the form was difficult to complete. The focus group participants took between 20-30 minutes to complete the hard-copy survey, with some spontaneously commenting that it was “user-friendly” to fill-in. Although some of the non-response may have been due to incorrect email addresses or absences from the workplace during the school holidays, for the benefit of future surveys it is recommended that AusAID follow up with non-respondents as to their reasons for not completing/returning the survey.

Given the experience of the pilot, a small number of modifications to the Survey are proposed for its future use. Whilst focus group respondents said that they did not have any difficulties in completing the form, analysis of the survey data indicated that a small number of refinements should be made to some survey questions. The format of a small number of questions were also changed to make analysis easier. Due to the importance of sustainability of scholarship outcomes, there is a need to build up a profile of alumni most likely to remain in their home country after completion of the two-year return to Australia embargo. Previous studies have shown that age, marital status and number of years with current employer may be important factors in identifying those least likely to migrate from their home country. It is therefore recommended that questions be added to the survey regarding marital status and what would factors are important for an alumni to stay more than five years in their home country.

It is noted that the tracer survey includes a number of questions regarding the quality and relevance of services offered by the institution and skills development during the awardees’ study. These on-award questions would typically be asked in graduate satisfaction surveys undertaken by the host institutions. However, because not all Pacific institutions undertake their own surveys, these questions were included in the survey. They could be removed if there is concern regarding the survey length. Given that the majority of respondents were likely to be ARDS and as English language is not a study-related issue in Fiji, the survey did not include any questions on English language, as this would also increase its length. It is noted that questions on ethnicity and region of residence were also not included, although it may be appropriate for other countries to include such questions depending on specific country program strategies.

A revised survey form reflecting the above changes is provided in Annex F, with the questions changed from the pilot highlighted by an asterisk.

2.4 Alumni Focus Groups

It was intended that, if possible, the Fiji/Tuvalu focus groups include a representative sample of ADS/ARDS alumni. This would have included those working in the public and private/non-government organisation (NGO) sectors, and where possible also those who have not found work after graduation, with gender equity across the groups. Three focus group sessions were held in Fiji with one session for ADS (attended by 4 alumni or 20% of the total alumni cohort) and two sessions for ARDS (attended by 16 alumni or 10% of the total cohort). There were 12 male and 8 female participants, of whom two were currently unemployed and one was not working in the area of his study due to personal/financial reasons. All focus group alumni had passed their degree course. Overall, the focus groups were considered a broadly representative sample of employed alumni in Fiji. However it was not able to be established whether the group was representative of the total 2005-2007 Fiji alumni cohort.

The dynamics of the group size of 6-8 alumni worked well and it was possible to generate open and friendly communication between the participants and the facilitator. The participants found it difficult to be punctual in attending the after-work meetings, so a slightly later meeting time (5:30pm) is suggested for any such future meetings. It is also suggested that, where possible, such meetings avoid the school holidays when it was reported that many employed alumni take leave.

Three focus groups sessions were held in Tuvalu. One had two ADS alumni and two ARDS alumni, the other two sessions were attended solely by ARDS alumni. In total 9 ARDS alumni attended focus group meetings. This represents 35% of all ARDS alumni in the study period but represents 43% of alumni available in Funafuti. All alumni attending the focus groups (with the exception of one) had been in-service scholars and were currently employed in the same job they had before they left for study. The one pre-service scholar was employed in the Ministry of Health on the basis of his study as a nurse. It was considered that the focus groups were attended by a broadly representative sample of the 2005-2007 Tuvalu alumni cohort.

2.5 *Alumni Employer Interviews*

It is noted that stakeholder consultations and employer interviews with the Fiji Government were limited in Fiji by the current rules of the AusAID Fiji Engagement Framework 2008-2010. Eleven line managers of Fiji ARDS alumni were interviewed, with four from the private sector, two from educational institutions and five from government agencies. Time and other factors meant that no line managers of ADS alumni were available to be interviewed. The alumni employed in government agencies reported delays in finalising their employment contracts and expressed greater difficulties in utilising their skills. It would therefore have been useful if more interviews could have been held with public service employers, especially in the health and education sectors, to further clarify the issues raised by alumni with government employers.

Four line managers of Tuvalu alumni were interviewed. Two were from government departments, one a state owned enterprise and one a private sector company. In addition, given the small size of the Tuvalu public sector, the personnel and training staff interviewed as stakeholders also effectively take the role of line managers of alumni as they are actively involved in what happens to alumni when they return into the government sector.

3 ADS/ARDS in Fiji

3.1 *Fiji Development Context*

Fiji's population of approximately 900,000 is composed of two main ethnic groups, indigenous Fijians (55 per cent) and Indo-Fijians (41 per cent). Three quarters of Fiji's population live on Viti Levu, the largest island in the Fiji archipelago. Fiji is relatively urbanised, with approximately 46 per cent of the population living in urban areas. A little less than a quarter of the total population live in the suburbs around the capital, Suva. Fiji is a middle-income country which is not aid-dependent. Total donor aid to Fiji is 2.3 per cent of GDP, with Australia's total aid amounting to less than 1 per cent. Total Australian Official Development Assistance to Fiji for 2007/08 is estimated at \$28.7 million (Shaw, 2007).

Overall Fiji has performed relatively well in terms of Millennium Development Goal indicators. However, there are concerns that Fiji is regressing in relation to some targets, particularly poverty. It is also uncertain whether Fiji will meet the goals for

reduced child and maternal mortality, access to clean water and improved sanitation. Fiji performs above the developing country average on most human development indicators, with a per capita GDP of around \$3,280, life expectancy of 68 years, low maternal, infant and child mortality rates, approximately 40% of children remain at school until the age of 18 and a 93% adult literacy rate. (Shaw, 2007).

Recent adverse political, economic and social developments have raised serious questions regarding Fiji's future stability and prosperity. Military coups in 1987, 2000 and most recently in 2006 have polarised Fijian society, isolated the country internationally and accelerated the flight of capital and skills. Economic performance has been weak, with average GDP growth of 2.1 per cent between 1996 and 2006. GDP is projected to fall by 3.1 per cent in 2007 following the coup of December 2006 and consequent downturns in key sectors such as tourism and sugarcane production (Reserve Bank 2007).

Fijian living standards remain high relative to their Pacific neighbours, but increasing wealth disparities, political instability, ethnic tensions, rising crime rates and a weakening of traditional community structures all signify an erosion of the social fabric which, over the last decade, has diminished the quality of life for many Fiji citizens. Poverty is a significant and growing problem, exacerbated by falling real wages and rising unemployment. 34% of the population were living below the poverty line in 2002 (PIF 2004, Chand 2007).

The 2006 coup has led to the shelving of the Fiji Strategic Development Plan 2007-2011 (SDP). The SDP has no official status and is no longer a driver of Fiji's priorities. The interim government is formulating its own policies on a seemingly ad hoc and reactive basis. Political dialogue and consensus remain elusive. The interim government has established a National Council for Building a Better Fiji to develop a *People's Charter for Change and Progress*, through which it intends to identify an agenda to address issues of governance and instability (AusAID, 2008a).

3.2 Fiji Labour Market

Less than one third of the Fiji labour force is in full-time paid employment (FIBS 2007a). The Fiji labour market suffers a significant imbalance between the supply and the demand of labour. Each year over 17,000 new entrants join the labour market in Fiji, including about 14,000 school leavers. There is a significant youth bulge, with half of the Fijian population aged under 21. In 2004, an estimated 4,000 new jobs were generated by the economy and 5,000 vacancies were created from emigration and natural attrition in the labour force. Wage jobs were therefore available for only about half of those entering the labour market. (ADB, 2007)

The public sector leadership capacity, morale and work ethic has been considerably weakened in recent years. Departments have been restructured, most CEOs and heads of key agencies removed and military personnel placed in key positions. The Fiji PSC states that the new civil service policy for retirement at 55 years will see an expected increase of civil service departures, which will impact particularly on the Ministries of Education, Health and Home Affairs and Immigration (PSC, 2008) and public service training needs.

3.3 Emigration and Remittances

"Fijians have responded to the lack of domestic opportunities by seeking work overseas, and offshore labour markets have come to assume a central role in Fiji's economy and society. Around 6,000 Fijians leave the country annually for employment abroad" (Shaw, 2007). While factors such as land insecurities, unemployment and political upheavals were the main contributing push factors for

emigration, the higher pay and standard of living, better economic opportunities, better health facilities and educational prospects for children in the metropolitan countries are some of the pull factors that greatly influence migration decisions (Mohanty, 2007).

Over half of Fiji's stock of middle to high-level labour was lost through emigration over the ten years following the 1987 coup (Fiji National Planning Office, 2005a). Since migration opportunities increase with skill levels, the most highly qualified and experienced workers are most likely to leave. In Fiji "56% of employers gave emigration as the reason for loss of employees with critical skills. As a consequence of emigration, the smaller pool of skilled workers also means fewer qualified supervisors and managers" (ADB, 2007).

Permanent emigration from Fiji has created serious shortages of skilled manpower in the economy. There are 'some critical areas, such as the medical profession, teaching and other specialized services, where labour shortages were most acute and still exist today' (Government of Fiji, 2002). For example, 2866 professional and technical workers (particularly architects, accountants, teachers, medical, dental, veterinary workers) emigrated during the period 2000 – 2003 (Fiji PSC, 2008). This migration takes away from the potential for sustainable economic and social development. Loss of people trained in specialist skill areas with high investment and long lead times poses particular challenges for workforce planning.

Although no longer utilising their skills and knowledge to contribute directly to their countries development, Fijian alumni working overseas nevertheless still have a positive impact on reducing poverty, through providing remittances and donations-in-kind to provide social assistance to their families, relatives and friends. About a third of Fijian households receive remittances, which make an aggregate contribution of about 10 per cent of GDP.

3.4 Human Resource Planning

The 2001 International Labour Organization (ILO) report on skill losses in Fiji states that *"Fiji's labour market supply and demand database and information systems are highly underdeveloped, predominantly unmanaged and relatively distorted"*. Whilst there is a lot of information available in terms of labour supply, a notable absence in labour market information is labour demand (LAPI, 2007). AusAID has traditionally consulted with the Fiji PSC to agree priority areas of study for ADS/ARDS. The PSC Workforce Planning and Scholarship Unit is responsible for assessing and analysing the national workforce needs and to facilitate the administration of scholarships on behalf of the Fiji Government. This includes administering all local scholarship awards as well as liaising with overseas donor countries on their scholarship local and overseas awards.

The National Planning Office (NPO), in the Ministry of Finance and National Planning is primarily responsible for the formulation of overall national development policy, coordination of its implementation and evaluation of the results. The Human Resource Planning Section develops national policies on population, human resource development and utilisation, and coordinates its implementation in consultation with key stakeholders. It also advises the government on human resource planning and labour market issues. The NPO is responsible for development of a national HRD Plan and coordinates meetings of the Human Resource Planning Committee whose membership includes human resource managers/training officers from the NPO, PSC Scholarships Unit, Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts, Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Health, Women and Social Welfare, and the Fiji Employers Federation (FEF) as private sector representatives.

3.5 PSC Training Needs Assessment

The Fiji PSC has prepared a Training Needs Assessment for 2008-2012, in order to identify specific areas of training (by field and level of study) to meet demands in the local and overseas labour markets and to seek the Commission's approval to the study areas for the award of scholarships and short term courses funded by the Fiji Government and other donor funded awards under bilateral agreements with the Fiji Government. The PSC assessment was prepared in consultation with government ministries and departments, FEF, Fiji Nursing Association, Fiji Manufacturers Association, Fiji Bankers Association, Fiji Electricity Authority, Fiji Institute of Technology, Bureau of Statistics, National Planning Office, and all scholarship agencies in Fiji (PSC, 2008). Factors taken into account included the trainees currently on local and overseas awards, training requests by Departments/Ministries, FEF and the Fiji Nursing Association, expatriate staff and trends in the Public Service wastage levels, Fiji citizen emigration and Public Service retirement forecasts.

The PSC notes that this assessment (in Annex G) is based on training needs for the local as well as for the external market. The PSC summarises that the *“training programs will have to continue, however, to provide the skills supply in the professional and technical fields frequently affected by losses to the private sector and through emigration. Upgrading of middle and higher level management skills in the specialised professions will have to continue in order to keep up with technological developments. To address the high wastage levels, emphasis will have to continue in the health/medical sciences, education, engineering and the agriculture professional and technical areas.”*

Whilst this PSC needs assessment is a useful starting point for determining AusAID's scholarship priorities, it is not able to be used directly by AusAID because of its broad nature. The list also details education and training needs for both domestic and overseas employment by Fiji citizens, whereas AusAID's development focus currently provides scholarships for education for skills utilisation domestically for Fiji's development.

It is noted that the National Planning Office also has a Priority Areas of Training Needs Analysis for 2006-2008 (Annex H), which is also provided to Fijian government scholarship sponsors as input to their selection processes. It was not able to be ascertained how this list was derived nor whether it serves a significantly different purpose to the list prepared by the PSC.

3.6 Skills gaps faced by employers

Specific skills gaps (and surplus) identified by those interviewed in Fiji are listed in Annex I. The FEF and private sector alumni employers interviewed advised that entry-level positions were generally easiest to fill. As an example, the Fiji Islands Revenue and Collection Authority (FIRCA) advertised 13-17 lower level customer service positions and received 300 applications from diploma/bachelor level graduates. Employers said that having a base degree is just a stepping stone to in-house and work-related training. Applicant selection at the junior level is based not so much on the field of study undertaken but more on the grades achieved as an indicator of intelligence and aptitude for learning and hard work.

