

AusAID Fiji ADS/ARDS Impact Study, 2011

Final Report

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Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADS	Australian Development Scholarships
ALAS	Australian Leadership Award Scholarships
APTC	Australia–Pacific Technical College
ARDS	Australian Regional Development Scholarships
ASAN	Australian Scholarship Alumni Network
A\$	Australian Dollar
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DFL	Distance Flexible Learning Scholarships
FCEF	Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation
FIT	Fiji Institute of Technology (now part of FNU)
F\$	Fiji dollar
FNCDP	Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons
FNU	Fiji National University
FSMed	Fiji School of Medicine (now part of FNU)
FY	Financial year
GoF	Government of Fiji
HRD	Human Resource Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multi-Ethnic Affairs
MNP	GoF Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
OASIS	Online Australian Scholarships Information System
ODA	Australian Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PG	Postgraduate
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PRO	Pacific Regional Organisation
PSC	GoF Public Service Commission
QAI	Quality at Implementation (AusAID)
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
SOFEA	Scholarships Online, Financial Estimation Administration
SPBEA	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment
SPC	Secretariat for Pacific Community
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UG	Undergraduate
US\$	United States Dollar

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Executive Summary

Background

The 2010-11 Australian Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Fiji is estimated at A\$37.2 million, of which A\$18 million is for bilateral aid. The key objectives of Australia's aid program in Fiji are to: improve economic recovery; develop rural enterprise and financial inclusion programs to generate local employment; promote better access to financial services and improve livelihoods; and help to facilitate an environment for good governance and building resilient communities.

Scholarships are a key aid modality, and one that partner governments value. The bilateral program for Fiji includes 15% for post-secondary scholarships (A\$2.7m in FY10/11) through the two main scholarship programs as part of the Australia Awards program – the Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) and the Australian Regional Development Scholarships (ARDS) schemes. The ARDS scheme provides opportunities for citizens of nine Pacific Island countries, including Fiji, to undertake study at post-secondary institutions in the Pacific region. The ADS scheme provides scholarships for in-Australia study in specialised areas not available at Pacific region institutions.

The ADS and ARDS objectives are to:

- enable Fiji citizens to gain the knowledge, skills, and international experience required to contribute to social and economic growth and stability, consistent with the focus areas of the bilateral aid program;
- help to create friendships and professional linkages with, and promote, Australia in the region.

While the Australian Government continues to award scholarships on the assumption that they support development and economic growth, better data and analysis is needed to support this investment. With the recent changes to the Fiji scholarships program to increase the number of ADS awarded (40 new awards per annum) and to target ARDS to TVET study (20 new awards per annum), more information is needed regarding the utilisation and transfer of alumni skills/knowledge in the workplace and their contribution to Fiji's human resource capacity as well as to the bilateral program. The objectives of this study are therefore to:

- a) assess the impact of the ADS and ARDS alumni in contributing to the human resource needs of Fiji in support of their long-term development in consideration of the Fiji Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics (MNP) human resource priority areas of need;
- b) make recommendations on how re-integration plans should be developed and implemented for those completing programs of study;
- c) provide recommendations for a scholarships framework for future ADS and ARDS that would focus on a small number of broad key priority areas and which could take advantage of coordinating/aligning with other Fiji scholarships agencies; and
- d) provide suggestions or recommendations on possible indicators or measures for assessing effectiveness of/impact on future scholarships, including the regularity of impact studies.

Approach and Methodology

The study considers the impact of individual scholarship alumni and their contribution (through outputs, skill utilisation and transfer) to the organisation within which they are working. It examines these outcomes through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on whether the ADS/ARDS alumni whose awards finished between 2000 to 2010: remain in Fiji after completing their scholarship; are employed in a job which is relevant to their studies; utilise the skills/knowledge gained during their scholarship; transfer their skills/knowledge; and maintain the linkages established during their award.

The study was conducted over an eight week period from mid August to early October 2011 and used a mixed method approach. Data on the 272 alumni whose awards finished between 2000 to 2010 was extracted from AusAID's scholarship databases and summarised to obtain descriptive data on all the alumni. Contact mapping was then undertaken on a 50% stratified random sample of the alumni to determine their employment, location and contact details. After intensive efforts, 98 alumni (72% of the sample) were able to be contacted by AusAID Fiji. Of the contactable alumni, 81% (79 alumni) completed an online tracer survey. In-country consultations were undertaken with key stakeholders and seventeen interviews conducted with selected alumni.

The study was subject to a number of limitations. Whilst the survey respondents were broadly representative by scheme, award end year, level of study and gender, the contact mapping and survey respondents are likely to under-represent alumni who are unemployed, live outside of the main island of Viti Levu or live overseas. The relatively small number of tracer survey respondents limited statistical analysis of significant difference, however analysis of proportions and frequency is sufficient for understanding the data. Overall the study provides useful insights and findings as a basis for examining Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni scholarship outcomes.

Findings

Whilst some information is available on labour supply in Fiji, effective targeting of ADS/ARDS scholarships is limited by out of date labour market demand information. A draft national Human Resource Development plan has however been developed by the Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics and will be publicly available by the end of 2011. To inform the award of post-secondary scholarships to Fiji citizens, after consultation with the public and private sectors, the MNP annually produces a National Training Needs list of the training needed to meet Fiji's current and future human resource needs, broken down by broad sector and level of study. This list is used by the three main Government of Fiji (GoF) scholarship schemes which offer over 3,000 scholarships a year, mostly for study in Fiji but also for overseas study where required.

In addition to considering training needs to support its bilateral programs, AusAID also uses the MNP list as input into prioritising its scholarship awards. However as the MNP list of training needs is extensive, AusAID also directly consult with the Public Service Commission (representing the public sector) and the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (representing the private sector) to confirm and prioritise training needs in their respective sectors. Effective dialogue with the community sector regarding their scholarship needs has proved more challenging, as there is no recognised umbrella Civil Society Organisation in Fiji. Despite the large number of scholarships for study at local Fiji institutions, effective coordination between the various GoF and donor agencies is limited.

The scholarships management approach in Fiji primarily targets individuals, selected on the basis of academic merit and relevance of their proposed training program to national HRD needs, rather than through an organisational approach whereby individuals are selected following their nomination by a number of key target organisations. The broad training areas identified by AusAID Fiji for the 2012 ADS/ARDS intake were economic growth, public sector management and reform, international trade, rural development and agriculture, climate change, health, education. Over sixty programs of study are listed in the scholarship advertisement for the 40 ADS awards, the majority of which are also included in the MNP National Training Needs list.

ADS/ARDS awards are open to all Fiji citizens, across all sectors of the population: pre-service applicants (school leavers and those undertaking tertiary studies) and in-service applicants (those employed in the private, civil society and public sectors). Despite widespread national scholarship promotion, there is some evidence of lower application levels from applicants with disability, those in rural/remote areas, females in non-traditional employment areas, and females working in the public service.

The ADS/ARDS schemes have contributed to Fiji's human resource development over many years, through increasing the number of post-secondary qualified human resources in areas of training need. Between 2000-2010, 272 Fiji citizens completed ADS/ARDS funded undergraduate (54%) and postgraduate education (46%). The ADS awards in particular have enabled training in fields of education not available at the time in Fiji. Through the equal allocation of awards to females as well as males, the scholarship program has promoted gender equity in human resource development. A very high proportion of these awardees completed their qualification, and returned to Fiji to work, at least for the period of the two-year AusAID scholarships "embargo" (when alumni cannot return to Australia to live or take up another scholarship) or GoF public service bond.

In consultation with the Fiji government, and in response to the training needs identified at the time, the 2000-2010 ADS/ARDS alumni were selected to undertake post-secondary education across a wide range of fields of study. Some of these areas of study (such as law, creative arts, MBAs and information technology), although priorities at the time, are no longer included in MNP as National Training Needs list. Nevertheless, the majority of alumni survey respondents still considered that their training is relevant at least to a medium extent to their current employment (94%) and also for Fiji's development (97%).

In response to Fiji's development priorities (and in the absence of in-country post-secondary education in fields such as engineering) the majority of alumni have been trained in the fields of health (19%), society and culture (19%) and engineering and related technologies (18%). Reflecting AusAID's overall program strategies for Fiji, in recent years

more alumni have undertaken health sector training. It is noted that whilst education is a key focus for AusAID's program in Fiji, only 9% of alumni have been trained in this area. This is likely to, in part, be due to a lesser need for donor scholarships for undergraduate education as the GoF's has its own programs for in-country teacher training. The level of training for the education sector may also be undercounted, as some alumni may have been trained in other fields of study (such as science) to support education sector activities.

Whilst there was an earlier scholarship program focus on meeting public sector HRD needs, Fiji and AusAID's more holistic approach to national development has resulted in the more recent inclusion of private sector training priorities. As a result, whilst the scholarships have contributed most to capacity development of the Fiji public sector, ADS/ARDS alumni are working across all sectors of Fiji. Of the contacted alumni, 64% are working in the Fiji public sector, with a further 9% working in a Fiji State Owned Enterprise. 16% of the alumni are working in non-government organisations, particularly regional organisations such as the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and 10% of the alumni are working in the private sector. 39% of the contacted alumni are working in the health and education sectors currently prioritised in Australia's development assistance for Fiji. AusAID has also been responsive to Fiji's emerging HRD needs, most recently through increasing the allocation of awards for in-Australia study and for targeting TVET in-country study.

Tracer survey alumni were asked the extent to which the skills and knowledge gained from their course of study had contributed to a positive change in work circumstances compared to before their study. 84% reported that their current position was ranked higher; 68% were more satisfied with their salary, 97% were supervising more staff, 73% had increased financial responsibility, 86% had an increased policy making role; and 84% had greater technical or operational responsibilities. The majority of the alumni reported that these positive changes in work circumstances were to a great extent due to the contribution of the skills and knowledge gained from their studies.

Assessment of scholarship outcomes and impact needs to take into consideration the political, economic and social context in which alumni are (and have been) working. Currently in Fiji, this includes ongoing political instability, high levels of competition for employment opportunities, a stagnant labour market, low economic growth rates, gender-based occupational discrimination, and significant disruptions and funding shortages to public sector programs affecting staffing levels and weakening human resource development and organisational planning. Nevertheless, whilst there are some variations between different groups of alumni, overall positive ADS/ARDS scholarship outcomes are that:

- *The majority of alumni remained in Fiji for two years or more after completing the scholarship:*
 - 100% of the 2008-2010 survey respondents are still in Fiji, although this may under-report cases where alumni was not able to be contacted and may be overseas.
- *The majority of alumni took up or resumed a job to which their studies are relevant within six months of returning home:*
 - 100% of the 2008-2010 survey alumni that were looking for work took less than three months to find work;
 - 99% of the survey alumni reported that their first employment after their award was relevant at least to a medium extent to their studies (and 81% responded that it was relevant to a great extent).
- *The majority of alumni have used what they have learnt to take action that contributes to organisational objectives (and development goals):*
 - 94% of the survey alumni reported that the content, knowledge and skills gained during their studies was relevant at least to a medium extent in their current job;
 - 89% of the survey alumni reported that they are using their technical/subject matter skills at least occasionally in their current job;
 - 74% of the survey alumni have produced an output in their current job that is related to the knowledge/skills obtained during their studies;
 - 97% of the survey alumni reported that the skills/knowledge gained from their studies was at least to a medium extent relevant to Fiji's development needs (93% of postgraduate alumni reported that their study was relevant to a great extent);
 - 55% of alumni reported using their skills outside the workplace to at least a medium extent in community-based organisations; and

- survey alumni reported frequent use of the “soft skills” gained on award: such as communication, analytical and critical thinking skills (which were used daily by 89%, 85% and 84% of the respondents respectively). The alumni interviewed also mentioned that their studies had helped them to develop a work ethic, to improve their time management skills and to have greater confidence in presenting opinions and making contributions in the workplace.