The FEF representative stated that at the upper level of management there is a shortage of Masters and PhD applicants, who have skills and business maturity to be able to think on their feet and make quick decisions. FIRCA advised that there were only six applications for a recently advertised Manager level position. The PSC representative indicated that there was a need for Masters and PhD trained

graduates to be able to fully participate in international meetings and to work with their international counterparts. Postgraduate alumni are also required to localise the 110 senior positions in the public service currently filled by expatriates (78% in the Ministry of Health, 8% in Works and Energy, 6% in Justice, 7% in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests and 1% in Trade and Consumer Affairs). Aside from Medical Officers, many of these expatriates are Civil Engineers. The PSC notes that *“Skills supply for the localisation of these positions in the immediate future will be sourced from in-service trainees undergoing specialist training at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level under sponsorship of our traditional donors (AusAID, NZAID) or the various other sponsoring agencies”* (Fiji Islands PSC, 2008).

The Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) finds difficulty in recruiting staff, with only 83 of 112 posts filled in their Distribution Department. Of these staff, only two have Bachelor of Electrical Engineering degrees. Last year FEA recruited all 25 of the graduates from the Diploma in Electrical Engineering program at the Fiji Institute of Technology to fill line mechanics positions. Where possible, FEA prefer to recruit staff trained at the Auckland University of Technology as they have found that USP Bachelor of Technology (Engineering) graduates do not have sufficient practical experience. The FEA pays higher than private sector organisations to be able to recruit staff. Their employees undergo an extensive training program and need to have at least one year's experience before they become useful in the workplace. Compounding their organisational difficulties is that once trained, the FEA electrical engineers have no problems migrating to Australia/NZ, where they are in high demand.

3.7 Sponsored Post-Secondary Education in Fiji

3.7.1 Government of Fiji Scholarships

There is already considerable donor, government and private sector funding of scholarships for post-secondary training of Fiji citizens in Fiji. For example, 39% of the 7000 Equivalent Full-time Students (EFTS) studying at USP in 2006 are sponsored. Of these sponsored students, 2,687 (45%) are sponsored by the Fiji Government, 52% by international donor agencies such as AusAID, NZAID Commonwealth Scholarships and others, with the remainder privately sponsored.

Government of Fiji funded scholarships are provided by the Public Service Commission, the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB), the Department of Multi-Ethnic Affairs. The FAB scholarship scheme has a budget of F\$8 million to fund over 2000 local and 40 overseas scholarships for both tertiary and seventh form education 40 overseas. The scholarships are awarded to students who have already proven themselves by completing four units of university study. The main objective of the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs' Scholarship Scheme is to assist students from poor and disadvantaged families of the Indian and minority communities in accessing tertiary education. Their 2008 budget of F\$4 million is expected to provide for more than 600 additional and on-going scholarships for study in Fiji and overseas for students whose parents/guardians joint gross annual income does not exceed \$10,000⁴. The Fiji PSC Scholarships had a 2006 budget of F\$3.6m for 490 partial scholarships for study in Fiji.

The number of Fiji citizens currently on Fiji Government and overseas donor award in 2007 (including secondary school scholarships) is shown in the table below. Of the 151 Fiji citizens overseas on scholarships in 2007, 67% are sponsored by Fiji Island government agencies.

⁴ It is noted that there is no similar income limits for the FAB and PSC scholarships. Narayan (2008)

Table 2: Fiji Citizens on Scholarship, 2007

Sectors	Trainees Currently on Award
Architecture / Building	56
Agriculture/Animal Husb./ Vet Science	127
Science/Mathematics	151
Health /Medical Sc	217
Arts/Humanities/Soc Sc	278
Information Systems/Computer Science	968
Law/Legal Studies	1280
Engineering/Surveying	2087
Education	3014
Business/Admin/Econ/Mngt/HR	3087

Source: PSC 2008

To ensure consistency between the Fiji Government scholarship schemes, in June 2008, the Fiji Cabinet approved the upgrading of the PSC scholarships to full scholarships. They also decided to harmonise the three government scholarship schemes so that meritorious students could be offered fully funded studies at approved training institutions. The Cabinet expects that this will increase the number of graduating students and assist government address gaps in the labour market in recent years. Once a single merit-based and transparent GoF scholarship scheme has been established and, as appropriate under the Fiji Engagement Framework, there would be alignment benefits in AusAID liaising with the relevant Scholarships Committee with respect to seeking advice regarding training priorities, particularly to avoid duplication or for AusAID to value add in the scholarships it provides.

3.7.2 Private Sector Funded Post-Secondary Educations

Focus group discussions with alumni and interviews with employers indicate a strong tradition of self-funded and employer funded investment in post-secondary education in Fiji. Many large Fijian employers have standard procedures for induction and value on-the-job training and study leave as retention tools. Employers have a range of study support schemes ranging from full or partial tuition fee reimbursements to study leave on part of full-time pay. An indicative case study of the structured training, including post-secondary scholarships, provided by large banking sector and multinational employers in Fiji is provided in Annex J. The Fiji Police provide leave with pay for staff members if the study program is relevant to their duties. Some Police officers also use loans from the Police Credit Union to undertake certificate training. The PSC also provides tuition fee support for public servants to take 1-2 units per semester at Fiji institutions.

Some Fijian private sector firms also provide scholarships for financially disadvantaged Form 7 or Foundation course students. For example, in 2008, Vodafone Fiji Limited provided forty scholarships for study at USP for degree programs in IT, Computer Science and Technology and for diploma courses at the

Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT), worth around \$0.5 million dollars. The scholarships will cover tuition and books fees for the duration of the program.⁵

3.7.3 Other donor scholarships

In addition to the AusAID scholarships, the PSC coordinates Cuba medical scholarships, Singapore, and UK Commonwealth scholarships. The NZAID Public scholarships are currently on hold due to the political situation in Fiji. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade is responsible for all Overseas Development Assistance and coordinates scholarships from other donors such as Japan and China. The Japanese government offers two scholarships to Fiji a year, including language training. In 2008, this included a scholarship at the Graduate School of Political Science at Waseda University for postgraduate studies in Media and Communication and a Teacher Training Scholarship in field of Artwork at the Graduate School of Education at Fukuoka University of Education.

3.8 AusAID's Engagement with Fiji

3.8.1 Fiji Engagement Framework, 2008-2010

AusAID's assistance to Fiji is governed by the guiding principles of partnerships, do no harm, donor harmonisation, gender, anti-corruption and regional cooperation. Australia's aid program in Fiji has traditionally sought strong partnerships with central government agencies, primarily through three large sectoral programs. The December 2006 coup and subsequent rules of engagement has led to a significant increase in collaboration with civil society, community groups and local government. The aid program will also remain closely integrated with Australian whole-of-government partners. A 2007 review of Australian bilateral assistance to Fiji recommended that a new country strategy be informed by analysis of Fiji's enduring social and economic problems and that it should lead to better focus within sector programs and clearer agreements with partner institutions over priorities. As a result, the overarching goal of AusAID's assistance through the 2008-2010 Fiji Engagement Framework is that the men and women of Fiji benefit from improved standards of living and governance. To achieve this, the aid program focuses on three pillars of building resilient communities, contributing to an enabling environment for good governance, and facilitating future economic growth.

3.8.2 ADS/ARDS Overview

ADS and ARDS are the two largest bilateral Australian scholarship schemes open to Fiji citizens. ADS and ARDS scholarship numbers and fields of study are determined annually as part of Australia's bilateral development assistance program to Fiji, as detailed in the Table below.

Table 3: Number and funding of new awards per year by scheme

Scheme	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
ADS	6	2	10	10	10
ARDS	40 (incl. 15 DFL)	24 (incl. 10 DFL)	24 (incl. 10 DFL)	30 (incl. 6 DFL)	30 (incl. 4 DFL)

Source: AusAID.

DFL = Distance and Flexible Learning

⁵ (<http://www.vodafone.com.fj/pages.cfm/general/about-us/media-releases-1/media-releases-08/aug-08.html>)

ADS awards are for study in Australia towards undergraduate, postgraduate or technical qualifications in study programs not available in the Pacific region. ADS provide Fiji citizens with tertiary qualifications in the governance, law and justice, health and education sectors which are unavailable in Fiji. ADS awards aim to create friendships and linkages between Australia and Fiji and promotes recognition of Australia as a regional education leader. There are ADS alumni in influential positions in the Fijian public and private sectors. Currently, 19 Fijian students are studying in Australia. The 2009 intake will be 10 students, with an estimated cost of A\$1 million.

ARDS awards are for study at selected education institutions in the Pacific region. ARDS awards for Fiji allow students to study in their home country with scholarship costs significantly lower than for study in Australia. ARDS provides Fiji citizens with tertiary qualifications in the governance, law and justice, health and education sectors. There are currently 97 Fiji ARDS students. The 2009 intake will be 30 awards, an increase of 20 per cent over 2008 with the contribution an estimated A\$1.4 million. Through the scholarships, the ARDS scheme also provides support to the regional institutions and encourages them to establish best-practice student services, especially at USP and the FSM, where the majority of ARDS awardees attend.

Australian regional or global scholarships available for Fiji citizens, among others, include the Australian Leadership Awards (ALAs), the Endeavour Awards and the APTC scholarships, which are funded and administered separately from the bilateral programs.

3.8.3 Merit-based and transparent selection and eligibility criteria

Fiji ADS and ARDS are offered in the open category only, with applications open to all sectors of the community. The South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) is contracted to undertake the eligibility checking and ranking of applications according to pre-determined criteria. Final selection is agreed at the Joint Scholarships Selection Committee (JSSC) meeting comprising members of the Fiji Government (represented by the PSC) and AusAID, although the final selection of awardees is the prerogative of AusAID.

There are three levels (technical/vocational, undergraduate, postgraduate), four categories of selection and equal numbers of males and females in each level and category are selected. The selection criterion with the greatest weight is that of the academic qualification, which carries an overall weighting of between 70-80% depending on the category. The selection also takes into account of the work experience and relevance to the proposed study, strengths of the references, and the quality of the written proposals by applicants. As candidates display a wide range of ages, qualification types, disciplines, and work experiences, the ranking process is not entirely without a degree of subjectivity. However, the use of set criteria for awarding points has reduced subjectivity to a minimum. None of the stakeholders interviewed in Fiji raised any issues with regard to the eligibility criteria and selection policies for the AusAID scholarships.

3.8.4 Priority Level/Fields of Study

AusAID has traditionally consulted with the Fiji PSC to agree areas of study for scholarships selection. Although the PSC asks individual Ministries for their long-term training plans, this process lacks robustness in terms of identifying skills gaps/surpluses and forward manpower planning for use in scholarship selection. The priority lists agreed have not varied much from year to year, with focus on health, education, finance/MBA, governance and engineering as shown in the tables below.

Table 4a: Number of Fiji ARDS Alumni (2005-2007) by Level and Field of Study

Field of Study	Level of Study			Total
	Diploma	Bachelor	Postgraduate	
Education		12	23	35
Engineering	18	1		19
Finance, Accounting and Commerce	8	16		24
Health	10	2	4	16
MBA			17	17
Gov/DevStudies/PA			13	13
Arts		11	9	20
Science	1	4	6	11
Law			3	3
Total	37	46	75	158

Source: SOFEA. 2005-2007 Fiji ARDS alumni

Table 4b: Number of Fiji ADS Alumni (2005-2007) by Level and Field of Study

Fiji ADS Field of Study	Level of Study				Total
	Adv. Diploma	Bachelor	PG Diploma	Masters	
Arts		1			1
Engineering		1			1
Finance, Accounting and Commerce		1		2	3
Gov/DevStudies/PA		1		2	3
Health		1	1	4	6
IT&T	2				2
Law				2	2
Science		2			2
Total	2	7	1	10	20

Source: SIMON. 2005-2007 Fiji ADS alumni

3.9 Pre-Award Effectiveness

3.9.1 Scholarship Advertisement

Advertising and shortlisting for the Fiji scholarships programs has been outsourced to SPBEA. The awards are advertised on Radio Fiji in both Fijian and Hindi and in the print media through a full-page AusAID scholarships advertisement in the Fiji Times newspaper, for multiple weeks. This advertisement campaign should be sufficient to reach all over Fiji, perhaps with the exception of poorer families in rural areas without ready access to this media. Preliminary application forms are therefore sent to all the nine District Education Offices in Fiji. No data was available on the onward distribution of these application forms to schools/potential applicants, although SPBEA could perhaps be asked to survey schools to check that they had received the relevant information on time. Even with this level of advertisement, many of the employer line managers and even a representative of a key government agency were not aware that AusAID were still providing scholarships to Fiji at this time. More publicity for the scheme throughout the year could include promotion of award completions to celebrate scheme success. The Tracer Survey respondents also had a number of recommendations with respect to advertising the scheme that are noted in Annex L, Table G.1.

Several stakeholders noted the need for improved school career counselling so that applicants are willing to consider courses that will lead to the growing range of employment opportunities in non-traditional areas (including TVET) rather than just applying for the traditional teaching, health and accounting courses. It is suggested that this be discussed further with the PSC and the Ministry of Education.

The scholarship advertisement attracts more than sufficient applicants (for the 2009 intake there were 2068 applications for 40 scholarships), however, 45% of these were invalid. Given the cost of assessing these applications, it is recommended that AusAID Suva consider ways to attract the right quality of applicant rather than quantity. A reduction in applications would also be achieved by AusAID more narrowly defining its scholarship objectives and the sectors/fields of study it will support for ADS/ARDS as discussed further in Section 3.13.