However, the study findings with respect to the outcome “*alumni continue to maintain relationships and links with Australia(ns) and with alumni networks in their country and in Australia for two years or more*” were not so positive:

- 23% of the survey respondents have had none or minimal contact with their former institution. Furthermore, the frequency of contact decreased with time - ADS alumni contact with former lecturers was significantly less for the 2000-2003 alumni (67% reported never being in contact); and
- 34% of the ADS survey respondents have had none, or minimal contact, with their cohort of Australian students.

In addition:

- at least 11% of the alumni contacted are no longer living in Fiji. This proportion is higher for the 2000-2003 alumni (18%). As 28% of the alumni were not able to be contacted for this study, this figure is likely to significantly under-represent the actual proportion of alumni now living overseas;
- 62% of survey respondents reported experiencing difficulty in applying their skills/knowledge in their current job (78% in the public sector, 36% in the private sector and 31% in the NGOs sector);
- only 49% have, at least to a medium extent, passed on the skills and knowledge gained from their studies through formal training/teaching courses in their current job (recent alumni were least likely to transfer their skills); and
- 15% of the survey respondents reported some negative impacts from their scholarship.

There were insufficient responses to the tracer survey to provide reliable data on the impact of alumni living overseas (proportion living overseas, reasons for moving, remittances etc).

Recommendations

These study findings point to the need to provide additional support to newly graduated alumni so as to maximise their skill utilisation and transfer particularly before they migrate or move into positions where their technical skills are not as relevant to their employment and they produce a lower extent of relevant outputs. The findings also indicate the need to support alumni to maintain and leverage the linkages with the contacts made whilst they were on award. Whilst over time, alumni may directly utilise their training to a lesser extent, many will still be in, or be promoted to, positions where they can play a critical soft-diplomacy role, including through improving people-to-people links between Australia and its partners. There is also a need to support alumni networking with other Fiji alumni, as 39% of the survey respondents reported difficulties in utilising their skills in their workplace due to lack of a professional network to share ideas, challenges and solutions and 35% responded that they lack opportunity to continue to develop their skills and knowledge.

Based on the analysis of ADS/ARDS outcomes for the 2000-2010 alumni, interviews with the alumni and consultations with key stakeholders in Fiji, to improve the impact of the scholarships it is **recommended** that AusAID:

1. develop ADS/ARDS applicant profiles to improve applicant targeting in Fiji;
2. strengthen its targeting of applicants with disability or applicants working with people with a disability;
3. strengthen its targeting of applicants from rural/remote areas to ensure equity of access from these areas;
4. in response to Fiji's priority training needs, continue the allocation of a higher proportion of its bilateral scholarships for in-Australia study, and subject to further evaluation as to the outcomes, target TVET study through ARDS;
5. more specifically target the ADS/ARDS awards by reducing the list of priority fields of study in consultation with key stakeholders in Fiji;
6. more closely integrate the ADS/ARDS program (from pre- to post-award activities) with its other development program activities in Fiji;
7. also include a Civil Society Organisation representative (in addition to the public and private sector representatives) on the Joint Scholarships Selection Committee;

8. provide re-entry workshops to support alumni enter/re-integrate to the workforce on award completion;
9. pilot reintegration planning for ADS/ARDS alumni in selected Fiji agencies in order to support them to apply and transfer their new knowledge/skills effectively;
10. increase its utilisation of the Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni to provide advice and undertake consultancy work in AusAID's development program activities in Fiji;
11. undertake a more pro-active role in supporting the Fiji Australia Scholarships Alumni Association to implement a regular program of activities and to maintain up-to-date alumni contact data;
12. arrange regular contact mapping of all Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni, so as to be able to include them in alumni activities, annually monitor employment and migration trends and to obtain representative samples of alumni for M&E studies;
13. undertake further analysis into the impact (through for example, remittances to their home country, or contributions to other countries in the region) of Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni living temporarily or permanently overseas; and
14. continue to closely meet regularly with Fiji government and other donor scholarship agencies to improve coordination and impact of the scholarship training provided to Fiji.

Fiji ADS/ARDS Impact Study: Final Report

1 Background

Scholarships for tertiary education delivered through Australia's overseas aid program enable Fiji 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. Regional scholarships also provide assistance and support to regional institutions, including guidance on the provision of quality student services.

The Australian Government delivers scholarships through a number of mechanisms bilaterally, globally and directly through Australian and partner country agencies in the public and private sectors. The bilateral aid program offers two main scholarship programs in Fiji – the Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) and the Australian Regional Development Scholarship (ARDS) schemes as part of the Australia Awards program. More recently the Australian Leadership Awards Scholarships (ALAS) were added to the suite of Australia Awards but are not funded through or managed as part of the bilateral aid program.

Scholarships are a key aid modality, and one that partner governments value and are highly dependent on. In financial year 2010/2011, the scholarship program's value was approximately A\$2.2 million of the bilateral program in Fiji. Education, and more specifically scholarships, can play an essential role in enabling key objectives of Australia's aid program in Fiji, to: improve economic recovery, develop rural enterprise and financial inclusion programs to generate local employment, promote better access to financial services and improve livelihoods, and help to facilitate an environment for good governance and building resilient communities.

A Fiji tracer survey of ADS/ARDS alumni who completed their awards between 2005 and 2007 was undertaken in 2008. Although the study sample was quite small, some interesting findings resulted. More information is however needed regarding the impact of scholarships on the workplace and their contribution to Fiji's broader human resource capacity as well as to the bilateral program objectives. While the Australian Government continues to award scholarships on the assumption that they support development and economic growth, better data and analysis is needed to support this investment. With the recent increase in ADS awards annually (40 awards), this Impact Study, as well as informing a strategy, should also provide information on how skills are being reintegrated into Fiji's human resource base. The study will focus on alumni who have completed their awards between January 2000 and December 2010, where possible, providing a comparison in contribution/support to places of employment of those who have recently completed their studies with those who completed more than three years ago.

2 Impact Study Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- a) Assess the impact of the ADS and ARDS alumni in contributing to the human resource needs of Fiji in support of their long-term development in consideration of the Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics human resource priority areas of need;
- b) Make recommendations on how re-integration plans should be developed and implemented for those completing programs of study;
- c) Provide recommendations for a scholarships framework for future ADS and ARDS that would focus on a small number of broad key priority areas and which could take advantage of coordinating/aligning with other Fiji scholarships agencies; and
- d) Provide suggestions or recommendations on possible indicators or measures for assessing effectiveness of/impact on future scholarships including the regularity of impact studies.

The Terms of Reference for the study are provided in Annex A.

3 Methodology and Approach

3.1 Approach

The AusAID Scholarships M&E Framework defines scholarships outcomes as “awardees reintegrate back to the workplace in their home country in a leadership role, maintain positive contacts with fellow scholars and Australian institutions and apply new skills in strengthening their organisation’s effectiveness”. In considering scholarship outcomes, successfully reintegrated scholars are those who:

- return home for two years or more after completing the scholarship;
- take up or resume a job to which their studies are relevant within 6 months of returning home;
- within the first 12 months, have used what they have learnt and the relationships they have developed to take action that contributes to organisational objectives and development goals; and
- continue to maintain relationships and links with Australia(ns) and with alumni networks in their country and in Australia for two years or more.

Furthermore, in their review of AusAID’s tertiary training assistance¹ the ANAO stated that a broad definition of impact is appropriate, to take into account the:

- role scholarships play in Australia’s foreign policy agenda, including their role in improving people-to-people links between Australia and its partners;
- proportion of alumni who return home and are making positive contributions to their countries’ development efforts;
- impact from alumni who have emigrated (through for example, remittances to their home country, or contributions to other countries in the region); and
- unintended consequences of scholarships, such the potentially negative impact of scholarships on institutions from losing qualified staff leaving on donor-funded scholarships.

As acknowledged by the ANAO, even with sophisticated and extensive approaches, the measurement of outcomes and impact from scholarship programs is difficult. This study therefore primarily considers the impact of scholarships on change at the individual alumni level and their contribution (through outputs and skill transfer) to the organisation within which they are working. As organisational change is affected by a multitude of internal and external factors beyond the scope of this study, this study does not examine the impact of scholarships on organisational change, on Fiji’s long-term economic and development or on the ultimate beneficiaries.

This study examines Fiji scholarship outcomes through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on whether the ADS/ARDS alumni: remain in Fiji after completing the scholarship; are employed in a job which is relevant their studies; utilise their skills/knowledge gained during their scholarship; transfer their skills/knowledge; maintain linkages established during their award; and the extent to which the scholarships have made a positive impact on individual’s work circumstances. The study also considers the impact of alumni who have emigrated and any unintended consequences of the scholarships.

The scope of the study is the Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni whose awards finished between 2000 to 2010, whether or not the alumni successfully completed their studies. This scope was selected to compare reintegration experiences and scholarship outcomes in the short to medium term after award completion. Differences between the responses of recent alumni and those who graduated more than three years ago are separately identified where relevant. Based on the analysis of award outcomes, interviews with alumni and consultations with key stakeholders in Fiji, recommendations are made to improve the impact of the scholarships, including with respect to using reintegration plans and for focusing future ADS and ARDS on a smaller number of key priority areas and which could take advantage of coordinating/aligning with other Fiji scholarships agencies.

3.2 Methodology

The key questions used to evaluate outcomes from the ADS/ARDS awards in Fiji (Annex D) reflect the study’s terms of reference and key evaluation questions in AusAID’s 2009 *Introductory Guidance on M&E for AusAID Development Awards Programs*.

¹ Auditor-General (2011). *AusAID’s Management of Tertiary Training Assistance. Audit Report No.44. 2010–11.*

The study used a mixed method approach, with quantitative and qualitative data collected through an alumni tracer survey, descriptive alumni data from AusAID databases, consultations with key stakeholders and case study interviews with selected alumni. The key components of the methodology included:

- agreement of the study methodology with AusAID Fiji;
- desk review and analysis of AusAID program and policy documents, scholarship management and M&E guidelines, and relevant Fiji-specific reports and reviews (as listed in Annex B);
- analysis of spreadsheet data² provided by AusAID Fiji on the 2000-2010 ADS/ARDS alumni from AusAID's databases - Scholarships Online, Financial Estimation Administration (SOFEA, for ARDS data) and Online Australian Scholarships Information System (OASIS, for ADS data);
- alumni sample selection and contact mapping by AusAID Fiji to determine the current workplace and contact details of the sample alumni;
- design, conduct and analysis of an on-line tracer survey on scholarship outcomes;
- a one week field visit to Fiji (Suva and Nadi) during the week 24-31 August 2011 to undertake in-country consultations and interviews;
- strategic semi-structured informant interviews with respect to the role of AusAID scholarships in meeting Fiji's HRD priorities with key stakeholder groups in Fiji³ - AusAID Fiji, PSC, MNP, Secretariat Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), Fiji National Council for Disabled People (FNCD) and the FCEF (Annex C);
- semi-structured case study interviews with selected alumni to triangulate data from the tracer survey and to obtain additional qualitative data;
- a debrief meeting with the ADS/ARDS managers at AusAID Fiji at the end of the in-country field visit; and
- provision of a draft Report to AusAID for their comments and suggestions, which will be incorporated in the Final Report, as appropriate.