3.9.2 Access for all citizens

The scholarships advertisements encourage applications from all Fiji citizens. Awards are offered for technical/vocational training, undergraduate and postgraduate training from school leavers, those currently undertaking tertiary studies and those employed in the private and public sectors⁶. The SPBEA notes that the *“AusAID priority fields of study for the 2009 intake has a great influence on many in their choice of courses of study. For instance, many more police officers have applied for the police studies programs on offer at the USP, many science students are applying for undergraduate and postgraduate courses on environment related studies, and commerce and business applicants have chosen economics and international trade.”*

3.9.3 Gender access

AusAID has a well-established gender equity policy for its bilateral scholarship programs. There was gender balance in the proportion of male and female ADS/ARDS 2005-2007 Fiji alumni. There were, however, some gender differences in the studies undertaken. A higher proportion of female ARDS studied at FSM/FSN, whilst a higher proportion of male ARDS studied at FIT. This is also shown in the table below, with a higher proportion of male ARDS having undertaken engineering and MBA courses, with more female alumni having taken courses in Finance, Accounting, Commerce and Health. Given the smaller ADS award numbers, it is only able to note a higher proportion of males doing postgraduate health courses (which is not consistent with the pattern of award study at the ARDS undergraduate level).

⁶ Of the 2008 applications for the 2009 intake, 55% were from Category A - school leavers (Form 7/FDN), 12% from Category B - undertaking tertiary studies, and 19 % working in the Public Sector, 10% working in the private sector and 5% not working. Working applicants were categorised as to whether they have a tertiary qualification and have at least 5 years of work experience (Category C) or are without tertiary qualifications but have at least 10 years work experience (Category D). (SPBEA, 2008)

Table 5a: Number of Fiji ARDS Alumni (2005-2007) by Gender and Field of Study

ARDS Field of Study	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Education	16	19	35
Engineering	4	15	19
Finance, Accounting, Commerce	15	9	24
Gov/DevStudies/PA	6	7	13
Health	13	3	16
MBA	4	13	17
Arts	10	10	20
Science	8	3	11
Law	1	2	3
Total	77	81	158

Source: SOFEA. 2005-2007 Fiji ARDS Alumni

Table 5b: Number of Fiji ADS Alumni (2005-2007) by Gender and Field of Study

ADS Field of Study	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Arts	1		1
Engineering		1	1
Finance, Accounting, Commerce	2	1	3
Gov/DevStudies/PA	3		3
Health	1	5	6
IT&T	1	1	2
Law		2	2
Science		2	2
Total	8	12	20

Source: SOFEA. 2005-2007 Fiji ADS Alumni

3.10 On-Award Effectiveness

3.10.1 Completion rates

Whilst all of the 2005-2007 ADS alumni successfully completed their degree, only 92% of the 158 Fiji ARDS alumni passed their degree. This ARDS completion rate varied by level of study, with over 97% of diploma and bachelor level awardees successfully passing their course and only 85% of those doing postgraduate study successfully completing their courses. Many of the course failures are in the Masters of Education research course at USP undertaken through DFL. Given the difficulties that are experienced by ARDS awardees in undertaking the Masters of Education, it is recommended that AusAID review whether further awardees should be selected for this course until improvements are made to the course supervision and support.

A number of awards are also available for Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL), the majority of which are for study at USP. There are mixed benefits and difficulties experienced in DFL study. A USP representative commented that Fiji students preferred to undertake face-face education if at all possible. It is also recognised that it is difficult to do part-time study after a full-day at work, especially for those with family/community responsibilities. It allows, for example, public servants to study whilst remaining at work (particularly those involved as key development project

counterparts). It can also be a more convenient study mode for awardees (particularly female) with family commitments. The PSC and the majority of the larger private sector employers interviewed indicated that many of their employees were undertaking employer sponsored part-time studies at USP.

However, although twenty new ARDS DFL awards were allocated in 2007, AusAID experienced difficulty in attracting suitable candidates. As a result, only four new DFL awards were allocated for the 2009 intake. As DFL is available to employees through alternative means of (employer) support, AusAID may wish to consider whether the ARDS DFL scholarships are duplicating support otherwise available and whether or not it would be more efficient to simplify the scheme by not offering DFL in future years.

3.10.2 Study experience

Survey respondents were asked to rate various aspects of the institution where they did their training. Given the small sample sizes, and the nature of the question/responses, the following data shows the average response for both Fiji and Tuvalu respondents. Overall, there was a high level of satisfaction, although ADS respondents were more satisfied than ARDS respondents with their institution. Pacific institution quality will need to continue to be monitored carefully by AusAID, including through the annual performance management discussions with the contracted institutions (USP Suva and FSM).

One of the rationales often expressed for offering scholarships to Pacific institutions is that the education and training provided is said to be more relevant to employment situations in the Pacific than the training undertaken in Australia. However ADS and ARDS Fiji alumni rated equally highly the relevance of their course focus to the realities in their home country. Further analysis should be undertaken on this issue in future tracer surveys with larger sample sizes.

Table 6: Satisfaction with Institution (Fiji and Tuvalu survey respondents)

Satisfaction with Institution	ADS	ARDS	Grand Average
Lecturers/tutors	4.5	3.9	4.0
Support from the student services office	4.5	3.6	3.8
Course materials	4.2	3.9	3.9
Teaching methods	4.2	3.9	3.9
Assessment methods	4.3	3.7	3.9
Connection between the realities in my country and the course focus	4.0	4.0	4.0
Access to experts in my field	4.3	3.8	3.9
Research capacity	4.5	3.7	3.9
Class sizes	4.6	3.6	3.8
Library facilities	4.7	3.6	3.8
Classroom facilities	4.6	3.5	3.8
Recreational facilities	4.7	3.4	3.7
The institution overall	4.7	3.9	4.1
Number in sample	11	38	49

Source: Tracer Survey, Fiji and Tuvalu respondents (Annex L, Table C.1)

Scale: 1 unsatisfactory to 5 very good

Survey respondents were also asked to what extent the study/training assisted in the development of their skills. Whilst for each skill type in Table 7 below there was a reported high level of increase in skills for both ADS/ARDS alumni, ADS respondents reported more development of their skills than ARDS respondents. The reasons for this difference are likely to be related to the higher satisfaction that ADS alumni reported for the services provided by the institution as indicated in the above table. If required, this difference could be tested by asking a supplementary question in future surveys as to areas where institution services and teaching could be improved.

Table 7: Average skills developed during study (Fiji survey respondents)

Skills Development	ADS	ARDS	Grand Average
Professional knowledge and skills	4.7	4.4	4.4
English language skills	4.5	4.1	4.2
Cross-cultural skills/people skills/team work	4.4	4.4	4.4
Communication skills	4.5	4.2	4.3
Leadership skills	4.2	4.2	4.2
Analytical skills	4.5	4.2	4.3
Research skills	4.5	4.2	4.3
Computer skills	4.5	4.0	4.1
Work/thinking independently	4.7	4.4	4.5

Source: Tracer Survey, Fiji and Tuvalu respondents (Annex L, Table C.2)

Scale: 1 - not at all to 5 - very much

A summary of the recommendations made by the surveyed alumni for each of the scholarships stages is provided in Annex K.

3.10.3 Benefit of studies

Survey respondents were asked how they would rate the benefits of their study/training. A broad range of significant benefits were experienced by both the ADS and ARDS alumni. Given the sample sizes, significant differences were experienced for ADS benefits of “development of useful contacts”, “establishment of links with Australia”, “development of links with other awardees”. Lesser benefits (with an average rating of 3.5 and below) were indicated for increased income, ability to lead reform in your country, establishment of links with Australia (ARDS), development of links with other awardees (ARDS).

Table 8: Average work-related benefits of study (Fiji survey respondents)

Scholarship type	ADS	ARDS	Grand Average
Benefits of Study			
Gain ideas/knowledge that are useful in your job	4.5	4.3	4.4
Development of useful contacts during the study period	4.6	4.1	4.3
Improvement in your confidence about performing your work	4.8	4.5	4.6
Higher progression in the same job	3.9	4.1	4.0
New professional opportunities	4.5	4.3	4.4
Opportunity to contribute to your country's development	4.5	4.3	4.4
Higher mobility across jobs	4.0	3.7	3.8
Ability to effect positive change and innovation in your workplace	4.3	4.3	4.3
Increased income	3.5	3.6	3.6
Greater credibility from peers	4.5	4.3	4.3
Recognition from your employer for your enhanced skills and knowledge	4.3	4.0	4.0
Establishment of links with Australia	4.8	2.8	3.3
Development of links with other awardees	3.8	3.0	3.2
Ability to lead reform in your country	3.5	3.4	3.4
Number in sample	8	21	29

Source: Tracer Survey Annex L, Table F.1

Scale: 1 - not at all to 5 - very much

Other benefits specified by alumni (Annex L, Table F.1) included:

- “First local to gain Masters degree in this field and an expatriate is in charge at the moment”
- “I was able to build contact with international organisation and identify alternative health financing options in Fiji. Currently in the process of doing collaborative research with UQ in health financing”

- “Able to upgrade my qualification until Post Graduate and now doing Masters in Arts (education)”
- “Awarded another scholarship from supervisor at the Australian University”.

Employers and focus group alumni were asked as to any perceived differences in the quality of courses/institutions in the region compared to those in Australia. The majority of the employers interviewed considered that alumni from Australian institutions had better “soft-skills”, including English language competence, greater confidence to be able to fully utilise their skills, to be assertive and to influence their colleagues and superiors and greater willingness to try new approaches to their work. The FEF representative advised that employers noticed a difference in confidence with Australian graduates who have had a broader educational experience than a more text-book approach with Pacific based education. Similar perceptions were expressed by the Telecom Fiji Limited representative who said that students trained in Australia perform a little better with less direction. The PSC representative said that those trained overseas are more confident, better able to mix with others ask questions and engage in free discussion.

The Fiji alumni interviewed in the focus groups mentioned a number of benefits of their studies including acquiring technical skills, networking, increased confidence, improved communication skills and better understanding of issues in their field of work. This was confirmed by the survey respondents who reported a wide range of personal benefits from their scholarship. However more ADS alumni (75%) experienced the personal benefits of personal satisfaction, communication skills or being seen as a role model for others in the community than did ARDS alumni (less than 50%).

Table 9: Number of awardees listing the following personal benefits from award (Fiji survey respondents)

Personal Benefits	Fiji		
	ADS	ARDS	Total
Advanced my skills generally	8	18	26
Gained confidence	8	13	21
Increased personal satisfaction with myself	7	11	18
Greater satisfaction with my professional work life	7	16	23
Improved communication skills	7	10	17
Seen as a role model for others in the community	6	9	15
<i>Number in sample</i>	8	21	29

Source: Tracer Survey Annex L, Table F.7.

3.10.4 Impact on workplace while awardee away

Given the relatively size of the workplaces in Fiji (compared to other Pacific countries), and the expectation that there will be absences of staff for training and regular turnover for migration, the private sector employers interviewed did not report any difficulties with managing activities while the alumni were away. As only a small number of public sector line managers were interviewed during the Study, it is not possible to say whether the Fiji public sector experienced difficulties due to absent alumni.

It is noted however, that the 2006 Report of the Auditor General found that the three Principal Economic Planning Officers of the NPO were all on overseas scholarships at the same time from 2006-2008. The Auditor-General report states that “*The Department’s decision and endorsement for the 3 Principal Economic Planning Officers to proceed on study leave simultaneously is not considered prudent and could impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations.*”

The Ministry of Finance's response was that *"the scholarship awards from FAB and from NZAID's were awarded to the officers after direct applications by them. They were chosen on their merits and the Department was then advised. As such the Department had no choice except to release the officers."* Albeit only one example, this points to the need for careful sequencing of training activities by employers and better coordination and consultation between scholarship donors.

3.11 Post-Award Effectiveness

3.11.1 Return to Fiji

As a condition of their scholarship, awardees must remain in their home country to take up a position that utilises their education for a minimum period of two years. Departure from Australia is strictly controlled by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Anecdotal evidence is that the vast majority of ADS alumni return to Fiji at the end of their award. Australian visa control procedures mean that permanent migration to Australia within the two year period is able to be strictly enforced. There are however no measures in place to stop the movement of AusAID trained alumni to other countries, such as to New Zealand and the United States. It is therefore recommended that Australia develop a immigration mechanism with New Zealand to prevent AusAID and NZAID alumni migrating from Fiji to Australia or New Zealand before the end of their two year embargo period.

3.11.2 Alumni Expectations

The survey respondents were asked for their main reason for doing the study/training. Eight of the 29 Fiji respondents said it was to get extra skills for their job, six respondents said it was to get a better job or promotion, six respondents said it was to get a job and five respondents said it was to improve their general educational skills. 86% of the respondents felt that their main reason for doing the study/training has been achieved, and none said that it had not (Annex L, Table B.7).

89% of the Fiji alumni surveyed stated that they would recommend their study to others. Those who would not recommend the study stated that "Promotion in Fiji does not come with qualifications especially in the public sector where years of practice etc are still a deciding factor", and "There is currently no employment" (Annex L, Table B.8).

3.11.3 Employment/Reintegration to workforce

Of the 29 Fiji alumni surveyed, only two had not yet found work on completion of their award. One of the ARDS alumni is undertaking voluntary work in her field of study, physiotherapy, at the Ministry of Health pending paid employment (after completing her award in 2006). The delay in confirming paid employment, despite the section having more than one budgeted headcount vacancy was allegedly due to communication problems between the Ministry and the PSC. The other ARDS awardee undertook a Bachelor of Applied Science degree and has not been able to find relevant work in her field of study (after completing her award in 2007). The following table shows that 52% of the Fiji respondents returned to the same employee/organisation on completion of their award, 34% started looking for their first job in the workforce (pre-service), and 14% left their previous employer and moved to a new organisation.