In consultation with AusAID Scholarship Section, the Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey was based on the standard set of recommended ADS tracer survey questions⁴, with some question modifications and additions to reflect the inclusion of ARDS alumni in the scope and the specific study objectives. The survey covered key issues relating to alumni current location/employment status, experiences finding work, skill/knowledge utilisation and transfer, satisfaction with the outcomes of the award, and the maintenance of links with Australia and their student/scholarship peers. The survey was conducted between 1-16 September 2011, using the web-based Zoomerang survey management tool. The survey form is provided in Annex E and a summary of the statistical data is provided in Annex F.

Current data on alumni contact and employment is not reliably maintained on the AusAID databases. Given the staff resources that would be required to try to contact all the alumni, AusAID decided that a representative sample would instead be contacted for inclusion in the survey. A 50% stratified random sample of the 272 alumni was used, that with a 66% response rate would give a minimum of 5-10 cases for survey analysis of key variables. The sample was stratified by scheme, award end year (grouped by year: 2000-2003, 2004-2007 and 2008-2010) and by gender.

After extensive networking effort, AusAID Fiji obtained email addresses for 98 (72%) of the 136 sampled alumni. As the mix of personal and work emails were sent from the Zoomerang system, it is not known what proportion of these were actually received/read by the intended survey recipients. Five additional email addresses were obtained, but these "bounced" as not being valid. A total of seventy-nine survey responses were received. The overall response rate of the alumni in the sample was 58%, however there was an 81% response rate from the alumni contacted to participate in the survey. Further detail on the survey methodology is provided in Annex F.

Semi-structured case study interviews were conducted with seventeen alumni. The key issues covered in the interviews were common to those in the tracer survey, so as to provide triangulation to the on-line survey responses. The interviews were also undertaken to enable flexible exploration of more complex and sensitive issues than would be possible through the written on-line survey. The alumni interviewed were selected purposively by AusAID Fiji to reflect the broad characteristics of the alumni population (by scheme, gender, award end year, employment status, and organisation sector). No overseas alumni were available for interview, and an alumni whose award had been terminated did not attend the pre-arranged interview. The interviews, lasting between half to one hour were conducted in English at the alumni's workplace, or in a public place, in Suva or Nadi. Summary notes were taken to inform the analysis of the interview data.

² Containing the data fields: Scheme, alumni name, gender, program name, institution name, institution country, award start, award end and completion status.

³ The specific individuals, stakeholders and organisations consulted were selected based on advice from AusAID Fiji.

⁴ Nugroho, D. (2011). *Guidelines for a consolidated methodology for AusAID scholarships tracer studies.*

As there is high visibility of alumni within many Fiji organisations, and some issues likely to be raised would be of a sensitive nature, alumni were assured of confidentiality in their responses. Reporting the tracer survey and interview data is therefore done anonymously, with a snapshot of the alumni interviewed provided separately to AusAID Fiji. To ensure confidentiality, quotes used in this report have been edited in some cases to remove identifying details.

The written outputs from the study are a draft report followed by a final report. AusAID provided feedback on the draft report to ensure it met the requirements of the assignment, points of clarification and accuracy of reporting. The final report will be circulated to key stakeholders as a basis for discussion of the study outcomes and recommendations.

3.3 Study Limitations

The study was subject to a number of limitations. As the tracer survey contact mapping was desk-based from Suva, it is likely that contact was able to be made with a higher proportion of those alumni who were employed and/or living in the capital city, Suva. That is, the survey is likely to under-represent alumni who are unemployed, live outside of Viti Levu or live overseas. Difficulty in making contact with alumni living overseas meant that there were insufficient responses to the tracer survey to provide reliable data on the impact of alumni living overseas (proportion living overseas, reasons for moving, remittances). Lack of contact with overseas alumni may in part be due to concerns that the alumni may have with regard to complying with AusAID expectations and policies regarding remaining in Fiji to fulfil the obligations of their scholarship. Similarly it may also be expected that alumni may present an overall more positive response regarding their scholarship outcomes so as to try to validate the investment made by AusAID, and in some cases, in anticipation of a more positive response when applying for a further scholarship in the future.

The tracer survey respondents were not representative of the total alumni population in a number of other areas. ADS, female and postgraduate alumni were over-represented in the survey responses. ARDS, undergraduate and male alumni were correspondingly under-represented. It is not considered that this significantly affects the validity of the survey results, and where appropriate the responses from each category are separately identified. Other study limitations include that:

- some key data from OASIS/SOFEA (e.g. award end year) is not consistent with that reported by the survey respondents. In the absence of corroborative data, the alumni responses were used in the analysis;
- the relatively small number of survey respondents (79 responses) limits the statistical analysis of significant difference. However analysis of proportions and frequency is generally sufficient for understanding the data; and
- there is limited availability of reliable and current labour market, labour demand and national HRD planning documents.

Where the study has been limited by these or other factors, the findings have been appropriately annotated. However, overall the study still provides useful insights and findings as a basis for examining scholarship outcomes of the Fiji ADS/ARDS 2000-2010 alumni.

3.4 Study Team and Timeline

The Fiji study was conducted over an eight week period from mid-August to early October 2011 (25 working days). It was led by an external consultant, working closely with AusAID Fiji for direction, in-country support and survey administration. The assistance of AusAID Fiji in providing advice on the Fiji development context, the scholarships program and in undertaking the alumni contact mapping, testing the survey instrument and providing phone call reminders to alumni is gratefully acknowledged.

4 Development Context

4.1 Fiji Development Context

Fiji's population of approximately 900,000 is composed of two main ethnic groups, indigenous Fijians (55 percent) and Indo-Fijians (41 percent). Three quarters of Fiji's population live on Viti Levu, the largest island in the Fiji archipelago (consisting of 322 islands and coral atolls, of which around 100 are inhabited). Fiji is relatively urbanised, with approximately 46 percent 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-dependent⁵. However, recent adverse political, economic and social developments have raised serious questions regarding Fiji's future stability and prosperity. Military coups in 1987, 2000 and 2006 have polarised Fijian society, isolated the country internationally and accelerated the exit of capital and human resource skills. Each coup has resulted in long-lasting political and social upheaval, and has eroded the capacity and independence of key institutions⁶. In December 2006, the democratically elected Government of Fiji = was overthrown in a military coup. The Constitution was abrogated in April 2009 leaving the country to be governed under Public Emergency Regulations. Fiji is now ruled through the regular issue of Decrees, with overall decision-making rests with the interim Cabinet. Fiji is experiencing deteriorating physical infrastructure, growing squatter settlements, unproductive farms and rising unemployment.

Agriculture, textiles, tourism, construction and mining have been the mainstay of Fiji's productive sector. Fiji's economy, has however also been affected by the impact of the global financial crisis on demand for Fiji tourism and exports, rising fuel prices and devastating floods in January 2009. Tourism, wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, manufacturing, agriculture (including sugar), forestry and fisheries sectors, have all slumped and further decline is predicted in the finance, insurance, real estate and business services sector. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that Fiji's economy contracted by 2.5 percent in 2009⁷. Nevertheless, the interim GoF forecasts a modest economic expansion over the next two years - with projected Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth averaging around 1 percent for 2011 and 2012. That growth will depend in part on a rebound in the agriculture sector in 2011 and its continued strong performance in 2012⁸. ADB has raised the growth forecast for 2011 to 1.2%, in the expectation of building on the 0.6% growth of 2010. Indicators show slow tourism growth and cane and sugar production projections are flat. The mining sector, while increasing, contributes just 0.4 percent of GDP.

Overall Fiji has performed relatively well in terms of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators. Fiji performs above the developing country average on most human development indicators, with a per capita GDP of around USD\$3,280, life expectancy of 68 years, low maternal, infant and child mortality rates, approximately 40% of children remaining at school until the age of 18 and a 93% adult literacy rate⁵. However, there are concerns that Fiji is showing signs of decline against some of the MDGs, particularly those related to health and poverty⁹. Although access to health and education is reasonably good by Pacific standards, the quality of services is poor, especially in rural areas. Already about one third of people in Fiji live below the poverty line, with rural indo-Fijians and women particularly vulnerable¹⁰. It is uncertain whether Fiji will meet the MDGs for reduced child and maternal mortality, access to clean water and improved sanitation.

4.2 Fiji Labour Market

The Fiji labour market suffers a significant imbalance between the supply and the demand of labour. The 2009 Fiji Labour Force Estimates indicated there were 132,600 in the formal waged sector and a 8.7% unemployed rate. There is a population 'youth bulge', with a high percentage (27% in 2010) of the population at a 'job seeking' age (15–29 years) with little chance of gaining formal sector employment. Each year over 17,000 new entrants join the labour market, including about 14,000 school leavers. 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. With continued low economic growth projections this situation is likely to become worse. There is a reported lack of job opportunities in many graduate (particularly of bachelor degrees) areas, while there are gaps in some areas, for example the ADB report a large skill shortage for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates¹¹.

Permanent emigration from Fiji has created serious shortages of skilled manpower in the economy. Over half of Fiji's stock of middle to high-level labour emigrated over the ten years following the 1987 coup. Some 2866 professional and technical workers (particularly architects, accountants, teachers, medical, dental, veterinary workers) emigrated during the period 2000 – 2003 (Fiji Island PSC, 2008). Between 2000–2009, an average of 5,000 Fijians emigrated per annum, of which 25% were professional and trade workers. Reliable data on the emigration rates for specific

⁵ Shaw (2007). *Fiji Country Report for AusAID*.

⁶ AusAID website, *Fiji Country Profile*, downloaded 8 September 2011.

⁷ Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook*, April 2010.

⁸ *Economy Securing The Present, Shaping The Future. World Bank East Asia and Pacific Economic Update 2011, Vol. 1.*

⁹ AusAID website, downloaded 22 August 2011.

¹⁰ Fiji Ministry of Social Welfare, 2002–03 Household Income and Expenditure Survey.

¹¹ Chandra, R (2009). *Higher Education Developments in Fiji: Global, regional and national imperatives and issues of quality and affordability. tertiary education in small states: Planning in the context of globalization IIEP/SEM 293/9.*

professions is not available as many Fijians do not provide the necessary detail when self-reporting on departure. A high level of skilled migration takes away from the potential for sustainable economic and social development. The emigration of Fijians trained in specialist skill areas with high investment and long lead times, such as those in the health sector, also poses particular challenges for workforce planning and development sustainability.

The Fijian Public Service Commission (PSC) plays a vital role in the labour market as it is the biggest employer in Fiji (some 52,000 people were employed in the public service in 2009, 40% of the formal waged sector). In 2009, Fiji's interim government announced Public Sector Reforms to right size the public service and bring about better performance, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. These reforms included reducing the civil service wage bill, and enforcing wage and partial hiring freezes. In 2010, wages and salaries as a share of current government expenditure was estimated at 43.7 percent (compared to 47.5 percent the previous year), and are budgeted to fall to 41 percent in 2011. In 2011, the PSC reported some relaxation on the reform measures such as the lifting of the freeze on appointments for established staff in priority areas and engagement of selected staff on case by case basis¹². There is also still a need in some Ministries (particularly in the Education, Health, Home Affairs and Immigration) to replace the 2557 public servants that retired when the compulsory retirement age was lowered to 55 years¹³.

The Fiji labour market is stagnant, with the Reserve Bank's Job Advertisement Survey reporting a 0.5% annual increase in job advertisements in April 2011¹⁴. To address unemployment issues, a National Employment Centre (NEC) in the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment was formed in 2009 to assist access to employment opportunities, work-ready skills training and work experience attachments. The MNP reported that there are over 20,000 unemployed persons registered on the NEC database.

4.3 Emigration and Remittances

A high proportion of Fijians leave their country to work overseas on a permanent basis. There are more than 30,000 Fijians abroad, mainly in New Zealand, the United States and Australia. "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" (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 decisions¹⁵. The World Bank labour mobility study showed that 44% of Fiji households have a member intending to migrate. The study also showed "no statistically significant relationship between migration intentions and acquiring tertiary qualifications" (World Bank, 2006). However, an ADB report found that 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).

Although Fiji alumni working overseas are no longer utilising their skills and knowledge to contribute directly to Fiji's development, they nevertheless may still have a positive impact, through providing remittances and donations-in-kind to provide social assistance to their families, relatives and friends. Remittances have made a positive contribution to alleviating household poverty in Fiji¹⁶. About a third of Fijian households receive remittances, a significant proportion of which are used to fund education and to pay for medical services. At the 2009 Pacific Forum Economic Ministers Meeting, Ministers emphasised the important role of remittances as a source of national income and economic growth for many Forum Island Countries¹⁷. In 2008, remittances to Fiji were USD\$255.8m, or 4.6% of GDP¹⁸.

¹² PSC on target to contain the cost of Public Service. Media Release. May 30, 2011.

¹³ PSC, 2008.

¹⁴ ADB Pacific Economic Monitor, July 2011.

¹⁵ Mohanty, 2007.

¹⁶ Migration and Remittances Factbook, Dilip Ratha and Zhimei Xu, 2006, Development Prospects Group, World Bank.

¹⁷ In Tonga and Samoa, remittance inflows are consistently greater than 25 percent of GDP.

¹⁸ T.K. Jayaraman (2011). Role of remittances in small Pacific Island economies: an empirical study of Fiji. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, Vol. 3, No. 5, 2011.

4.4 Human Resource Planning

Whilst information is available in terms of labour supply, there is limited labour market demand information (LAPI, 2007). National human resource planning is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics (MNP). The Strategic Planning Office (SPO) within the MNP is primarily responsible for coordinating development efforts, the implementation of the Integrated Human Resource Development Programme and manpower planning particularly in the identification of priority areas. It coordinates meetings of the Human Resource Technical Committee whose membership includes human resource managers/training officers from the SPO, 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 FCEF as private sector representatives. The SPO is also responsible for development of a national HRD Plan and advised that a National Strategic Human Resource Plan will be publicly available by the end of 2011.

To determine the national training needs, the SPO conduct an annual survey to collect training requests from individual public sector ministries and from the private sector (through the FCEF). From this data the MNP collate a National Training Needs list of priority training to meet current and future human resource needs. This list is reviewed by Human Resource Technical Committee, then approved by Human Resource Management Committee. It is indicatively available at end of the first quarter of each year. As might be expected from a national list across all sectors, the 2012/13 list contains a broad range of priority areas, grouped by broad sector and level of study (Annex I). It does not indicate the number of people needing to be trained in any specific area. The process for determining priorities appears to lack some robustness in terms of identifying skills gaps/surpluses and forward manpower planning. It is not apparent as to whether the training need requests from individual agencies have been triangulated with data from other sources (e.g. number of expatriates employed, number of migrants by area of specialisation, students on award/about to graduate, unemployed persons on the NEC database, public service data/training/succession plans etc).

4.5 Post-Secondary Scholarships

4.5.1 Government of Fiji Scholarships

Although high by Pacific Islands standards, Fiji's level of post-secondary education is low by international standards, with its gross participation rate standing at 15 percent in 2006. This is much lower than the 40-50 percent that the World Bank recommends as the minimum for developing countries if they are to succeed in the new knowledge economy and society¹⁹. Post-secondary education in Fiji is provided at over 70 public and private training institutions. In 2010, there were 11,032 Fiji students (headcount) or 6455 EFTS at the University of the South Pacific (USP)²⁰. In 2010, 614 Fiji females and 532 males completed bachelor degree courses; 72 males and 93 females completed Masters programs (of which sixty were Masters Business Administration graduates). Now part of the Fiji National University (FNU), in 2009 18,000 Fiji citizens were enrolled at the Fijian Institute of Technology (FIT), with 715 enrolled at the Fiji School of Medicine (FSMed).

There is considerable donor, government and private sector funding of scholarships for post-secondary training of Fiji citizens. For example, 40% of the Fiji students at USP in 2010 are sponsored by the Fiji Government, and a further 4% sponsored by other donor agencies. There are three large GoF scholarship programs for its citizens. These include the iTaukei scholarships for indigenous Fijians, the PSC Scholarships scheme open to all ethnic groups in Fiji and the Multi-Ethnic Affairs Scholarships for non-indigenous citizens.

The iTaukei scholarships are administered by the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs (previously the Fijian Affairs Board) with the objective to bridge the education gap between indigenous Fijians and the other races. The program has an annual budget of F\$10m for 2012²¹, with approximately F\$4.5m for overseas study (for new and continuing students). Approximately 40 awards (from over 200 applicants) are made for overseas study each year. In 2011, there were 12 awardees in NZ, 46 in Australia, 25 in Malaysia, 1 in China and 1 in Singapore. In 2011, over 1,000 scholarships were awarded for study at USP (over 200), FSMed (80), FNU/FIT (over 400) and other Fijian institutions. Scholarship selection is based on academic merit as well as national HRD priorities as specified in the MNP National Training Needs list.

¹⁹ Chandra, R (2009). *Higher Education Developments in Fiji: Global, regional and national imperatives and issues of quality and affordability. tertiary education in small states: Planning in the context of globalization IIEP/SEM 293/9.*

²⁰ USP Official Statistics, 2010.

²¹ Fiji Times online. 4 Mar 2011.

The PSC Workforce Planning and Scholarship Unit, a section of the Training Division, is responsible for public sector workforce planning. It also administers the government's scholarship awards (with the exception of the iTaukei scholarships), as well as liaising with some donor countries on their local and overseas scholarships for Fiji. The PSC Overseas and Local Scholarships are available to not only public servants, but also school leavers and others to meet public service training needs and also the broader human resource requirements of the nation. The program has an annual budget of approximately F\$30 million. The PSC local awards are mainly for pre-service applicants at the undergraduate level and includes scholarships for teaching and nursing. In 2010, the program awarded 458 scholarships from 1,976 applications for local study²². The PSC offered 15 new overseas awards in 2011, with all applicants choosing to study in Australia or New Zealand. A separate budget is available for scholarships for medical training and individual Ministries also have their own training budgets for in-service employees. There is also a student loan scheme for pre-service students.

So that there is consistency between the GoF funded scholarship schemes, the Fiji Cabinet approved the upgrading of the PSC scholarships to full scholarships in June 2008. They also decided to harmonise the three government scholarship schemes so that meritorious students could be offered fully funded studies at approved training institutions. Implementation of this consolidation has not yet occurred, with the three schemes still being continued with different processes, terms and conditions until endorsement of a fully merged scheme. As part of this consolidation, management of the Multi-Ethnic Affairs Scholarship program has been transferred to the PSC. The main objective of the program is to assist students from poor and disadvantaged families of the Indian and minority communities to access tertiary education (eligible applicants are in families where the joint gross annual family income is below F\$15,000). In 2011, from a budget of F\$5.5 million, the program awarded 531 local scholarships from 2,634 applications, as well as a small number of overseas scholarships²².

4.5.2 Private Sector Funded Post-Secondary Educations

The 2008 ADS/ARDS Tracer Survey confirmed a strong tradition of self-funded and employer funded investment in post-secondary education in Fiji. As a retention and training tool, employees in larger companies are offered a range of study support ranging from full or partial tuition fee reimbursements to study leave on part or full-time pay. Some Fijian private sector firms also provide scholarships for financially disadvantaged school leavers. For example, in 2008, Vodafone Fiji Limited provided forty scholarships for study at USP and FIT, worth around F\$0.5 million dollars²³. There are also small scholarship schemes funded and operated by religious and charitable organisations in Fiji.

4.5.3 ADS/ARDS

ADS and ARDS are two largest scholarship programs open to Fiji citizens funded from the bilateral program. Australian regional or global scholarships available for Fiji citizens, among others, include the Australian Leadership Awards, the Endeavour Awards and the Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC) scholarships, which are funded and administered separately from the bilateral programs. Despite the current political situation, the scholarships program has not been affected, in fact it has recently been increased in budget, demonstrating Australia's commitment to continue the components of the aid program that benefit individuals.

The ARDS scheme, now part of the Australia Awards, provides opportunities for citizens of nine Pacific Island countries to undertake post-secondary study in the Pacific region. The ADS scheme provides scholarships for post-secondary study in Australia in specialised areas not available (through ARDS) at institutions in the Pacific region²⁴. Both schemes are available for undergraduate and postgraduate training (up to Master's level study). ADS and ARDS are not provided for PHD study in Fiji. Since their introduction, the scholarships have had a development focus with the overall goal of strengthening the human resource capacity of Fiji. The ADS and ARDS objectives are to:

- enable Fiji citizens to gain the knowledge, skills, and international experience required to contribute to social and economic growth and stability, consistent with the focus areas of the bilateral aid program;
- help to create friendships and professional linkages with, and promote Australia in the region.

Additionally the ARDS program aims to:

- provides support and assistance to regional higher education institutions, including guidance on the provision of quality student services.

²² PSC Media Release Media Release 019 of 2011.

²³ (<http://www.vodafone.com.fj/pages.cfm/general/about-us/media-releases-1/media-releases-08/aug-08.html>).

²⁴ Primarily the USP, and the newly formed Fiji National University (FNU); the latter comprising the FSM and FIT.

ADS and ARDS scholarship numbers, levels and fields of study are determined annually as part of Australia's bilateral development assistance program to Fiji. Until 2011, significantly more awards were offered for ARDS than for ADS.

Table 1: Number of ADS/ARDS awards offered by scheme/award year

Scheme	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
ADS	6	2	10	10	10	10	40	40
ARDS	40	24	25	30	30	30	10	20
	(incl. 15 DFL)	(incl. 10 DFL)	(incl. 10 DFL)	(incl. 6 DFL)	(incl. 6 DFL)			

Source: AusAID Fiji

The two schemes have their own comparative advantages. ARDS has advantages of being of significantly less cost²⁵ than ADS study, meaning that indicatively up to 75% more people can be provided with a higher education from the available budget than if they trained in Australia. ARDS training at Pacific institutions offers undergraduate education that is tailored and relevant to the Pacific, allows younger awardees to adapt to post-secondary study without the distractions of living away from positive family influences for the first time and for married awardees to remain with their families in their home country. The scheme also provides much needed tuition fee revenue for the Pacific institutions, thereby assisting to build their capacity/resources to offer a range of courses of Pacific regional relevance. AusAID also has a contract with USP (which is attended by the majority of ARDS awardees) and FSMed to provide support to Fiji and other Pacific ARDS awardees. This requires USP and FSMed to provide levels of student services and administrative accountability that might otherwise not be achieved. These benefits flow to not only awardees but also to other government or self-funded students at the institutions.