Table 10: Alumni employment on return to Fiji (Fiji survey respondents)

Employment on return		Total
Left my previous organisation	Moved to a different organisation	4
Returned to the same employer/organisation	Assumed new responsibilities	6
	Promoted to a new position	7
	Remained in same job position	3
Started seeking my first job in the workforce	Started seeking my first job in the workforce	9
Fiji Total		29

Source: Tracer Survey, Annex L, Table D.1

Apart from the above mentioned two respondents who have not yet found employment, 82% of the Fiji respondents found work within six months after award completion (Annex L, Table D.4). 87.5% of Fiji respondents said that their study/training was absolutely necessary or helped a lot in finding them employment (Annex L, Table D.4). Only one respondent (6.25%) reported that the study didn't help at all in finding employment. The majority of the focus group participants similarly reported that they did not find difficulty in finding work on completion of their studies.

It is noted that caution should be used in the extrapolation of the employment related data as given the Fiji tracer survey and focus group alumni may not be a representative sample and are perhaps more likely to be employed and living in Fiji than those who were not able to be contacted by AusAID Suva, many of whom were contacted through their work email addresses.

3.11.4 Current employment

ADS/ARDS graduates are in strong demand, with both the FEF and the PSC requesting that AusAID advise them in advance when awardees are nearing degree completion, so that they can be approached by employers. Of the Fiji survey respondents, 93% were in employment at the time of the survey. 46% of the respondents were employed in the public sector, 32% in the private sector and 18% at educational institutions. None of these respondents were working at International/Regional Non-Profit Organisation, Multilateral Aid Agency, Foreign Embassy/Consulate or were a Self Employed/Consultant (Annex L, Table E.1). As may be expected for graduate roles, 66% of Fiji survey respondents were employed in corporate service, middle management or higher (Annex L, Table E.2). It is noted that 30% of the employed Fiji respondents are not in permanent positions, particularly those working in educational institutions (Annex L, Table E.3).

Table 11: Level of current job (Fiji survey respondents)

Level of the job	Total
Administrative support/clerical	2
Service delivery to the general public	5
Corporate Services (HR, Finance, IT)	3
Middle Management (eg. Division Head, Lecturer)	6
Professional Staff (eg. Accountant, Doctor)	8
Senior Management (eg. General Manager)	1
Other	2
Total	27

Source: Tracer Study, Annex L, Table E.2

3.11.5 *Relevance of education and skills*

The majority of Fiji survey respondents indicated that their study/training was highly relevant to their job (88% of ADS and 81% of ARDS), with none saying that it was of very little or no relevance. Of the twenty focus group participants, only two were employed in areas different from their training. One was a bachelor level environmental science lab technician who couldn't find work in a related area. Another was a diploma level aeronautical engineer, who is currently working as an automotive engineer doing car repairs because family financial commitments meant that he could not afford to remain on the aeronautical engineer apprenticeship wage.

Whilst the majority of Fiji ADS/ARDS survey respondents (61%) thought their studies were highly relevant in addressing Fiji's priority development needs, some 32% thought their course of study were only of some relevance and 7% reported it was of very little relevance (Annex L, Table F.5). In terms of meeting the overall development objectives of scholarships, the proportion of alumni (39%) who felt their studies was only of some or very little relevance, seems high. This finding should be further analysed on a larger sample size in the next tracer survey. Possible explanations for this finding are that it might indicate the need for AusAID to more closely target the Fiji scholarship selection policies to clear development objectives. Alternatively, it may indicate the need for awardees to have a clearer understanding as to their role in their country's development (whether in the public or private sector).

3.11.6 *Impact on workplace*

In the short-term, it is essential for capacity development that alumni have the opportunity and incentive to use, adapt and transfer their new knowledge and skills after their scholarship. The impact that new alumni make to the workplace in the year after graduation is demonstrated through the employer's recognition and utilisation of the training undertaken by the awardee. The Study found that overall both alumni and employers felt that the alumni's skills had been utilised and that the alumni had made a positive impact on their workforce. Despite this, some alumni reported difficulties in applying their new knowledge and skills in their current job.

Of the 15 Fiji survey respondents who returned to their previous employer, only 13% remained in the same position, with the vast majority being promoted to a new position or given new responsibilities (Annex L, Table D.1). The majority of the focus group alumni were satisfied that their skills were being utilised, and gave examples of how they had used their knowledge on their return and reported that they had been given increased responsibilities and managerial duties or promotions and the opportunity to train others. One alumni did however state that her employer was not aware that she had completed her postgraduate degree and that even if they knew, they were unlikely to provide special opportunities to utilise her new skills.

The FEF representative said that graduates are put under a lot of pressure to succeed and to take up senior management positions. All of the Fiji employers interviewed provided positive examples of how the new skills of their alumni employees were directly utilised in the workforce, often through special projects. The TFL representative said that he tried to give new graduates projects to challenge them. One of the alumni was, for example, given a project to modernise the IT area's business processes, which involved working cooperatively with a range of stakeholders including vendors and lawyers. As recognition of this work, the alumni was given the opportunity to present their recommendations to the TFL Board for higher level exposure. The Fiji Police also recognise significant benefits of staff studying in the Bachelor of Policing program at USP and are keen to see the program continued. One alumni at Quest was using his Accounting degree skills as a Statutory Reporting Officer, ensuring ANZ activities comply with Australia and Fiji

regulations. The Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) reported high levels of satisfaction with their scholarship graduate from FIT, with career plans being developed for him to undertake further study and to make a significant contribution to the FEA in future years.

Survey respondents were asked what difficulties (if any) they had experienced in applying their new knowledge and skills in their current job. A significant number of Fiji ADS respondents reported difficulty caused through resistance from their employer/colleagues, lack of required equipment and different working practices/styles. Fiji ARDS respondents reported difficulty in their working environment and different working practices/styles (Annex L, Table F.3v). Whilst alumni can be given skills to minimise resistance from colleagues/employers, this reported lack of required equipment (by 62.5% of ADS respondents) is of concern as it significantly reduces the effectiveness of the ADS study/training (especially compared to that of ARDS where only 14% reported the same difficulty). This finding needs to be verified by a larger sample size in the next Fiji Tracer Survey.

3.11.7 Impact on civil society

An important area of development impact is the extent to which alumni make use of their skills in civic life or to benefit their communities. This includes taking on leadership roles for not-for-profit organisations, media, church, professional associations and community based organisations. Four of the eight Fiji ADS surveyed reported utilising their skills with community/NGOs and two with local government/provincial/island councils. None reported utilising skills with church organisations. Of the 21 ARDS respondents, six utilised their skills in Church organisations, ten in community/NGOs and two in local government/provincial/ island councils. Other respondents gave examples of using their scholarship skills to “provide advice and litigation on a pro bono basis for those who cannot afford legal services”, to “publish in a local general practitioner journal on the importance of understanding health economics” and by “advising rural community students on the importance of studies” (Annex L, Table F.6v).

3.11.8 Staying in Fiji

In the context of scholarships, sustainability is the extent to which the skills learnt continue to be used after the end of the scholarship. A major limitation to sustainability is the length of time that alumni continue to be employed in Fiji after their two year embargo period, particularly when as an unintended outcome of the scholarships, there is enhanced ability for the qualified Fiji alumni to work overseas rather than remaining in Fiji. Survey respondents were asked how likely it is that they will work in Fiji for the next five years. One third of those who responded to this question stated they were not likely to remain working in Fiji for the next five years. There were no significant variations in response to this question by employer type, scholarship type, or level of study (Annex L, Table F.9).

Table 12: Likelihood to remain working in Fiji in five years time (Fiji survey respondents)

Scholarship type	Not likely at all	Not very likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely	(blank)	Don't know	Grand Total
ADS		2	2	2		2	8
ARDS	1	5	2	10	2	1	21
Fiji Total	1	7	4	12	2	3	29

Source: Annex L, Table F.9

Factors that alumni reported as influencing their decision to leave their home country included external factors, such as the current political situation, the economy and job market, as well as perceptions of increased employment and educational opportunities in other countries, particularly Australia. Alumni were more likely to

remain in their home country if they had job satisfaction, family and friendship ties or they worked in a field where they felt they could make a contribution (Annex L. Table F.10).

3.11.9 Employer retention strategies

Private sector employers reported significant and ongoing loss of their trained employees to overseas employment. For example, TFL says that they have 150 staff and 60% are tertiary graduates with 40% FIT diplomas. Ten TFL staff (mainly network engineers after 2 years experience) went overseas in the last year. The Fiji Development Bank said that over the last six months they have lost 20 out of 50-60 staff working in the Treasury Operations, 80% of whom have migrated to Australia. In an Asian Development Bank study, one company manager said: "We are like a training camp for Australia and NZ. As soon as someone is skilled enough, they leave. Hence constant upskilling is required" (Voigt-Graf, 2006).

FIRCA have around 100 staff in the Corporate Services section. Retention of staff is a problem for this section, especially of IT staff. FIRCA have a training plan based on training needs analysis for individual staff and section as a whole, with staff reimbursed for post-secondary study taken outside of work. When staff members have successfully completed 70% of the course, they are entitled to take full-time study leave to complete the remainder of the course. When they have completed their degrees they get an immediate salary increase and promotion as soon as possible (subject to a position being available). The FIRCA representative said very few people fail their extra-mural study, except for those with problems of personal circumstances. FIRCA staff also receive scholarship opportunities from the Government of Fiji, World Bank and JICA.

In large private sector organisations, retention strategies are to offer on-going training, interesting projects to work on and market competitive salaries (some comparable with Australia in terms of buying power). For example, Quest promote themselves as "Best Employer with induction, training, retention strategies. Many of the private sector employers gave examples of non cash benefits such as internet, professional publication subscriptions, conference, family schooling etc. Such incentives are unable to be matched by the public sector or smaller private sector employers.

Even with these incentives, staff loss is a significant challenge for Fiji employers. Employers reported that they were most likely to lose both degree qualified male and female employees between ages of 25-35, and that those who want to stay are typically older and have strong family associations, businesses and other commitments. Three of the thirty-five staff in the Quest Finance Division have migrated in the past year. Multi-national organisations try to arrange placements for migrating staff in their own/affiliated companies in Australia and NZ, so that there is not an overall skills loss to the organisation.

Many employers therefore recruit staff at base (diploma) levels and train-up, or train their middle-level managers, many of whom are not as degree qualified as their younger staff but less likely to leave. The Colonial Bank for example, have a higher level of trained staff at lower levels (50% diploma and 50% bachelor) than at middle management level where there are older staff with less training. Middle to upper management often study the MBA at USP, a valued degree in Fiji. A Colonial Bank representative said that the MBA improves communication and confidence, with staff more willing to take on new challenges. The Colonial Bank continue to lose up to 16 staff a year to overseas employment and said that it can't compete with overseas salaries but do match local competitor salaries. As well as an in-house training scheme, the Bank has a study leave scheme to encourage retention. On degree

completion, the Bank sends staff a congratulatory letter and prepares or updates a Personal Development Plan that is incorporated into the Bank's succession plan, although there is not automatic promotion, as a place may not always be available.

Smaller companies with less than 50 employees experience even more severe difficulties in retaining staff because of their inability to pay market rate salaries, and turnover as graduates leave to work with larger organisations or emigrate. Their retention strategy is therefore to recruit at diploma level and train in-house.

3.11.10 *Two year embargo period*

Almost all persons consulted in Fiji considered that the AusAID two year scholarships embargo before alumni can return to Australia to be important and should be continued in order for Fiji to benefit from the alumni utilising and transferring their skills. Most private and public sector employers also require their sponsored employees to be bonded to their organisation for an equivalent to the number of years that they have had paid study leave (typically longer than the two year AusAID embargo). Although not many employees break their bond, some employers said they had experienced cases where overseas employers are happy to re-pay several times the value of the bond to secure the employee immediately.

Whilst the focus group and stakeholders expressed some sympathy for any alumni who could not find work in Fiji, they considered that there was likely to only be a relatively small number disadvantaged in this way and that therefore the principle of the embargo should be maintained by AusAID. Focus group participants did however express some confusion as to the exact terms of the AusAID embargo and when the embargo period finished. Some requested that the two year wait should be up to the date of grant of Australian permanent residence not application date.

3.11.11 *Links with Australia*

The experience of living and studying in Australia does appear to directly correlate to a strengthened link the ADS alumni feel to Australia. Of the eight ADS survey respondents, all mentioned substantial links with friends in Australia and seven mentioned substantial links with their former university. However only one of the eight Fiji ADS respondents reported maintaining links with the Australian community.

Of the 21 ARDS alumni surveyed, perhaps not surprisingly, none reported links with Australian communities. 12 had links with their Fiji university, and 12 with friends. Only 7 of the 21 ARDS respondents reported links with students from other countries. As USP is a regional institution with students from all the Pacific countries, this figure might have been expected to be higher, but is perhaps not unsurprising given that the Fiji alumni are likely to already have existing friendship links with other Fiji students at the institution (Annex L, Table A.2).

3.11.12 *Alumni Associations*

AusAID recognises that while scholarships provide a means of supporting growth in the region, it is also important to build enduring links at the individual, institutional and country levels. An alumni network plays an important role towards achieving this and it is also essential to the post-award re-entry and re-integration process for the scholar. To date, AusAID Fiji has had limited alumni activities although it did maintain informal contact with alumni through invitations to High Commission events on an ad-hoc basis and use of alumni in scholarships related activities such as pre-departure briefings. The AusAID ASG is facilitating the development of an alumni network with a pilot program including Fiji. A database of alumni is currently under development by AusAID Suva, which will form the basis of activities for the Fiji Chapter.