ADS study has advantages over ARDS in that awardees not only gain best-practice skills and knowledge from their in-Australia training (including the availability of programs of study and specialisations not available in the Pacific), but also experience living and studying in a country with developed technologies, strong public sector processes, legal systems and democracies. One of the ADS alumni interviewed indicated that the award gave him "exposure and appreciation of how things are done in other countries". Awardees also have the opportunity to form linkages with Australian institutions and students, exposure to alternative systems of education, business and government. These linkages can be leveraged to support alumni contributions to organisational development.

4.5.4 Other donor scholarships

In addition to the AusAID scholarships, the PSC coordinates Cuba medical (4), Singapore and Commonwealth scholarships. The NZAID scholarships have been suspended due to the political situation in Fiji. The Fiji Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade is responsible for all ODA and coordinates other donor scholarships such as from Japan (2), China (16), India (20), Malaysia (8), Cuba, Korea, Forum Secretariat, Morocco (10), Indonesia postgraduate and the East West Centre.

5 Applicant Targeting

5.1 Awardee Profiles

ADS/ARDS awards are open to all Fiji citizens, across all sectors of the community: pre-service applicants (school leavers and those currently undertaking tertiary studies) and in-service applicants (those employed in the private and public sectors). The scholarships are managed by AusAID Fiji through an "open" category, with applications submitted directly to SPBEA as the Managing Contractor for selected pre-award processes. Initially, in-service applicants include a statement of support by their employer, with public servants requiring government approval before taking up an award offer.

The AusAID scholarship program in Fiji currently targets individual attributes (rather than specifying types of organisations). Applications are considered in four categories (by gender): students in Form 7 or USP/FIT Foundation studies; students undertaking tertiary studies; working applicants with a tertiary qualification and at least 5 years of work experience; and working applicants without tertiary qualifications but at least 10 years work experience. Application scoring is based on pre-defined weighted criteria (academic qualifications, relevant work experience,

²⁵ The ANAO report indicated the average annual cost of a Bachelor's degree in Australia to be A\$40,000 compared to A\$22,000 at a Pacific institution.

quality of proposal, reference/CV, and relevance of study to the priority training needs). The highest weighting (between 70-80% dependent on the applicant category) is for academic merit. AusAID Fiji have to date primarily allocated awards evenly across the four categories.

ADS/ARDS promotion is wide-spread throughout Fiji, with the 2011 advertisements in all three languages on the radio (Communication Fiji and Fiji Broadcasting Commission), in national newspapers (Fiji Times, Fiji Sun) and on the AusAID websites. Remote/rural applicants have materials available to them through the Ministry of Education's District Education Offices. Although a large number of applications are received each year (1054 in 2011), scholarship promotion and targeting could be improved in some areas. Targeting of rural applicants should include monitoring receipt of applications from rural areas and taking follow up action as necessary. In 2011, there was no specific targeting for the changed program focus on TVET applications. Promotion for the next intake should include promotion directly to TVET secondary schools, more explicit definitions of the TVET areas to be supported (and the program of study level), and the targeting of female TVET applicants in non-traditional employment areas. The continued need for AusAID to work with organisations in the disability sector to successfully promote the awards to people with a disability is discussed in Section 5.4. The level of detail included in the scholarship promotions should aim, where possible, to decrease the number of invalid applications received (for the 2012 intake, 60% ADS and 81% ARDS applications were invalid, although significantly reduced from previous years²⁶). Nevertheless it is expected that the number of invalid applications may remain high due to the difficult circumstances in Fiji putting pressure on students to at least apply for every possible (even if unlikely) opportunity. For example, 24% of the invalid applications had insufficient marks, even though the minimum cut-off examination results was clearly indicated in the scholarships advertisement.

Defining a desired applicant profile for each of the ADS/ARDS target groups would help to ensure that quality and informed candidates are being encouraged to apply. As in the sample desired applicant profile template in Annex G²⁷, each profile should indicate the eligible group, strategies to encourage applications, scheme promotion, selection criteria and support service options. The profile should also detail the target applicant bio-data (gender, attained level of education, work-experience, work-sector/role, any targeted disadvantage) and applicable programs of study (level and fields of study).

Recommendation: That AusAID develop ADS/ARDS applicant profiles to improve applicant targeting in Fiji.

5.2 Merit-based Selection

The Joint Scholarships Selection Committee (JSSC) makes recommendations to AusAID on awardee selection. In the current political climate, the continuation of transparent and merit-based selection of candidates with good potential is particularly important. To engage a broader range of stakeholders, in addition to PSC representation on the JSSC, from 2011 the FCEF (representing the private sector) were also included. In 2010 for the first time, AusAID Post involved the MNP in preliminary selection processes where they participated in initial culling to select applicants that matched agreed priority areas of study. Priority and reserve lists were then presented to the JSSC to ensure that both the MNP and PSC agencies of government concerned with personnel planning on both public sector and national levels were involved in selection. Given the holistic role of the MNP in manpower planning in Fiji, consideration should be given to their full inclusion in the JSSC. The inclusion of a Civil Society Organisation representative on the JSSC would also be valuable in providing perspectives and input on civil society and equity issues.

Recommendation: That in addition to public and private sector representatives, AusAID also include a Civil Society Organisation representative on the Joint Scholarships Selection Committee.

5.3 Gender Equity

There is gender equity in the Fiji education system - girls comprise 52 percent of the secondary school students²⁸ and outperform boys in examinations²⁹. The MIA and PSC reported that whilst they have no gender equity policy and selection is based on academic scores, more than 50% of their scholarships go to females. However, occupational discrimination and gender segregation are strong and persistent in Fiji. Women's share of formal employment is

²⁶ SPBEA (2011).

²⁷ Provided by AusAID Scholarships Section, August 2011.

²⁸ Rising to 56 percent in Form 7, the final year of secondary school. Fiji Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008.

²⁹ Chandra, R (2009). *Higher Education Developments in Fiji: Global, regional and national imperatives and issues of quality and affordability. tertiary education in small states: Planning in the context of globalization IIEP/SEM 293/9.*

significantly lower than men's and women are less often promoted. Only about 30% of women are engaged in the formal economy and a large proportion work in semi-subsistence employment and self employment³⁰.

Whilst gender equity in ADS/ARDS selection is strictly maintained (with the shortlisting procedure ensuring a final selection of 50% females), there is some imbalance in the number of applications received from females in some areas. No specific applicant targeting to females is undertaken, although the advertisement states that equal numbers of scholarships will be awarded to male and female. Of the valid ARDS (TVET) applications, 42% were female, compared to 53% for ADS undergraduate and 34% for ADS postgraduate awards. There appears a need for more specific ARDS/TVET promotion towards females in this non-traditional employment area. Similarly, discussions should be held with the PSC as to ways to encourage in-service females to apply and be endorsed for scholarships in the same proportion as men. One of the public sector alumni interviewed stated that "females need to be encouraged to apply for scholarships as we feel small, and that there may not be much chance of being given a scholarship".

5.4 Disability

In Fiji, the rights of people with disability are stated in the Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons (FNCDP) Act. There is no national registration system to provide information on the number of school-age children with disabilities³¹. It is likely that barriers to education will have already limited the number of academically able students with disability graduating from secondary school. Whilst Australian universities provide support and facilities for people with disability, Fijian universities have limited support systems - access to ramps, Braille machines, big screen computers, interpreters, and individual support for students with disability who struggle in a fast-paced learning environment.

With the release of *Development for All: Towards a Disability-Inclusive Australian Aid Program* in 2008, the Australian Government expressed its commitment to extending the benefits of development to all, and to promoting the dignity and well-being of people with disability. Strengthening Australia's focus on disability in the aid program is integral to sustainable development. AusAID Fiji's policies and practices with respect to the award of ADS/ARDS to people with disability will need to be guided by the policy on disability inclusive scholarships being developed by the AusAID Scholarships Section, consideration of any legal and other regulations that may be applicable in Fiji and the other Pacific study countries, the advice of the AusAID Disability Adviser for the Pacific and consultation with relevant disabled people's organisations in Fiji. A small number of Fijians with disability have to date received an ADS/ARDS award. However, aside from some awareness raising work with disabled peoples organisations in Fiji, there has been limited direct targeting in this area. As an initial step, there is a need for more explicit activities to increase access to information on the scholarships by people with a disability.

Recommendation: That AusAID strengthen its targeting of applicants with disability or applicants working with people with a disability.

Pre-award processes could be strengthened through a range of means including: incorporating fields of study relevant to applicants supporting people with disability in the scholarship priority areas; including self-identification of disadvantage in the ADS/ARDS application form³²; continuance of AusAID advocacy work with representative/support organisations³³; dissemination of information in a range of accessible formats; arranging tailored support for application completion/interview attendance; and flagging these targeted applicants in the shortlisting reports. Potential applicants who identify themselves as having a disability should be requested to provide details of their disability/special need, so that appropriate support and assessment can be arranged.

The FNCDP noted that TVET is a good education option for students with disability who have not had opportunities academically but are skilled at working with their hands. With TVET being the current focus of the ARDS awards, this may be an area where AusAID can give particular emphasis in its scholarship promotions and targeting.

To provide a scholarship for a person with disability requires lot of discussion, coordination and planning as well as ongoing support and monitoring. Before an award is offered, an assessment would need to be undertaken as to the individualised support that the student would need to complete their studies successfully and whether reasonable

³⁰ Fiji EFA MDA Report 2007

³¹ Fiji EFA-VI National Plan 2009-2011 Education for All Children with Vision Impairments, including those with additional disabilities.

³² Which will also facilitate in analysis, reporting and M&E in this area.

³³ Such as the Fiji Society for the Deaf; Fiji Society for the Blind and the Pacific Disability Association amongst other NGOs and government organisations.

accommodation could be made³⁴. Following award offer, continued support should be provided to awardees with disability including: adjustment to award length where required; liaison with the university to discuss reasonable changes to the study environment and the university provision to the awardee of accessible rooms within the student accommodation; ongoing pastoral care and support in accordance with the disability inclusive provision of the institution's Pastoral Care Plan; and seeking advice Disabled People's Associations on disability inclusive matters. Post-award support may also be required.

5.5 Other Disadvantage

The prevalence of families in poverty in Fiji is higher in rural areas than in urban. In 2008-2009, 43% of rural population was in poverty compared to 19% in urban areas. Rural poverty is highest in the Northern District at 51%³⁵. Nevertheless while poverty in Fiji has traditionally been manifested by low incomes, inadequate housing, and poor access to health and education services, rather than hunger, the liquidity crisis and rising unemployment in 2009 will put increasing pressure on family incomes and the cost of living. As 51 percent of Fiji's population live in urban areas, the option to resort to subsistence lifestyles is not available to all³⁶.