The alumni network will also prove useful to AusAID in facilitating contact with alumni to monitor and evaluate the impact and scholarships effectiveness (such as through tracer surveys) and to act as a consultative group to provide input to discussions of matters relevant to Fiji's development needs.

All the alumni contacted welcomed the establishment of a Fiji Alumni association and considered that it would provide valuable social, professional development (through access to professional journals) and networking activities. The focus group participants said that they would be interested in attending an annual professional seminar including topics such as influencing skills, leadership, governance etc.

3.12 Overall assessment of Fiji ADS/ARDS effectiveness

3.12.1 Contribution to the human resource needs in support of Fiji's long-term development

The contribution of the 2005-2007 ADS/ARDS alumni to Fiji's long-term development is not able to be fully assessed due to the small proportion of the total cohort (16%) able to be contacted and included in this Study. Given the labour context in Fiji where there is both unemployment and high emigration rates, it is thought that the alumni not able to be contacted are more likely than the survey respondents to be either unemployed in Fiji or to have emigrated. It is therefore recommended that a subsequent tracer survey be conducted/repeated when a larger and more representative sample of Fiji alumni are able to be contacted.

Notwithstanding this, the above analysis indicates that the ADS/ARDS scholarships provided to the Fiji 2005-2007 alumni cohort able to be contacted in the Tracer Study have, in the immediate years after award completion, overall contributed to human resource development in support of Fiji's long-term development. Of the alumni surveyed:

- awardees have been selected and undertaken their studies according to broad HRD needs of Fiji;
- there is a relatively high completion rate of studies (92% of ARDS and 100% of ADS for the total alumni cohort);
- there is a high rate of return to Fiji by the ADS alumni;
- the majority reported that their study/training was highly relevant to their job (88% of ADS and 81% of ARDS), with none saying that it was of very little or no relevance;
- the majority have experienced significant personal and professional benefits from their studies;
- a significant proportion have used their skills and knowledge to the benefit of civic society;
- the majority have had their skills recognised through promotions, increased responsibility or finding work; and
- all have remained in Fiji for at least two years (as required under the scholarship return to Australia embargo).

In addition, the alumni are working in private sector organisations supporting economic growth and in public sector providing services to the community (especially in education and health). Alumni and employers alike state that the skills and knowledge gained from the scholarship have been utilised in the workplace.

There are however a number of limiting factors to the long-term development impact of the Fiji alumni. Despite an overall reporting of skills utilisation by alumni, a significant number of Fiji ADS respondents reported difficulty caused through lack of required equipment and different working practices/styles. The sustainability of development outcomes from the scholarships is also likely to be affected by high

rates of emigration by the technically and professionally qualified alumni. This is validated by employers' substantiation of the loss of qualified staff from their workplace and the one third of those alumni surveyed who said that they were likely or highly likely to leave Fiji within five years.

3.12.2 *Poverty Alleviation*

Current Fiji scholarships selection processes do not reflect rural, socio-economic, location or physical disadvantage factors. ADS/ARDS awards are mainly awarded to those from urban locations. Of the Fiji survey respondents, 75% went to secondary school in Suva, Nadi, Nausori or Lautoka (Annex L, Table A.2) and 93% are currently working in an urban area (Annex L, Table A.2).

Whilst an objective to provide scholarships to Fiji citizens with financial disadvantage would have strong policy coherence with the Fiji Engagement Framework objectives and higher level AusAID policies, there is insufficient situational (economic, education and employment) analysis on which to reliably target the disadvantaged at this stage. Providing scholarships to Fiji citizens from (poorer) rural/outer island areas, so that they have greater access to livelihood opportunities, would also not necessarily mean that these alumni return to these areas on award completion (although it may mean increased household earnings for their families) as Fiji employers highlighted the difficulties and incentives needed to encourage trained employees to (return to) work in rural/remote areas.

It is suggested that the feasibility of inclusion of disadvantage-related criteria in future scholarship selection be reviewed when there is additional data/analysis available from any of the Framework initiatives and/or when there are any changes to the inclusion of financial criteria in the Fiji Government scholarships.

The effectiveness of the current ADS/ARDS contribution to the elimination of poverty in Fiji would be improved however by:

- education and training leading to a better resourced and skilled public service with greater focus on service delivery to poor communities;
- targeting awards to industries in economic growth areas with the best prospect of stimulating economic and job growth (particularly in the Outer Islands);
- increasing the awareness of scholarship opportunities in islands outside of Viti Levu; and
- providing scholarships to up skill civil society employees supporting services for the youth and disadvantaged of Fiji.

3.12.3 *Achievement of country program objectives*

The 2005-2007 alumni in this study were awarded scholarships on the basis of broad HRD needs (across a range of fields of study including health, education, finance/MBA, governance and engineering) as agreed with the Fiji PSC. The majority of the alumni surveyed are now employed in a work area related to their studies.

More recently, AusAID has selected awardees for areas of study that are common to the partner government lists and to AusAID sectors of bilateral cooperation. Although selected prior to the current Fiji Engagement Framework, the 2005-2007 Fiji alumni are broadly contributing to its pillar of facilitating future economic growth with 54% of the tracer survey respondents now working in and increasing the capacity of the public sector and 31% working in key areas in the private sector. It is also noted that some 32% of the alumni have completed health or education degrees, although it was not able to be assessed as to whether they are working to directly support the pillar of building a resilient community.

The contribution of the 2005-2007 Fiji alumni to achievement of the current Framework objectives is summarised in the table below.

Framework Pillar	Objectives	ARDS/ADS support of objective
Building resilient communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men and women in selected rural and economically disadvantaged areas have greater access to livelihood opportunities Communities in targeted areas have better access to quality health and education services Regional and national institutions and communities have improved capacity to plan for and manage possible impacts of climate change and disasters Robust data to measure progress towards the MDGs available by 2010, particularly the health and education targets 	<p>There is gender equity in the ADS/ARDS scheme but neither have explicit criteria for selection of applicants with rural/ economic disadvantage. There is widespread publicity for the scholarships, but no evidence whether this is (or is not) reaching these groups.</p> <p>57 (or 32%) of the 2005-2007 alumni have studied health or education degrees and are likely to be working in that sector.</p> <p>The Tracer Study did not collect or analyse any data regarding climate change and disasters or the collection of directly MDG-related data.</p>
Encouraging a return to democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the election of a civilian government in March 2009 Greater awareness of civic and governance issues resulting in increased debate, scrutiny of national institutions and public demand for accountability and improved service delivery 	<p>No data was collected in the Study that indicated that ADS/ARDS alumni were (or were not) contributing to a return to democracy</p>
Facilitating future economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for long term economic growth are identified and supported as appropriate Opportunities to build the capacity of the public service are identified by mid-2009 	<p>54% of the Fiji Tracer Survey respondents are working in the public sector. 31% are working in the private sector.</p> <p>57 (or 32%) the 2005-2007 alumni have studied health or education degrees and are likely to be delivering social service in that sector</p>

3.13 Key Recommendations for the Fiji ADS/ARDS Scholarships Schemes

3.13.1 Fiji ADS/ARDS Objectives

AusAID ASG recommend that, where appropriate, scholarship objectives be integrated more closely with the relevant Country Program Strategy so as to be able increase their 'synergistic' effect to increase their effectiveness and to more readily measure their impact at the institutional level. This is also consistent with the growing trend for aid to be focused on 'bigger, fewer, deeper, longer' approaches, which in the case of scholarships would mean that award funding be concentrated on a smaller number of targeted areas to develop a critical mass of skills expertise with which to effect long-term change and sustainability of outcomes.

A successful targeting approach relies on accurate national planning, human resource development and labour market analyses linked to a country's social and economic development needs, which does not yet exist in Fiji. The Fiji Engagement Framework indicates that AusAID will work with the Fiji PSC to map workforce planning requirements and identify capacity gaps. With any revised scholarship targeting, care needs to be taken, especially for any specialist training that there will be relevant public/private sector employment opportunities on award completion.

It is recommended that AusAID adopt the following interim objectives for the Fiji ADS/ARDS schemes as a more effective mode of support to the Fiji Engagement Framework pillars of building resilient communities, contributing to an enabling environment for good governance, facilitating future economic growth in Fiji. It is noted that these interim scholarships objectives are broadly framed prior to further analysis and consultation with both relevant Australian and Fiji government departments and stakeholders.

Objective 1: ADS and ARDS increase the number of Fiji public servants with relevant post-secondary education and training in priority areas

Awards are currently made under this objective on advice from the PSC as to public sector training priorities. It is suggested that AusAID and the PSC agree a smaller number of government departments where AusAID can focus and most add-value from their scholarships program⁷. Under this objective, over time, AusAID would award an increasing proportion of the scholarships to Fiji departments where there are specific country program (or the equivalent) initiatives or to Fiji departments working with other Australian Government partners⁸. Indicatively, a long list of priority fields of study might include specialist health and education, engineering, agriculture, land management and valuation, economic analysis, meteorology, climate change, forestry and fisheries, biosecurity and statistics. The AusAID Pacific Governance Support Program will provide capacity building opportunities to the junior, middle and senior levels of the public sector in Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The analysis undertaken for this Program should also prove useful in providing more specific guidance as to the post-secondary training priorities of the Fiji public service.

⁷ This should be acceptable to PSC as staff in other Government departments would still be able to access training opportunities through other (GoF and AusAID) scholarships.

⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on support for elections and regional organisations; Treasury in economic analysis; the Bureau of Meteorology on climate change; ACIAR on productive farming systems, sustainable management of forestry and fisheries, and biosecurity; the Australian Electoral Commission on elections support; and the Office of National Assessments with research and analysis. Australian government project staff should be encouraged to support the nomination of suitable Fiji citizen candidates (with strong academic/technical ability and development orientation) for scholarships.

Objective 2: ADS and ARDS increase the skilled workforce as critical to improved economic growth in Fiji

Given the sizeable number of Fiji Government scholarships available for post-secondary training, AusAID could concentrate its support to a narrow range of employment sectors, so as to maximise impact and to be able to assess its contribution to economic growth in the selected industry(s). Selection of the industries to target would be guided by work under the Framework to identify economic growth opportunities. Under this objective, awards could be given to employees in the textiles, clothing and footwear (TCF) industry, to be supported under the Framework. In the meantime, further consultation with the Fiji Employers Federation would help prioritise the training needed to meet critical private sector skills gaps. Where possible, the AusAID scholarships should minimise duplication of training opportunity funded by the Fiji Government or the private sector.

Objective 3: ADS and ARDS increase the skilled workforce in civil society organisations

Under this objective, ADS/ARDS would be provided primarily to employees in civil society/NGOs with mandates for promoting good governance through democracy, transparency and accountability or for promoting self-reliance and income-generating activities to help build resilient communities in Fiji. Where appropriate, awards might also be made to staff of relevant government units and to pre-service students wanting to work in the civil society sector. The organisations and fields of study to be targeted could be developed with advice from the Australian Civil Society Support Program and the Fiji Public Service Commission, but might include for example, fields of study such as governance, development planning, forensic accounting, auditing, agriculture and fisheries and journalism.

3.13.2 Relative number of ARDS/ADS

There are a number of advantages for providing scholarships for education and training in Fiji (ARDS) compared with in Australia (ADS). The per person award cost (tuition fees, airfares and living costs) of in-country study in Fiji is significantly cheaper than comparable costs for study in Australia. For example, the average cost of an ADS award to study a Bachelor's degree in Australia is A\$130,00 compared to A\$56,820 for an equivalent course at USP in Fiji. An ADS Masters degree costs an average A\$85,00 compared with A\$21,000 at USP.

Scholarships for study in Fiji rather than Australia also have other benefits. The education and training provided in Fiji is directly relevant to the Fiji workplace as it is based around current resources, technologies, work practices and challenges that are able to be utilised. Pacific institution alumni are able to find work in Fiji, their skills are of benefit to their organisation and their qualifications are recognised for further education in many overseas countries including Australia and New Zealand. There is also some evidence that overseas trained alumni are more likely to emigrate than domestically trained alumni. In addition, the sponsorship of awardees at institutions in Fiji contributes to institutional strengthening through boosting institution income, increasing student numbers so the courses are viable, and in conjunction with other donor initiatives for academic, administrative and student support service capacity building.

Conversely, ADS alumni report strong ongoing links with Australia, report higher average benefits from their studies and are reported by Fiji employers to have superior “soft-skills” in the workplace. There is also still a need for training in Australia for:

- postgraduate training not available in the region;
- undergraduate courses which are not available in the region, or where the training requires use of equipment and facilities that are not available in regional educational institutions (provided this equipment is available in Fiji workplaces) or where Australian courses have unique value-adds;
- applicants with the highest academic ability who would benefit from academic stretching and expanding their horizons through exposure to modern technologies and possibilities and approaches; and
- applicants with strong leadership potential that would benefit from the exposure to efficient governments, democratic thinking, private enterprise activity and modern technologies and environments.

Given the benefits gained from study in country (particularly the number of awards that can be made from the available resources and course relevance) and the likely training needs for the objectives proposed above, it is recommended that the current ratio of 25% ADS and 75% ARDS be maintained at present. This ADS/ARDS balance would need to be reviewed depending on the identification of training needs from the AusAID Pacific Governance Support Program or other AusAID development initiatives in Fiji.

3.13.3 Other Key Recommendations

Other key recommendations to improve ADS/ARDS effectiveness in Fiji are for AusAID to:

- require shortlisted in-service public sector applicants/employers to submit re-entry action plans with their scholarship applications to indicate the career plan, responsibilities, skills utilisation and transfer that would happen on completion of the study⁹;
- develop a profiling approach to be able to best identify (from the written application or interview) the profile of applicants who are most likely to remain in their home country after completion of the two-year return to Australia embargo, thereby contributing to sustainability of scholarship outcomes¹⁰; and
- undertake further research and analysis as to whether to include rural, socio-economic, location or physical disadvantage factors in the selection criteria.

⁹Re-entry action plans were discussed at the AusAID Scholarships M&E Workshop in September 2008. Unless a proforma is developed by ASG, it is suggested that AusAID Suva modify one of the plans already developed by another ADS country. In consultation with the Fiji PSC, this could be implemented for the 2009 selection for the 2010 intake. It would also need to be factored into the SPBEA ranking calculations.

¹⁰ This approach is best undertaken on a regional basis, given the incidence of alumni migration in the Pacific.

4 ADS and ARDS in Tuvalu

4.1 Development Context

Tuvalu is a geographically remote chain of atoll islands located north of Fiji. Its population of approximately 10,000 is largely dependent on subsistence fishing and agriculture. Approximately 50% of the total population live on the atoll of Funafuti, where the main government centre and international airport are located. The government sector (government and state owned enterprises) provides the majority of continuous paid employment and 10% of the population is on the government's payroll. Small scale enterprise and short term construction projects dominate the much smaller private sector. Seafaring on foreign owned cargo ships and remittances from Tuvaluans employed overseas are both significant sources of income.

Tuvalu is one of the Least Developed Countries (LDC's) and is highly aid dependent. It is likely to remain reliant on external income from donors as well as remittance from international labour opportunities. Tuvalu is vulnerable to changes in the USD/AUD exchange rate, where the weak situation in the first nine months of 2008 eroded the value of offshore earnings (e.g. dot tv domain name income). However, the recent resurgence in the USD/AUD exchange rate in October has reversed the situation. The Tuvalu Trust Fund (TTF) remains an important source of funding for the Government of Tuvalu's recurrent budget (approximately 15% in 2008) and the funding of government priorities in the medium to longer term. Tuvalu's development and economic situation is shaped by a narrow resource base, a small population and geographical remoteness. Adverse external conditions or poor management can result in the country moving quickly to a position of economic vulnerability.

4.2 Tuvalu's National Development Planning

Te Kakeega II National Strategies for Sustainable Development 2005-2115 is the national planning document of Tuvalu. *Te Kakeega II* arose from a nationwide series of development planning workshops and consultations in 2004. The following eight key strategic areas are identified in the *Te Kakeega II*:

- Good governance;
- Macroeconomic growth and stability;
- Social development: health, welfare, youth, gender, housing, and poverty alleviation;
- Outer island and falekaupule development;
- Employment and private sector development;
- Human resource development;
- Natural resources: agriculture, fisheries, tourism and environmental management;
- Infrastructure and support services.

Te Kakeega II provides policy objectives and strategies for the achievement of each of the eight areas. There is a general section on performance monitoring for each strategic area, but no specific indicators are given.

4.3 AusAID's Engagement with Tuvalu

The Tuvalu/Australia/Asian Development Bank (ADB) Joint Country Strategy 2007-2011 is the key planning document that underpins the engagement in Tuvalu of both AusAID and the ADB. These two development partners and the Government of Tuvalu (GoT) have agreed on the following two key objectives for their engagement, informed by Tuvalu's own strategic planning:

- Ensure financial stability through effective management of Tuvalu's recurrent budget including effective budget formulation and execution; and
- Improve access to income generating activities in the local and international labour markets.

AusAID's two largest bilateral scholarship schemes ADS and ARDS, are a key feature of the second objective. The table below shows that approximately 25% of the total bilateral program expenditure has been spent on the ADS/ARDS schemes over the last three years. Other regional or global Australian Scholarships available for Tuvalu citizens include the Australian Leaderships Awards, the Endeavour Awards and the APTC scholarships.

Table 13: Expenditure on ADS/ARDS in Tuvalu

Year	Total bilateral funding (A\$)	Scholarship estimate	% of scholarship expenditure of total bilateral allocation
2005/06	\$3.3m	\$804,000	25%
2006/07	\$3.35m	\$1,000,000	29.8%
2008	\$4m	\$975,000	24.4%

Source: AusAID

4.4 Tuvalu's HRD Planning

Tuvalu does not have a national Human Resource Development (HRD) Plan. The Personnel and Training Department (PTD) of the Office of the Prime Minister is the section of government responsible for human resource planning. The PTD is currently undertaking some workforce analysis. Data including workforce numbers, age, qualifications, retirement, replacement options, skills needed and workplace gaps are being collected and it is intended that this analysis will form the basis of the first national HRD plan. This process does not have any time lines around it and, given that submissions from Ministries in response to requests for the first level of information required have been slow in coming in, may take some time. The analysis is limited to collecting workforce data from the public service. It is likely that any resulting HRD plan will therefore focus on the needs of the public sector. Several Government Ministries and Departments (e.g. Education and Health) have their own strategic plans however, which include an HRD component. These strategic plans do not appear to link to the stated priorities of Te Kakeega II.

4.5 Employment Patterns in Tuvalu

The Tuvalu public sector is the largest employer in the country, and in 2005 employed 68% of the total number of employees in Tuvalu, 36% of whom have tertiary level qualifications. The private sector is increasing in size, but still only employs about 30% of the total workforce. The Tuvalu National Chamber of Commerce has over 60 members – most of whom are small employers in retail or service type industries. The majority of those employed in the private sector are unskilled or semi-skilled.

The main movements in and out of the Tuvalu workforce apart from retirement etc are brought about by migration and by going overseas for employment, scholarships and training. While there is some movement within the public service (especially among the common cadre of staff who rotate between departments) there is little movement between the public service and the private sector. Many employees in the government owned corporations and in the private sector remain in the same job/or section for much of their working life.

A significant number of Tuvaluans enter the workforce as seamen (approx. 60 per year) after their graduation from the Tuvalu Maritime Training Institute, although the employment rate for Tuvaluans in this sector is slower than the current boom in the shipping industry might lead one to expect. There are approximately 360 Tuvaluan seamen on board ships at any one time.

4.6 Skills gaps faced by employers

Tuvalu employers interviewed were adamant that more scholarships were needed in order to meet their needs. However, when questioned more intensely they were not readily able to indicate what skills gaps could be met by increasing the number of scholarships. Several stakeholders, especially those in the private and NGO sectors, did indicate that the real skills gaps in Tuvalu are in the technical and vocational areas (e.g. plumbing, building, mechanics). They went on to note that they felt these skills could not be met via the current ADS/ARDS scholarship program which tends to focus on academic study. Several stakeholders expressed regret at the demise of the AusAID funded In-Country Training program which provided technical training opportunities in Tuvalu. The same stakeholders indicated their view that the GoT would be unlikely to support scholarships for trades related skills that replaced academic scholarships, the implication being academic training is valued more highly than trades training in the public sector.

The study team understands that the Department of Education is looking at incorporating Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) into the high school curriculum. They recently held nationwide consultation on this concept but have yet to release their report. It is suggested that AusAID offer more ARDS awards for certificate and diploma level technical education, for example at the Fiji Institute of Technology. Alternatively it might be possible for AusAID to support TVET through the Tuvalu Education Sector Program currently being developed.

4.7 Scholarship Management in Tuvalu

Tables 14 and 15 detail the number of new AusAID awards per year for the ADS and ARDS scheme by Open/Public category. As at October 2008, there are 29 ARDS and 10 ADS Tuvaluan awardees currently on award.

Table 14: Number of New Award by Scheme and Year, Tuvalu

Number of New Awards Per Year					
Tuvalu		2006	2007	2008	2009
ADS	OPEN	1	3	1	2
	PUBLIC	1	3	1	2
ARDS	OPEN	5	5	4	6
	PUBLIC	5	5	5	6

Table 15: Expenditure by Scheme and Financial Year, Tuvalu

Expenditure (A\$) Per Financial Year				
Tuvalu	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009*
ADS	175,852	401,137	353,591	350,000
ARDS	582,529	581,621	522,636	630,000

* estimate only

The responsibility for scholarships' management is divided between the Personnel and Training Department of the Office of the Prime Minister who are responsible for in-service scholarships and the Pre-Service Department of the Ministry of Education who manage the pre-service scholarships. There is some discussions that the management of the two scholarships might once again become the responsibility of one department but no timeframe has been given for this to happen.

In the Tuvalu context, in-service refers to scholarships awarded to people who are currently employed. Their employer (usually a government ministry or department) applies to the Personnel and Training Department for a course of study deemed necessary for the workplace and indicates a staff member to undertake that study. Under this system successful applicants have their jobs held for them until they return, and are paid their scholarship stipend as well as a portion of their salary while studying.

Pre-service scholarships are generally awarded to those who have not yet entered the workforce. Usually they are graduates from Motofoua secondary school, although Tuvaluans can access scholarships from attendance at overseas secondary schools. Ministries indicate how many new graduates they are likely to need in the future (many teachers and nurses enter the workforce via pre-service scholarships). Successful applicants have a job promised to them when they return and awardees who do not complete their course of study are often absorbed into the public sector as well.

Apart from the Government of Tuvalu, which allocates 10% of its national recurrent budget to funding scholarships for its citizens, New Zealand, Australia and Taiwan are the main funders of scholarships for Tuvalu nationals.

4.8 Pre Award Effectiveness

4.8.1 Application access – communication and outreach

Tuvalu has no TV or newspaper. AusAID scholarships are therefore advertised on Radio Tuvalu and by government circular distributed to government departments and government owned corporations. Unless it is a fine clear day, Radio Tuvalu is only heard on Funafuti atoll and even in perfect weather is only heard as far afield as the central islands of Vaitupu and Nukufetau. Nevertheless, as over 50% of the total population live on Funafuti atoll, the majority of the population are able to hear the scholarships advertised. Not all the population of Tuvalu enjoy equal access to AusAID scholarships. The level of forward planning involved in submitting an application for an outer island resident is significant. Communications difficulties between the outer islands and Funafuti make essential application submission activities such as faxing paperwork, telephoning, sending emails and locating transcripts very difficult to achieve.

4.8.2 *Merit based and transparent selection and eligibility criteria*

AusAID has a contract with the South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment (SPBEA) based in Suva for the assessment of all applications and first level shortlisting of the potential candidates for its scholarships. SPBEA reports show an extremely high level of invalid applications are received from Tuvaluans. In the 2007 selection process for the 2008 intake, 55% of all ARDS applications and 30% of all ADS applications were deemed invalid. For the 2009 intake, 58% of the preliminary applications received for ARDs were invalid. Of these invalid applications, 31% of candidates had insufficient marks to enable them to enter their intended course of study and a further 60% lacked proper certification or complete documents.

The SPBEA report recommends AusAID consider extending the application period in Tuvalu to allow candidates to access the correct documentation and ensure certification is allowable. However AusAID staff indicate the problem is not the timeframe for applications, rather it is the last minute nature of submission of most Tuvalu applications. This does not allow officers any time to follow up with applicants to seek supporting documents etc. None of the stakeholders interviewed had any issues with the eligibility criteria for AusAID scholarships, on the contrary, several commented that the AusAID criteria are clear and not able to be 'tampered with'.

The Personnel and Training Department and the Pre-service Department seek annual submissions from government and the private sector identifying the training they see as priorities and would like to see scholarships awarded for. The Public Sector Advisory Committee (PSAC) spends up to a week assessing the submissions and agrees a priority list for approval by Cabinet. Cabinet vets the PSAC list as well as all the supporting submissions. Their final priority list frequently differs with that agreed to in PSAC deliberations.

The Government of Tuvalu, AusAID and NZAID then run a Joint Selection Committee (JSC) to agree on the scholars listed in the Cabinet approved list to be offered AusAID and NZAID scholarships. Several stakeholders commented that since the involvement of Cabinet, the selection process has become more time-consuming, more repetitive and less transparent. The NZAID, AusAID and GOT scholarships officials are required to view (and comment) on the lists prior to the JSC meeting, but some stakeholders have observed that with the addition of Cabinet into the scholarships selection process the sharing of information with the JSC is delayed.

The majority of scholarships awarded are targeted to support needs in the public service. Some stakeholders commented that the private sector was significantly disadvantaged in accessing scholarships given this public service focus. This study was not able to analyse the numbers of applications received from the private sector and the number of scholarships granted to the private sector over time. However, of the 2005-07 ADS/ARDS alumni cohort 15% (4 out of 32) were employees in the private sector. Further research into the training needs and scholarship access of the private sector might be useful in the future.

4.8.3 *Reflecting AusAID and Partner Government policies and strategies*

There is little evidence that specific cognisance is taken of AusAID or the GoT policies and strategies in scholarship selection. In the absence of a national HRD plan, and given the breadth of training priorities identified in the Te Kakeega, it is possible for nearly any course of study to be considered part of national needs. Stakeholders in the selection process in Tuvalu indicated that the strategic plans of both donors (AusAID and NZAID) were considered in the selection process but were unable to define exactly how this occurs. It seems the responsibility of this linkage remains one for the donor staff in their parts of the selection process.

4.8.4 Gender equity

The requirement for gender balance is accepted as an important one for the donor and in recent years a gender balance has been achieved in awarded AusAID scholarships. Overall, there was a male and female gender balance in the Tuvalu ADS/ARDS 2005-2007 alumni. Table 16 shows that 80% of the awards to male applicants were for those over 29 years of age, whereas only 50% of the scholarships for females were in the same age group. That is, scholarships are significantly more likely to be made to males after they have been working for five or more years than is the case for females. This would seem to back up the anecdotal comments regarding the difficulties which women experience in accessing scholarships, as they advance through the workforce. Whilst age is not an AusAID criteria for scholarship selection it might be worthwhile for AusAID to give this some consideration during future selection rounds. In regard to gender balance by field of study, it is noted that most young women are still only applying for scholarships in the traditional fields of teaching, nursing, administration, management etc.