The GoF already recognises the specific needs of students with disadvantage in a number of ways. The GoF iTaukei and MEA schemes provide targeted scholarships for individuals from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. The Ministry of Education has developed a disadvantage index for schools (based on social, economic, location and remoteness factors), with the aim to provide equity in assistance to highly disadvantaged schools³⁷. In 2010, the GoF also introduced new policies for entrance to post-secondary nursing and teacher training, with selection and entrance quotas based on geographical and disadvantaged criteria. The policy aims to promote "differential treatment to minimize the gaps that exist between urban and rural education thus giving adequate attention to problems faced by schools and students at their disadvantaged locations."

Fiji ADS/ARDS have to date been selected on academic merit and relevance of training need and have not factored in equity (other than gender) considerations. The stakeholders consulted during the field visit considered that AusAID should continue to focus on academic merit for selection, in order not to duplicate (or replace) the role of the GoF in providing scholarships for the financially disadvantaged. Without access to relevant government systems, AusAID would also have difficulty validating claims of financial disadvantage based on family income.

Providing scholarships to students living in rural/remote areas does however have strong alignment with other AusAID activities in Fiji (including in the education sector) and also to the AusAID's Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda policy to ensure that the opportunities to develop skills after secondary school, both locally and in the region, are accessible to women, people with a disability and those living in rural areas and on outer islands. Data on the family income or the secondary school of ADS/ARDS applicants is not currently routinely collected. However, 57% of the tracer survey respondents went to secondary school in the major urban centres of Suva, Nadi, Nausori or Lautoka, with only 3% from schools in the Eastern and Rotuma divisions of Fiji. As a basis for considering the feasibility of including disadvantage-related selection criteria in future years, data on secondary school location should be collected for pre-service applicants and analysed along with other situational data. AusAID should also strengthen the targeting of awards to rural/remote applicants through: ensuring that scholarship information is reaching rural remote applicants in a timely manner; coding of applicants by their secondary school category and presenting this information on the summary sheet provided to the JSSC; and considering positive discrimination to pre-service candidates from a rural/semi-rural school (particularly for the ARDS TVET awards) where there are two candidates of similar academic merit.

Recommendation: That AusAID strengthen its targeting of applicants from rural/remote areas to ensure equity of access.

³⁴ Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article (Accessibility) and 24 (Education) from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

³⁵ Fiji Bureau of Statistics - Key Statistics : June 2011. Household income and expenditure survey.

³⁶ Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics. Poverty indicators, 2009: http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/Social/poverty_indicators.htm.

³⁷ Fiji Education Sector Strategy, 2009-2011. Category A are schools in very remote areas with a roll between 10-49; Category B are small schools in remote rural areas with a roll between 50-99. Category C are medium schools in remote, rural and urban areas with a roll between 100-149 and Category D are medium and large schools mainly in rural, peri-urban and urban areas with a roll of 150 or more students".

6 Impact of Alumni on their Workplace

6.1 Return to Fiji

Successful reintegration requires that awardees return home for two years or more after completing the scholarship.

Departure of ADS awardees from Australia is strictly controlled by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship. As ADS alumni are not required to report back to AusAID on their return to Fiji, no data is available on the number of ADS alumni that leave Australia but do not return to Fiji. AusAID Fiji however report only a very small number of cases where Fiji ADS students have attempted to remain as over-stayers in Australia. As a condition of ADS/ARDS awards, alumni must return to their home country for a minimum period of two years after their award before they can live in Australia. Australian visa control procedures mean that permanent alumni applications to return to migration to Australia within the two year scholarships embargo period are able to be monitored. There are however no measures in place to monitor the movement of AusAID alumni to other countries, including New Zealand. Given the scholarship/immigration policies and processes, that public sector alumni are financially bonded by the GoF, the awareness that most alumni have of their scholarship obligations, and evidence from tracer survey data, it is considered that the vast majority of alumni do remain in Fiji for at least two years after completing their scholarship.

6.2 Finding Employment

Successfully reintegration requires that awardees take up or resume a job to which their studies are relevant within six months of returning home.

The tracer survey alumni were asked about their first work experiences after their award. This would be expected to vary dependent on whether the alumni was in-service (had been in employment) prior to the award (63% of alumni) or whether they were pre-service (37% of alumni). 84% of the in-service alumni reported that they had returned to work with their former employer, although a higher proportion of ADS in-service alumni looked for work with a different employer (22%) compared to ARDS alumni (9%).

The survey respondents worked across all sectors in their first employment after award end. 74% of the alumni worked in the Fiji public sector, 16% in the private sector and 10% in a Fiji/regional/international non government organisation as their first employment after award end. Table 2 shows that pre-service alumni were more likely to find their first employment in the private sector (21%) than in-service alumni (12%). Figures of current employment/relevance and interviews with alumni indicate that initial private sector employment may sometimes be a temporary measure for pre-service alumni, until more relevant employment is obtained. Some pre-service tracer survey alumni reported difficulties in finding work, mentioning lack of public service vacancies, waiting to find relevant work, and requiring more specialist training before they could secure a job.

Table 2: Alumni's first employer after scholarship by applicant type

First employer after scholarship	Pre-service	In-service	Total
Public sector organisation	71%	76%	74%
Foreign-owned private company	14%	4%	8%
Locally-owned private company	7%	8%	8%
National non-government/civil society organisation	4%	2%	3%
Multilateral aid agency (e.g. UNDP, World Bank)	0%	2%	1%
International non-profit organisation / INGO	4%	8%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

Table 3 shows that postgraduate alumni (many of whom would have been bonded) were more likely to work in the public sector after completion of their award (81%), compared to undergraduate alumni.

Table 3: First employer after scholarship by level of study

First employer after scholarship	Level of Study		
	UG	PG	Total
Public sector organisation	66%	81%	74%
Foreign-owned private company	14%	2%	8%
Locally-owned private company	14%	2%	8%
National non-government/civil society organisation (NGO)	3%	2%	3%
Multilateral aid agency (e.g. UNDP, World Bank)	0%	2%	1%
International non-profit organisation / INGO	3%	9%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

The respondents sector of first employment after award did not vary much by award end year, although a lower proportion of the 2004-2007 alumni had their first job in the public sector (67%), combined with public sector recruitment policies at that time (with only 55% of pre-service alumni finding work there).

Table 4: Alumni's first employer after scholarship by award end year

First employer after scholarship	Award End Year			Total
	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010	
Public sector organisation	82%	67%	79%	74%
Foreign-owned private company	0%	6%	12%	8%
Locally-owned private company	18%	9%	3%	8%
National non-government/civil society organisation	0%	3%	3%	3%
Multilateral aid agency (e.g. UNDP, World Bank)	0%	0%	3%	1%
International non-profit organisation / INGO	0%	15%	0%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

For those alumni whose first job after their award was in the Fiji public sector, 38% worked in government administration and 36% in health services and 16% had a first job in a Fiji public sector teaching institute (although other alumni worked in the education sector at USP, a regional non-government organisation). Reflecting traditional gender employment differences, 27% of female alumni's first employment after award was in a teaching institute compared to 4% of the male alumni.

Most pre-service tracer survey respondents found work quickly, with 60% finding work within two months or less. However postgraduate alumni took longer (3-12 months) to find work (55%) than undergraduate alumni (36%). Female alumni also took longer to find their first employment, with 17% taking seven or more months (compared to none of the male alumni). Table 5 shows that finding first time employment was easier for more recent graduates than for those who graduated before 2008.

Table 5: Length of time to find work by award end year

Length of time to find work	Award End Year			Total
	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010	
Less than 1 month	25%	33%	100%	55%
1 to 2 months	25%	0%	0%	5%
3 to 6 months	50%	44%	0%	30%
7 to 12 months	0%	22%	0%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

Pre-service alumni are not assisted by Fiji government agencies to find relevant work on award completion, although they may be advised to register as unemployed on the NEC database. To assist awardees in finding work after graduation, AusAID Fiji has commenced distributing lists of awardees about to graduate to PSC and the FCEF for

onward forwarding to potential employers. This initiative was well received by the FCEF and should be continued. AusAID has also commenced dialogue with professional organisations, such as the Fiji Institute of Engineers, to better understand training needs and facilitate alumni reintegration in this area. Awardees should also be encouraged by AusAID to make contact with potential employers during their studies, and where possible to arrange attachments and work experience during university holidays.

Re-entry workshops would be of value to new alumni in order to provide them with advice on finding work and on utilising/transferring their new knowledge/skills. A structured program (presented by AusAID, alumni from earlier cohorts and employers) could explore topics such as how to find work, networking skills, maintaining and leveraging contact with university staff and fellow students, influencing change and career progression and using reintegration plans (see Section 9.3). The workshops should also address gender-specific issues that have been identified in this and other studies.

Recommendation: That AusAID provide re-entry workshops to support alumni enter/reintegrate to the workforce on award completion.

6.3 Relevance of study to employment

Of the tracer survey alumni, 81% responded that their study was to a great extent relevant to their first job after the scholarship. Only 1% of alumni reported that their study was not at all relevant. Alumni who studied engineering (100%) and health (88%) degrees reported the greatest extent of study relevance, particularly compared to those who studied education (71%), agriculture (71%) and management (70%). Perhaps given their higher difficulty in finding work, the 2004-2007 alumni reported a lower extent of first job relevance than the more recent alumni.

Table 6: Extent of relevance of study to first job after scholarship by award end year

Extent of relevance of study to first job after scholarship	Award End Year			
	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010	Total
To a great extent	82%	73%	88%	81%
To a medium extent	9%	12%	6%	9%
To a small extent	0%	15%	6%	9%
Not at all	9%	0%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

Compared to the first employment after the award (81%), a slightly lower percentage of alumni reported that their current job was to a great extent relevant to their studies (76%). No alumni reported that their current work was of no relevance, however the 2000-2003 alumni were significantly less likely to consider their skills relevant to a great extent (44%) in the current job compared to the first job after employment (82%). Although no reasons for this difference were provided through the survey, it is possible that this could be due to alumni changing or being promoted to jobs over time where their technical skills are no longer as relevant (and managerial skills more relevant).

Table 7: Extent of relevance of content, knowledge and skills gained during studies to current job by award end year

Extent of relevance of content, knowledge and skills gained during studies to current job:	Award End Year			
	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010	Total
To a great extent	44%	68%	93%	76%
To a medium extent	33%	26%	7%	19%
To a small extent	22%	6%	0%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

6.4 Skill Utilisation

Successful reintegration requires that awardees have used what they have learnt and the relationships they have developed to take action that contributes to organisational objectives and development goals.

Scholarship outcomes and organisational development is most likely to occur when supportive managers give alumni the opportunity to use and transfer their new knowledge and skills. The FCEF reported that the larger private sector companies in Fiji have well-developed induction, training, and career development planning for their new employees. Within the Fiji public sector, the individual Ministries are responsible for ensuring alumni skills are utilised, although the PSC does provide leadership and mentoring training courses for managers. The public service alumni interviewed during the study reported significant differences in the approaches and human resource management capabilities of their line managers.

Tracer survey alumni were asked the extent to which the skills and knowledge gained from their course of study had contributed to a positive change in work circumstances compared to before their study. 41% of the in-service alumni reported that their new skills/knowledge had been recognised by appointment to a higher position than before the award. The in-service alumni who were more likely to return to a higher position were: ADS (56%), postgraduate (44%), male (59%) and those in the private sector (100%). The lower proportion of public servants that returned to a higher position (39%), perhaps reflects the procedural need for them to wait to apply for an established position at a higher level to become vacant, whereas the private sector may have more flexibility in this regard.

Table 8 shows the majority of alumni experience positive changes in their work circumstances, to a great extent due to the skills and knowledge gained during their studies.

Table 8: Positive change in work circumstance of in-service alumni

Positive change in work circumstance – Current position	% in-service alumni	Change to a great extent due to the contribution of the skills and knowledge gained from their study
Current position was ranked higher	84%	85%
More satisfied with their salary	68%	86%
Supervising more staff	97%	58%
Increased financial responsibility	73%	55%
Increased policy making role	86%	75%
Greater technical or operational responsibility	84%	72%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

The alumni reported using the skills/knowledge gained from their studies on a regular basis in their current employment. Technical/subject matter skills were used at least weekly by 81% of alumni. Only 1% of the alumni never used their technical/subject matter skills and knowledge skills in their current employment. Most frequently used were the “soft skills” such as communication, analytical and critical thinking (which were used daily by 89% and 84% of the respondents respectively). In addition to the other soft skills, a number of the interviewed alumni mentioned that their studies had helped them to develop a work ethic, to improve their time management skills and to have greater confidence in presenting opinions and make contributions in the workplace.

Table 9: Frequency of use of knowledge / skills in current employment

Use of knowledge / skills in current employment:	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Infrequently	Never
Technical/subject matter	71%	10%	7%	10%	1%
Analytical and critical thinking skills	84%	10%	4%	1%	0%
Leadership skills	69%	14%	11%	6%	0%
Management skills	73%	10%	7%	10%	0%
Communication skills	89%	7%	3%	1%	0%
Cross-cultural skills	69%	11%	13%	7%	0%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

Overall, 62% of the survey respondents reported that some difficulties in applying their knowledge and skills in their current job. A higher proportion of alumni working in the public sector reported experiencing difficulties (78%), compared to alumni in the private sector (36%) and in the NGOs (31%). There was no difference in the overall level of difficulties experienced reported by gender. Of all the respondents, 40% reported that they lacked a professional network to share ideas, challenges and solutions and 35% reported that they lacked opportunity to continue to develop their skills and knowledge. Females (32%) were more likely than males (19%) to respond that they had experienced difficulties due to lack of authority or status to bring about change. One interviewed alumni reported that *"initially being a female supervisor was a challenge for the staff reporting to me, but I was supported by bosses"*.

Table 10: Difficulties experienced in utilising skills/knowledge in current job by gender

Difficulties experienced	Female	Male	Total
Lack of a professional network to share ideas, challenges and solutions	37%	42%	40%
Lack of opportunity to continue to develop my skills and knowledge	34%	35%	35%
Lack of essential equipment	29%	32%	31%
The 'organisational culture' (resists change, lacks leadership/like minded people...)	29%	32%	31%
Lack of authority or status to bring about change	32%	19%	26%
Lack of infrastructure such as ICT	21%	26%	24%
Knowledge and skills not relevant to role	8%	6%	7%
Expectations are too high about the amount of change I can bring about	3%	6%	4%
None	37%	39%	38%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

The survey alumni also reported difficulties in applying their skills, such as one alumni trained in environmental studies *"I was ahead of my time by about 5 years. Now, 7 years later my skills are in demand for Fiji's development needs"* and another *"I was unable to apply the knowledge and skills from my training as there were no equipment available. In addition the [...] laboratory was more a biology lab rather than a chemical lab"*. One of the interviewed alumni from the agriculture sector reported that *"some of equipment I trained on is not available in Fiji due to financial pressures, so we have to improvise"*.

6.5 Alumni Outputs

The tracer survey alumni were asked whether they had produced any outputs relevant to their studies. Of the respondents, 74% had produced relevant outputs (e.g. report, policy paper, business improvement strategy, memo presentation or other work) in their current job, 21% had research published since completion of studies, 29% were currently undertaking research that will lead to a publication and 7% had been granted or filed for a patent. Differences between the alumni are illustrated in the table below with postgraduate alumni more likely to have produced relevant outputs (83%) and research (28%) than undergraduate alumni (63% and 13% respectively). More recent alumni were proportionately more likely to have produced relevant outputs (77%) compared to those who completed their awards between 2000-2003 (67%).

Examples of current employment outputs include: hospital protocols, sugar boilers course manual, divisional business plan, structural realignment of Fiji police force, proposal to look at aid effectiveness from a development fiscal approach, presentation at renewable energy symposiums, annual plan, proposal to ILO for funding, national integrated coastal management framework, review of the Fiji marine act and regulations, monetary policy papers, pacific water policies, development of a transfer pricing framework, policy to implement new laboratory testing strategies at national public health laboratories, cyclone reports and review of stock movement and marketing policies.

Examples of research published since award completion included: research published since completion of studies included on: brucellosis in cattle; media and democracy in Fiji; Enhancing adaptive capacity in Druadrua; Fiji; health economics part of the problem; the hidden side of domestic violence in Fiji; integrated water resource management in Fiji. The research currently being undertaken by alumni that will lead to a publication include to a peer-reviewed international academic journal (9 respondents), peer-reviewed national academic journal (9), industry publication (3), general publication (3), unpublished report (10). The authorship of these publications was as a sole author (12), co-author with other Fiji authors (9), co-author with Australian authors (3) and co-author with international authors (4).

Table 11: Alumni outputs relevant to study skills/knowledge

	Current employment output	Research work published since studies	Current research that will lead to publication	Granted or filed for a patent since studies
ADS	79%	24%	21%	3%
ARDS	70%	19%	35%	11%
Undergraduate	63%	13%	23%	7%
Postgraduate	83%	28%	33%	8%
2000-2003	67%	11%	22%	0%
2004-2007	74%	32%	23%	6%
2008-2010	77%	13%	37%	10%
Female	71%	21%	34%	11%
Male	78%	22%	22%	3%
Public sector	70%	20%	30%	9%
Private sector	82%	9%	9%	9%
Other NGOs	85%	38%	38%	0%
Total	74%	21%	29%	7%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

6.6 Skill Transfer

Alumni are passing on their knowledge and skills in the workplace through both formal and informal means. 80% of respondents reported using formal transfer of skills/knowledge to at least some extent (31% to a great extent, 30% to a medium extent, 19% to a small extent). 93% of respondents reported informal transfer of skills/knowledge to at least some extent (40% to a great extent, 33% to a medium extent, 20% to a small extent).

Alumni passing on the skills/knowledge through a formal means to a great extent were most likely to be those who did postgraduate studies (35%), female (42%), completed their award more than three years ago (35%), work in the NGO sector (54%), completed education (83%) and society and culture degrees (50%). Of those who had passed on their skills/knowledge in a formal context, 56% had delivered 1-5 formal training/teaching courses in the past year, and 44% had conducted 20 or more courses (the majority working within educational contexts). The alumni most likely to not at all be passing on their skills/knowledge were those who did an ARDS award (35%), an undergraduate degree (43%), male (38%), working in health services within the public sector, who completed their award recently (2008-2010), completed agriculture (43%) and engineering degrees (57%).

Alumni who completed their award more recently (2008-2010) were more likely to be passing on their skills through informal means to a great extent (50%) than formally (20%). 47% of these recent alumni at all were not passing on their skills through formal means compared to only 7% who were not at all passing on their skills informally. Given that recent graduates are entering the workplace with the most current skills and knowledge, scholarship outcomes would be increased if organisations arranged more formal transfer of their skills.

Of the alumni who reported that they passed on their skills/knowledge, the main skills passed on formally were independent work/thinking skills (63%) and technical/subject matter skills (49%). The main skills passed on informally were leadership (63%), independent work/thinking (63%), analytical (62%) and communication skills (60%). Only 52% reported informal transfer of technical/subject matter skills.

Table 12: Transfer of alumni skills/knowledge

Skills/knowledge	Formal Transfer	Informal Transfer
Technical/subject matter	49%	52%
English language skills	8%	38%
Communication skills	35%	60%
Leadership skills	34%	63%
Analytical skills	40%	62%
Research skills	20%	46%
Computer skills	22%	48%
Independent work/thinking skills	63%	63%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

Alumni were asked if there were other benefits from their scholarship experience that contributed to their capacity to perform their work role. Confidence building and getting to know other people and to develop a network was mentioned by a number of survey respondents. Other benefits mentioned included increased confidence, better ability to communicate subject matter, learning to work under pressure, public relations and social skills, ability to think from a wider perspective, and facilitation, mentoring and counselling skills.

6.7 Personal Outcomes

In addition to workplace outcomes and contribution, 89% of alumni were to a great extent satisfied overall with the outcomes from their scholarship personally (with no difference by gender). No alumni were not at all, or only to a small extent, satisfied. Postgraduate alumni were more likely to be were satisfied to a great extent (98%) compared to undergraduate alumni (80%). Recent alumni (97%) were more were satisfied to a great extent with the personal outcomes compared to only 60% of the 2000-2003 alumni.

A small number of the alumni who were less satisfied with the personal award outcomes expressed frustration with the field of study taken or in finding relevant work. One alumni stated that *“AusAID should have continued its support with us, as I found that although the country needed my skills as a [xx] I was faced with either lack of job opportunities available due to the political climate or just not enough resources to make use of the skills gained and having a mindset within the country that didn't want to promote the profession generally. This creates frustration and more reason for us to leave the country for greener pastures overseas which was not the intention of acquiring the scholarship in the first instance”*.

85% of the survey alumni responded that there were no negative or unintended impacts (with no difference by scheme or gender). 15% reported negative work-related and personal impacts. The contribution of the alumni and their families to scholarship outcomes are sometimes overlooked. One alumni reported that *“the scholarship was only for the scholar and did not cover for the family. I have missed some vital changes in my children's growth from kids to pre-teens and my daughter transformation to a teenager”*. One of the interviewed alumni reported that they had *“little time for their family during their award, especially for their siblings”*. Another of the interviewed alumni reported the negative impact of the work-load, sacrifice and commitment required whilst studying and even more so once working in the health sector. An interviewed alumni from the public sector commented *“While away I missed the opportunity for promotion, so I returned to post at same level as before, and now have to wait for a higher level post to become available”*.

6.8 Alumni Suggestions

At various points in the tracer survey, a high portion of the alumni took the opportunity to thank AusAID for the opportunity given to them by the scholarship, both from a personal perspective and for Fiji's development. As part of the survey, 56 alumni provided recommendations for AusAID on how to improve ADS/ARDS. While a good percentage (13%) were completely satisfied, the majority provided useful feedback on how the program might be improved. Improving the strategic alignment of scholarships and/or providing more scholarships in specific areas was a major focus, with 50 percent of respondents providing feedback in this area. Suggestions included better aligning scholarships with Fiji's long-term human resource and national development needs (16%), broadening the

scholarships program to include short-term courses, vocational opportunities and advanced degrees (12%), and increasing the number of available health/medical scholarships available (9%). A further 27 percent of respondents provided recommendations on supplementary services to support the scholarships program, including strategic work attachments (16%), a strengthened alumni association, networking opportunities, post-award workshops, and post-award support.