Table 16: Award of scholarships by gender and age, Tuvalu

Gender	Age	% of gender/age awarded scholarship
Females	Under 30	50%
	30 and over	50%
Males	Under 30	20%
	30 and over	80%

Source: Tracer Survey, Annex L, Table A.1

4.8.5 Scholarships targeted to disadvantaged groups

Stakeholders interviewed in Tuvalu indicated that while providing targeted scholarships to disadvantaged groups might be a good idea in principle, it would be hard to achieve in reality. One noted that as it had proved hard enough for Tuvalu to meet a gender balance target, it would be impossible to meet any other target. When specifically discussing the likelihood of people with disabilities to access scholarships one interviewee said 'Cabinet would never approve a disabled person to take up a scholarship'. It must be noted however that the role of Cabinet is only relevant in the Public category scholarships, Open category applicants apply directly to AusAID who do all the selection themselves (not using the JSC process) based on merit.

The Department of Education (Primary) has their first pre-service awardee studying Special Needs Education with a view to them coming back and working in a primary school as part of the Department's focus on 'inclusive education'. Given the lack of resources to support those with disabilities, in reality it may even be some time before people with disabilities are able to attain the merit based academic criteria for course entry and scholarship selection, due to the limitations of the primary and secondary education systems to support their specific needs. One option discussed with stakeholders was a specific quota being allocated for Outer Island dwellers. In reality this too would be hard to administer without a significant extension of the time allocated for applications to be accepted. Even if awardees were selected from Outer Islands their development impact would be more likely to be through increased household earnings remitted to their island from their place of employment in Funafuti or overseas rather than from paid employment in their home island.

4.8.6 *Open and Public category scholarships*

Of the 2005-2007 alumni cohort, 2 ADS and 10 ARDS of the 20 AusAID funded scholars received Open category scholarships. five received ARDS Public category scholarships and three did not know what type of scholarship they received.

Under the Standing Administration Orders (SAO) for the Tuvalu Government, candidates who are members of the public service when they are accepted for an Open category scholarship from AusAID are required to resign from their jobs. They are not paid salary while away and do not have a guaranteed job to come back to. Employment opportunities for these candidates can be severely limited on their return given the small size of the Tuvalu private sector economy. However, the Open category scholarship recipients interviewed were all civil servants at the time they were awarded their scholarship and all managed to negotiate their way around the SAOs and retain their salaries and their guaranteed jobs on their return to Tuvalu. None of the 2005-2007 alumni from the private sector were granted an Open category scholarship, however this study does not know whether any applied.

4.9 *On-Award Effectiveness*

4.9.1 *Completion rates*

All of the ADS alumni cohort completed their study. However, seven of the twenty Tuvaluan tracer survey respondents, all ARDS students, did not complete their studies. This 30% non-completion rate of the total ARDS 2005-2007 alumni cohort. seems high, especially compared to the Fiji alumni cohort, but a statistical comparison with other ARDS countries was not done. Of the non-completers, there was a higher proportion of women (5) than men (2).

The reasons for non-completion by Tuvaluans have not been researched, but anecdotally, interviewees noted that those who 'did not complete' were more likely to be pre-service awardees rather than in-service, with youth, inexperience in living outside of Tuvalu, party lifestyle and lack of sense of responsibility towards the scholarship donors all mentioned as caused. One stakeholder noted that due to the strong gender roles in Tuvalu culture, women students found it hard to be able to concentrate fully on their study given they also had full responsibility for raising the children and all household tasks while on their scholarship, even if their partner was accompanying them on placement. It is recommended that AusAID undertake more research into the reasons for non-completions.

It is impossible for this study to know whether the students who did not complete their studies overseas have subsequently attempted to complete their course either via USP Tuvalu centre or another scholarship. In recent years, the GoT has funded students to undertake the Augmented Foundation Program (AFP) at the USP Campus in Tuvalu. It would be useful to follow students who go onto study offshore at the completion of the AFP. This research would confirm or not the suggestion by Tuvalu USP staff that commencing study in Tuvalu will enhance the ability and confidence of the students before they go on to study offshore.

4.9.2 *Impact on workforce while awardee away*

The number of awardees away on scholarship at any one time is a significant feature of the Tuvalu workforce. The Joint AusAID/NZAID selection processes award about 25 scholarships annually, so it is reasonable to assume that approximately 75 AusAID or NZAID awardees are out of Tuvalu at any one time. Employers expect that they will have to manage with a portion of their workforce away studying at any one time. Some employers noted that while they do plan for awardees to be away,

the fact that many of them do not complete their study makes it difficult to achieve all their intended outcomes. However employers do not penalise non completing students (none spoken to indicated this as something they would want to do) and these students are absorbed back into their previous jobs on their return.

4.10 Post-Award Effectiveness

4.10.1 Return to Tuvalu

The majority of the 2005-2007 ARDS (77%) and ADS (66%) alumni cohort are currently working in Tuvalu. Of the ARDS alumni, one is a teacher on an Outer Island, one is offshore receiving medical treatment and the remaining 18 are employed in Funafuti. Of the six who are not working in Tuvalu, one is deceased, one is working on ships, and four are in other countries. Of the ADS alumni, one is a government employee posted to the Tuvalu High Commission in Suva, the other three are working on Funafuti. Of the two who are no longer in Tuvalu, one is working on a ship and the other is in NZ accompanying her husband who is also on a scholarship.

4.10.2 Employment/Reintegration to workforce

Table 17 shows that 75% of all surveyed alumni who took up an open or public scholarship from the public service returned to their previous employer. 35% assumed new responsibilities or were promoted and 40% returned to the same position. The pre-service awardees are working for the employer they expected to work for when they took up the scholarship e.g. the nursing trainee now with the Ministry of Health.

Table 17: Employment on completion of scholarship (Tuvalu survey respondents)

Employment on Return	Detail	No.	%
Left my previous organisation	Looked for new employment	2	10%
Returned to the same employer/organisation	Assumed new responsibilities	3	15%
	Promoted to a new position	4	20%
	Remained in same job position	8	40%
Started seeking my first job in the workforce	Childcare/family responsibilities	1	5%
	Started seeking my first job in the workforce	2	10%
Total		20	100%

Source: Tracer Survey, Annex L, Table D.1

According to the survey results, gaining meaningful employment at award completion does not appear to be a problem for Tuvalu alumni. Employers do not seem to differentiate between awardees who have completed their training and those who have not. There are no real incentives for awardees to complete quickly and to as high a level as they can, given most awardees who do not complete come back to their expected job with no penalties applied to them.

Many stakeholders stated that employees who had been on scholarship were 'more confident, better workers, and able to achieve to a higher level than before they went'. However, employers found it difficult to give practical examples of this. Employers made the same comments about those who did and those who did not complete their study. There did not seem to be any concern on the part of employers at the numbers who did not complete their study.

4.10.3 Alumni/employer expectations

The issue of expectation is a feature of the Tuvalu scholarship environment. Public service employees expect that they will 'have a turn' at getting one or more scholarships if they stay in employment long enough. Alumni focus groups indicated that they had had an expectation that a completed scholarship would be recognised by a pay increment or promotion. The PTD (who manage this process) do try to accommodate increments and promotions but in reality there is not enough money in the budget or positions in the public service to enable this to become a reality. Employers similarly indicate that they try to support alumni for increments and promotions but given the above limitations are often not able to do so.

4.10.4 Effective utilisation of education and skills

Table 18 below shows the benefits the Tuvalu alumni survey respondents identified from their study. Tuvalu alumni ranked ability to contribute to their country's development as the most important benefit to undertaking study and increased income as the least important benefit. Interestingly while benefits relating to employment including 'new professional opportunities' and higher progression in the same job were both ranked highly, over 50% of survey respondents returned to exactly the same position they were in when they left, as the GoT cannot accommodate increased salaries and promotions expected by graduating awardees.

Table 18: Work-related benefits of study (Tuvalu survey respondents)

Benefits of Study	ADS	ARDS	Average
Opportunity to contribute to your country's development	4.7	4.9	4.8
Gain ideas/knowledge that are useful in your job	5.0	4.6	4.7
Ability to effect positive change and innovation in your workplace	4.3	4.7	4.7
Improvement in your confidence about performing your work	4.3	4.7	4.6
New professional opportunities	4.7	4.6	4.6
Recognition from your employer for your enhanced skills and knowledge	4.7	4.6	4.6
Development of links with other awardees	4.3	4.6	4.6
Ability to lead reform in your country	4.7	4.6	4.6
Development of useful contacts during the study period	4.7	4.5	4.5
Higher progression in the same job	4.7	4.5	4.5
Higher mobility across jobs	3.7	4.6	4.5
Greater credibility from peers	4.3	4.6	4.5
Establishment of links with Australia	4.7	4.4	4.4
Increased income	3.0	4.1	3.9
Number in sample	3	17	20

Source: Tracer Survey, Annex L Table F.1

Scale: 1 - 'not at all', 5 - 'very much'

Table 19 shows that lack of required equipment and the working practises differing between where the alumni studied and where they are working, were the two most noted difficulties highlighted by survey respondents when talking about returning to the workforce at the completion of their study. It is noted that whilst all ADS respondents noted the difficulty of different working practices between Australia and Tuvalu, only 35% of the ARDS respondents experienced the same difficulty.

Table 19: Number of respondents reporting difficulties in utilising new skills/knowledge in the workplace (Tuvalu survey respondents)

Difficulties Experienced	ADS	ARDS	Total
Different working practices	3	6	9
Lack of required equipment	1	7	8
Working environment	1	6	7
Resistance from employers/colleagues	-	3	3
New knowledge and skills not relevant	1	1	2
Low level of responsibilities	-	2	2
<i>Number in sample</i>	3	17	20

Source: Tracer Survey, Annex L Table D.3

4.10.5 Impact on workplace

The Tuvalu alumni were positive about the personal benefits from their study. Table 20 shows that 70% of the survey respondents felt their study had advanced their skills generally and that they had gained confidence. This is backed up in interviews with employers who also indicated that employees who had returned from training had gained in confidence and had a positive impact on their workforce.

Table 20: Number of respondents reporting personal benefits gained from studies (Tuvalu survey respondents)

Personal Benefits	ADS	ARDS	Total
Advanced my skills generally	3	11	14
Gained confidence	2	12	14
Increased personal satisfaction with myself	2	8	10
Greater satisfaction with my professional work life	1	6	7
Improved communication skills	2	8	10
Seen as a role model for others in the community		3	3
<i>Number in sample</i>	3	17	20

Source: Tracer Survey, Annex L Table F.7

Given that less than 50% identified 'Greater satisfaction in their professional work life' as a personal benefit this suggests it is the generic benefits (communication skills, confidence, personal satisfaction) that have benefitted alumni more than the professional benefits.

4.10.6 Employer retention strategies

The Tuvalu Government has a bonding system in place for students who receive scholarships for training offshore. In theory, awardees are bonded to return to Tuvalu to work regardless of who funded their scholarship. In reality, however, it is often difficult to get students to sign the bond. Focus group alumni, employers and

government officials supported the bonding idea in principle as a significant amount of money had been spent on scholarships and it was fair to contribute back to Tuvalu to 'pay that off'. However no-one knew of a single incident where a student who did not work out their bond had been required to repay it. Issues relating to the reasons why the bond was not called in, legality of the bond, the ability of the government to enforce it even if it wanted to, were not able to be covered during this study.

Fifty percent of ARDS students felt it was very likely they would remain in Tuvalu for the next 5 years, with a further 35% somewhat likely to remain for the five years. 60% of those who studied diploma or associate diploma level think it highly likely they will remain in the country for the next five years, whereas less than 50% of those with a Bachelor's degree think it highly likely they will remain. 100% of those who did a Masters degree intend remaining for the next five years. Only one respondent, an ARDS student with a bachelor's degree indicated it was unlikely they would remain in Tuvalu for the next five years. AusAID can be confident, based on the tracer survey results, that a significant majority of alumni do intend to remain in Tuvalu to work for the next five years.

4.10.7 Two year embargo period

Approximately half of all those interviewed were in support of the two year scholarships embargo for alumni to work in their home country for two years before being allowed to return to work in Australia. Reasons for supporting the embargo centred around the scholarships being funded to support the needs of Tuvalu not Australia and several of those interviewed noted that as the needs in Tuvalu were great it was important that trained people returned to Tuvalu to work for the development of their own country. However others commented that as the embargo only related to Australia there were many other places to emigrate to when qualified. Reasons for opposing the embargo centred around the argument that when Tuvaluans take up work overseas the money they remit is assisting in the development of Tuvalu anyway so therefore moving to work in Australia within two years should be allowed.

4.10.8 Links with Australia

All ADS survey respondents indicated they had maintained substantial links with former university or alumni associations, students from other countries, as well as friends in Australia compared with only 40% of the ARDS alumni surveyed. 66% of the ADS students and less than 30% of ARDS students felt they had substantial links with Australian communities. The experience of living and studying in Australia does appear to directly correlate to a strengthened link the alumni feel to Australia. Several alumni who attended the focus groups indicated that ongoing relationships with their tutors and other academic staff was an important feature of their post scholarship life.

4.11 Overall assessment of Tuvalu ADS/ARDS

4.11.1 Contribution to the human resource needs in support of Tuvalu's long-term development

The ADS/ARDS scholarships provided to the Tuvalu 2005-2007 alumni cohort have, in the immediate years after award completion, contributed to Tuvalu's development. This has been demonstrated by:

- a high rate of return of awardees to Tuvalu;
- a high percentage of alumni being employed in work that is related to their field of study which was selected according to broad HRD needs of Tuvalu;
- alumni and employers alike stating that the alumni's skills and knowledge have been utilised in the workplace;

- a very high percentage of the alumni felt that their study had very much helped them contribute to their country's development;
- awardees having experienced significant personal and some professional benefits from their studies;
- alumni using their skills and knowledge to the benefit of civic society; and
- a high percentage of alumni having remained in Tuvalu for at least two years (as required under the scholarship bond).

These scholarship outcomes in Tuvalu are likely to be sustained, as 85% of alumni surveyed said that they are somewhat, likely or highly likely to remain in Tuvalu for the next five years. Further analysis of the contribution of these alumni to their organisation's effectiveness and/or to the long-term development of Tuvalu will need to be assessed in five-ten years time.

4.11.2 Achievement country program objectives

The Tuvalu alumni in this study were awarded scholarships on the basis of broad, mainly public sector, HRD needs as determined by the Joint Selection Committee at the time of selection. The majority of the alumni are now working in the public sector in areas related to their field of study.

Although the alumni were selected prior to the adoption of the Tuvalu/Australia/Asian Development Bank Joint Country Strategy in 2007, five of the twenty alumni surveyed undertook finance/accounting related degrees and are working in the public sector, one of whom is working in the Tuvalu treasury. If utilised effectively, these alumni would be able to contribute to the Strategy objective to ensure financial stability through effective management of Tuvalu's recurrent budget including effective budget formulation and execution. However, it is noted that only 15% (3 out of 20) of the alumni surveyed are now working in the private sector in potential support of the Strategy's second objective to improve access to income generating activities in the local and international labour markets.

4.12 Key Recommendations for the Tuvalu ADS/ARDS Scholarships Program

4.12.1 Tuvalu ADS/ARDS Objectives

To achieve greater synergies with the overall AusAID program in Tuvalu, it is recommended that AusAID consider adopting the following scholarship objectives which would support both the Tuvalu/Australia/Asian Development Bank (ADB) Joint Country Strategy 2007-2011 and the Te Kakeega.

Objective 1: ADS and ARDS increase the number of Tuvalu public servants with relevant post-secondary education and training in priority areas

ADS and ARDS would be used to provide awardees, that are or will be employed in nominated government departments, with training that is directly linked to achievement of the Joint Country Strategy (and the Te Kakeega II). In the absence of an agreed HRD plan at present, AusAID and the GoT should agree a smaller number of government departments that will be supported through the scholarships. In the interests of obtaining a critical mass and directly supporting the Country Strategy objective of financial stability, a phased approach of targeting scholarships to training in financial and budget management might be warranted. Consideration might also be given to targeting scholarships to support the Tuvalu Education Sector Program currently being developed. The AusAID Pacific Governance Support Program will also be useful in providing guidance as to post-secondary training priorities at the junior, middle and senior levels of the Tuvalu public service.

Objective 2: ADS and ARDS increase the skilled workforce in Tuvalu to support income generation activities

ADS and primarily ARDS would be used to provide relevant post-secondary education and training (including skills-based TVET) to awardees that are or will be employed in private sector companies, public sector corporations (or in government departments that directly support income generating activities) to make them better able to compete in the local and international labour market (as linked to the second Country Strategy objective of Income Generating Opportunities). Decisions regarding the nature and scope of support under this objective would need at a later stage to reflect Tuvalu's decision on TVET training in schools and the design of the Tuvalu Education Sector Program.

4.12.2 Other Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of the ADS/ARDS awards provided in Tuvalu it is recommended that AusAID:

- use the Education Sector Program development process to investigate options for increasing technical/vocational training to Tuvalu citizens, either through the scholarship program or as an adjunct to it;
- support the work of the PTD to develop a national HRD plan as this will allow scholarships to be targeted to fewer stated priorities;
- undertake research determine reasons for the high non-completion rate of ARDS awardees and what could be done by institutions, AusAID and/or the GoT to increase completion rates;
- research the progress of students who start tertiary training upon completion of the Augmented Foundation Program at USP Tuvalu to see if there is related performance improvement in overseas study and therefore whether it would increase award effectiveness for all ARDS awardees to undertake the program;
- encourage the Education Sector Program team to develop a set of specific outcome indicators for TVET and tertiary level education under Objective 2 of the Country Strategy that support the ones they develop across the rest of the education sector; and
- undertake research into the specific post-secondary training needs of the private sector and civil society along with the rates of application and acceptance of awardees from these sectors.

5 ADS/ARDS Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 Current ADS/ARDS M&E

Most current Fiji and Tuvalu ADS/ARDS monitoring is conducted at the pre-award and on-award phases in the scholarships cycle. ADS/ARDS monitoring is conducted to varying extents by AusAID in Canberra, Fiji and Tuvalu and under contract by Australian educational institutions, by the Fiji School Medicine (FSM) and by USP Suva. This includes:

- monitoring by AusAID of gender equity, transparency and alignment with development goals in award offers;
- institution monitoring to ensure that the policy guidelines are adhered to in that students are not allowed to change their course of study without prior agreement of their sponsor;
- monitoring visits to educational institutions/awardees in Fiji by AusAID Suva;
- ongoing email communication with awardees;

- monitoring of semester results (final qualification awarded, extensions and terminations) provided under contract with Australian institutions, USP/FSM and manually by other institutions; and
- a formal PSC process that requires public servants to complete “end-of-course” and their employers “transfer evaluations” three months after the course end to determine effectiveness of the training on actual job performance.

AusAID Fiji is working with contracted institutions on simple performance indicators so that both parties can be sure to collect the correct data for reporting purposes. Recognising the importance of institution monitoring, the 2008 USP Audit recommended that “USP develop robust mechanisms for comparing the pass, progression, retention and completion rates of its students across all campuses”. Given the high proportion of ARDS Fiji and Tuvalu awardees at USP, this data, once available, would prove extremely useful in the monitoring of the scheme (AUQA, 2008).

ADS and ARDS M&E (and program management) is limited by the comprehensiveness and reliability of the ADS and ARDS data contained in SIMON and SOFEA, the Management Information Systems to support the scholarships schemes. It is therefore recommended that data cleansing on empty or inconsistently recorded key fields be undertaken on the ADS and ARDS data. It is recognised that these SIMON/SOFEA were not designed to maintain and report historical data or retain it in a form that facilitates interrogation or follow up. As there is not yet a reporting layer in SIMON/SOFEA, it proves difficult to extract individual record data, summary reports across specific student groups or comparative data from other Pacific countries. It is expected that such a reporting layer will be added to the MIS by mid 2009 which should greatly facilitate scheme monitoring and evaluation.

Until this Tracer Study, there has been limited monitoring or evaluation of the post-award phase, specifically with respect to the impact of training on employment and other development outcomes for Fiji and Tuvalu. As recommended elsewhere, processes should be instituted so that there is annual collection of tracer survey data and analysis on the immediate outcomes (1 year after award completion) of the scholarships, mainly at the individual level. This will enable any necessary adjustment to the program (in terms of selection, on-award management or post-award support), can be made as quickly as possible. These annual surveys should be complemented by follow-up five to ten year out tracer surveys and other analysis of medium and longer term outcomes of the scholarships to Fiji’s development (and against agreed scholarship objectives), conducted every 3-5 years. As alumni are increasingly selected to support specific Fiji country program initiatives, monitoring of the medium to longer term impact of the scholarships at the institutional level should be done in conjunction with monitoring of the relevant activities in Fiji.

5.2 ADS/ARDS Tracer Surveys

To facilitate the conduct of tracer surveys by AusAID Posts, it is recommended that ASG develop a suite of standard questions from which Posts can select those that are relevant for their assessment needs. Posts will also need to develop any country-specific/objective survey questions (which should be shared however with ASG/other Posts). It is also recommended that AusAID establish a survey centre on their web-site. Posts would then be able to set up their country-specific tracer survey on this site. Graduating alumni would then be sent an email containing a link to the web survey and asked to complete it on line. By this means, survey data would be able to be collected progressively and be available for analysis when required. Hard-copy forms will still be needed for alumni without internet access. To increase survey responses, alumni should be reminded near the end of their award that, on accepting

their scholarship, they agreed to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of the scholarship scheme while on scholarship or following completion of my scholarship. Alumni could for example be requested to keep their contact details current through the AusAID scholarships survey centre.

Better recording of the employer name on SOFEA/SIMON at application time would also result in a higher number of contacts, as a high percentage of alumni return to the same employer on award completion. For future surveys, the following sources could also be used to assist in obtaining Fiji/Tuvalu alumni contact details:

- USP/Fiji School of Management (FSM) alumni association;
- Fiji Islands Public Service Commission (PSC);
- Fiji Employers Federation, with more than 5000 members; and
- Tuvalu Personnel and Training department of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Future surveys should also need to allow adequate time in advance of the survey to obtain contacts for a bigger sample size to which the survey is to be sent and to make personal phone call reminders to ensure a higher response rate. It is noted that less than 30% of the Fiji focus group participants said that they had received the electronic version, perhaps indicating lack of regular use of email addresses in Fiji. Future surveys should therefore also be sent to postal addresses if time permits.

Due to the time it takes to personally interview line manager employers, it is recommended that a survey form be developed and distributed to alumni employers to increase the quantity of data on alumni impact in the workplace.

5.3 *Fiji/Tuvalu Scholarships M&E Plan*

AusAID has an over-arching M&E framework for the Australian scholarships to inform country-level M&E frameworks and to direct the data to be collected for agency reporting purposes. Annex M provides an initial outline of an M&E plan for the Fiji and Tuvalu ADS/ARDS including possible indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the scholarships. It is recommended that this M&E plan be completed for Fiji and Tuvalu by adding in any baseline data and targets, by including suitable indicators for the specific objectives to be agreed for the scholarships programs and by adding appropriate risk management indicators.

5.4 *Other Scholarships M&E Analysis*

AusAID's overall scholarships M&E should be coordinated and findings shared across the Pacific region. Specific projects that could be done on a regional basis include analysis of:

- student outcome data from USP, where lessons can be learnt about pass-rates of awardees by country, course/level of study, gender, family entry to the study country etc. Where possible this should be extended to analyse any differences in the outcomes of scholarship awardees (who have had the benefit of additional scholarship and academic/pastoral support) and privately funded students;
- institutional graduate course/institution satisfaction survey data; and
- Australian immigration data (with appropriate caveats for student privacy) on the number of alumni living in Australia broken down where possible by gender, scholarship scheme, degree level and field of study.

6 Conclusion

As a key sponsor of scholarships for overseas and local post-secondary training in Fiji and Tuvalu, AusAID has significantly contributed to Fiji and Tuvalu's human resource development over many years. In accord with the principles of the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*, AusAID has actively engaged with the relevant government agencies in Fiji and Tuvalu to align the ADS/ARDS awards to their stated training priorities. The Fiji PSC representative stated that the Government of Fiji greatly values AusAID's consultative and responsive approach to the scholarships program.

The ADS and ARDS scholarship schemes for Fiji and Tuvalu have broad policy coherence with higher level AusAID policies and strategic directions. Investing in people through improving education and health is one of the four themes of the *2006 White Paper Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability*. A significant proportion of ADS/ARDS awards have been for education and health training for Fiji and Tuvalu, potentially contributing towards their progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, agreed targets set by the world's nations improve the well-being of the world's poorest people by 2015¹¹.

Education provides the foundation for economic growth and self-reliance with additional benefits in health, governance, gender equality, stability and security, and in fostering effective states. The *AusAID Education Policy* provides the strategic framework for improving the effectiveness of Australia's education assistance delivered through the aid program. This is in addition to the aid program's support for tertiary scholarships through the Australian Scholarships program and the new Australia-Pacific Technical College (AusAID, 2007c).

AusAID's scholarships policies are currently being reviewed, and it is expected that by the end of 2008 there will be clear direction as to how scholarships fit into the overall AusAID program. The enhancement of regional education institutions and a significant program of scholarships to study at Australian education institutions are incorporated in the *Pacific Partnerships for Development* which will provide a new framework for Australia and the Pacific Island nations to commit jointly to achieving shared goals. A Project Design Document is currently being prepared for Tuvalu but the design for Fiji is on hold under the current engagement framework.

In both countries, the level of value ascribed to the AusAID scholarships was high. Overall, there was widespread stakeholder agreement that ADS and ARDS have contributed to meeting human resource development (HRD) needs in support of Fiji and Tuvalu's long-term development. ADS/ARDS graduates are in strong demand in the workplace in both Fiji and Tuvalu and alumni line managers are clear that their alumni employees have added value to their place of employment. The surveyed alumni were overwhelmingly positive when outlining the benefits they have achieved for themselves and for their work as a result of their scholarship. However, scholarship effectiveness is reduced by the difficulties experienced by many alumni in applying their new knowledge and skills in their current job. Longer term sustainability of development outcomes, particularly in Fiji, is also likely to be affected by emigration of alumni from their home countries.

¹¹ Which include halving extreme poverty, getting all children into school, closing the gap on gender inequality, saving lives lost to disease and the lack of available health care, and protecting the environment

The strengthening of human resource capacity is included in AusAID's country strategy for both Fiji and Tuvalu and support for ADS/ARDS tertiary level study is a significant component of each country's annual bilateral allocation. However, given the breadth of training priorities identified by Fiji and Tuvalu government agencies responsible for national planning and human resource development, scholarship awardees have historically been selected to meet a broad range of HRD needs. More recently, AusAID has selected awardees for areas of study that are common to the partner government lists and to AusAID sectors of bilateral cooperation.

In order to more effectively contribute to their respective country programs, to demonstrably increase their effectiveness and to more readily be able to assess their medium to long-term impact at the institutional level, it is recommended that the ADS/ARDS schemes in Fiji and Tuvalu be integrated more closely with their country program strategy.