7 Alumni Linkages with Australia

Successful reintegration requires that awardees continue to maintain relationships and links with Australia(ns) and with alumni networks in their country and in Australia for two years or more.

One of the long-standing aims of Australian scholarships is to contribute to establishing links at the individual, institutional and country levels between individuals from Fiji and Australia and within the Pacific region. The ADS/ARDS program explicitly identifies this as one of its program objectives. As ARDS awardees do not study in Australia, it would be expected that the opportunities for them to establish linkages with Australia are significantly reduced, except where there is positive contact with the AusAID office, or alumni feel some connection resulting from their appreciation for the scholarship.

Tracer survey alumni were asked how often they had contact with people met during their studies. Table 13 shows that 50% of ADS alumni have contact with Australian students more than a few times a year, as do 26% of ADS/ARDS alumni with their former institution and 40% of ADS/ARDS alumni with other AusAID scholarships students.

Table 13: Frequency of alumni contacts

Alumni contacts with:	Daily	Weekly	Occasional	Infrequent	Never	Total
Former institution lecturers and staff	4%	3%	19%	55%	19%	100%
Former institution alumni association	3%	0%	6%	53%	38%	100%
Other AusAID scholarship students	5%	4%	30%	42%	18%	100%
Australian students (ADS only)	0%	3%	13%	50%	34%	100%
Local communities in Australia (ADS only)	0%	6%	19%	56%	19%	100%
Other Fijian citizens who studied in Australia with you (ADS only)	3%	9%	21%	55%	12%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

One interviewed alumni stated that the ADS award “leaves a useful bi-product, love for contacts made and for Australia and a can-do attitude”. However, contact with Australian institutions and people is limited for many of the ADS and ARDS alumni. For example, of the survey respondents:

- 34% of ADS and 7% of ARDS had no contact with former institution lecturers
- 38% never had contact with former institution alumni association (compared to 45% of ARDS)
- 34% of ADS never had contact with Australian students met during their studies
- 12% of ADS never have contact with other Fijian students met during their studies

Furthermore, the frequency of contact decreased with time, ADS alumni contact with former lecturers was significantly less for the 2000-2003 alumni (67% reported never being in contact) compared to the more recent alumni (20%)

When considering linkages, the quality and outcomes/leverage from the linkage, is likely to be at least as important as the quantity of interactions with both educational institution staff, other Australian government agencies and fellow (Australian, Fiji and regional) students. The interviewed alumni gave specific examples as to how the networks developed during their award contributed to workplace outcomes. This included the ease of conducting regional trade negotiations with people from other countries (including Australia) who had studied the same course at the same time; the ability to email past lecturers to seek their advice on technical matters such as the use of appropriate methodologies for research papers; and to seek advice on equipment procurement for the health sector; and the use of Australian senior policy analysts for a research project in Fiji based on an on-award relationship developed with staff of the Western Australia Department of Health.

However, given the overall low rate of linkages in many cases, it is important to firstly determine whether effective linkages are made whilst the awardee is studying and whether more needs to be done to strengthen on-award engagement with institution/staff/other awardees, and whether institution alumni associations are active and relevant. Assuming these links have been established, there is a need for post-award strategies to support alumni to maintain these linkages so as to continue to foster mutual understanding in the region, and so that alumni can continue to use their connections for networking and professional support to effect development outcomes.

Effective alumni organisations and activities have potential benefits in fostering linkages between Australia and the alumni, in assisting in the post-award re-integration process and through providing networking and professional development support. An alumni association can also provide a resource for AusAID to maintain contact with its alumni to monitor and evaluate scholarship effectiveness, for use in scholarship program activities (such as in promotion, pre-departure preparation and mentoring) and to act as a consultative group to provide input to discussions of matters relevant to a country's development needs.

In 2010, the AusAID Fiji Post launched the Fiji Australia Scholarships Alumni Association which was well attended by graduates dating back to the late 1970s. The launch was very successful - some of the registered members of the Association are CEOs of major private sector companies and also include Permanent Secretaries and Directors in Government Ministries and a former Fiji High Commissioner to Australia. An Executive Committee has been elected and has had a number of meetings, with a strategic plan for the next three years being drafted, a newsletter to be published and the next Association gathering planned for November. It is expected that the Fiji Alumni Association can be part of a regional network as other Pacific countries develop alumni groups to build relationships, and advance professional networks. Unfortunately other Fiji Alumni Association activities have to date been limited, possibly due to competing work priorities of the Executive.

Several of the interviewed alumni indicated that although they were Alumni Association members, they had not been invited to any functions but would welcome the opportunity to participate in any networking, professional development and social events. The need for an active alumni association was also illustrated by the 39% of survey respondents that reported that they had a lack a professional network to share ideas, challenges and solutions and the 35% that reported they lack opportunity to continue to develop their skills and knowledge.

Recommendation: That AusAID undertake a more pro-active role in supporting the Fiji Australia Scholarships Alumni Association to implement a regular program of activities and to maintain up-to-date alumni contact data.

This may require AusAID funding and other support for the Association, such as for organising functions and other membership matters. The reintegration guidelines indicate the value of high profile welcome home celebrations and presentations of awards by the Ambassador to build both self esteem of scholars and reinforce soft diplomacy connections with Australia.

8 Contribution to Fiji's Development

8.1 Relevance of Skills to Fiji's development

The tracer survey alumni were asked the extent to which the skills/knowledge gained from their studies was relevant to Fiji's development needs. 83% of the alumni felt that the skills / knowledge were to a great extent relevant to Fiji's development needs (with no significant difference by scheme type, gender or organisation type). Postgraduate alumni were more likely to consider that their skills were relevant (93%) compared to the undergraduate alumni (71%), although many undergraduates still felt that their skills/knowledge were used to a medium extent. Table 14 shows that recent alumni (93%) were most likely to consider that their skills/knowledge were to a great extent relevant to Fiji's development. Reasons for this were not established from the survey, but may be due to improved targeting of training needs, recent alumni being better able to find more relevant work and utilise their skills.

With respect to satisfaction with scholarship outcomes for Fiji's development, 97% of alumni were satisfied at least to some extent (73% to a great extent, 18% to a medium extent and 7% to a small extent). Those most likely to be satisfied to a great extent were females (83%), ADS alumni (76%), postgraduates, (78%), private sector employees (82%) and Society and Culture degree graduates (86%). Those who were most likely to be not at all satisfied were management and administration degree graduates (10%) and the 2000-2003 alumni (10%).

Table 14: Extent of study skills / knowledge relevance to Fiji's development needs by award end year

Extent of study skills / knowledge relevance to Fiji's development needs	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010	Total
To a great extent	80%	72%	94%	83%
To a medium extent	10%	25%	3%	13%
To a small extent	0%	3%	3%	3%
Not at all	10%	0%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey, 2011

As Fiji is the hub for many regional organisations, many alumni are contributing not only to Fiji's development but also to the region, through working in a regional organisation or even whilst working in a Fiji public sector agency. One interviewed alumni working in the health sector stated that they were *“able to work for the region not just Fiji, as Fiji is leading WHO's patient safety project”*,

8.2 Contribution to Civil Society

An important aspect of development impact in the Pacific is the extent to which alumni make use of their skills in civic life or to benefit their communities. This includes taking on leadership and other voluntary roles for not-for-profit organisations, media, church, professional associations and community based organisations. Results from the tracer survey found that the alumni were using the skills / knowledge gained from their studies in community involvement. For example:

- 39% of alumni use their skills to a medium or great extent in religious organisations (with 27% of females and 47% of males stating not at all);
- 55% of alumni use their skills to a medium or great extent in community-based organisations (with both 24% of males and females stating not at all);
- 46% of undergraduates and 63% of postgraduates use their skills in community-based organisation to a medium or great extent; and
- 48% of alumni use their skills to a medium or great extent in local government / provincial councils / local councils (with 35% of females and 28% of males stating not at all).

Examples of skill/knowledge use outside the workplace include participation in the Fiji Business Excellence Awards, membership of the Nursing Research Forum, membership of the Fiji Rotuma Association, sitting on School Committees, supporting the Fiji Society for the Blind, establishing a support group for cancer patients.

8.3 Remaining in Fiji

Data on the current location of alumni is not routinely maintained by AusAID Fiji. The tracer survey contact mapping exercise was only able to identify the location of 77% of the 136 alumni sampled. In the absence of ongoing contact with ADS/ARDS alumni, unsurprisingly, a higher proportion of recent (2008-2010) alumni (92%) were able to be identified compared to the 2000-2003 alumni (64%).

8% of the alumni in the sample, and 11% of those whose contact details were obtained, were identified as living overseas (not including those ARDS alumni now overseas on ADS scholarships). Given the extent of the informal network that AusAID has with many of its alumni, the relatively narrow labour market for graduates (with the majority of formal employment in Suva), and the extensive contact mapping efforts, it is likely that a high proportion of those not able to be contacted are living overseas (particularly the pre-2008 alumni) or unemployed (particularly the recent alumni who would still be subject to AusAID scholarship and/or GoF bond restrictions on their movement to live overseas).

Table 15: Proportion of contacted alumni living overseas by award end year

Living Overseas	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010	Total
Yes	11%	9%	6%	8%
Not Known	36%	31%	8%	23%
No	50%	60%	83%	67%
On ADS award	4%	0%	4%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS contact mapping, 2011

Of the 2000-2003 alumni, 18% were identified as living overseas (as a proportion of those whose location was identified and not now undertaking further study as an ADS student) compared to 6% of the recent alumni. This relatively low proportion of migration of recent alumni is likely to be due to restrictions regarding remaining in Fiji from their AusAID scholarship and/or GoF bond.

Of those who completed their award between 2000-2007, the contacted alumni most likely to be living overseas (as a percentage of those whose location was identified and not now an ADS student):

- ARDS alumni (20%) compared to ADS alumni (10%);
- Undergraduate alumni (23%) compared to postgraduate alumni (7%);
- Female alumni (17%) compared to male alumni (12%);
- Female undergraduate (29%) compared to male undergraduate alumni (17%); and
- Education, engineering and management alumni (17-18%), compared to health (11%), natural science (10%) and society and culture (0%) alumni.

Despite these figures, it is noted that many alumni do feel a sense of commitment from their scholarship. For example one interviewed alumni stated that *"I chose to remain in job, when there was high turnover elsewhere, as I felt an obligation from the scholarship"*. In addition, not all the outward movement from Fiji may be permanent, as some of the alumni may be temporarily working (including in regional organisations) or studying overseas (or accompanying their spouse). The FCEF noted that while professionals do leave the country for overseas work opportunities, many do return in later years and that this was assisted by the 2010 change by Fiji government to allow dual citizenship.

To maximize returns on their scholarships investment (as the GoF in most cases continues to pay salaries whilst there employees are on award), the bonding of alumni so that they remain in Fiji as long as possible is a key concern expressed both by PSC and MIA. In 2009/10, the bond for in-service alumni was increased to 1.5 times the length of award (previously one year bond for each year of award). These agencies are also actively pursuing bond defaulters to make repayments. AusAID has been requested by the GoF to consider implementing an embargo stand-down period of longer than two years before alumni may return to Australia and/or take up a second scholarship. AusAID has also been asked to assist in implementing a bond system for pre-service alumni. This is a complex issue when the scholarships are awarded to individuals (not organisations), compounded by lack of data on actual out-migration rates of alumni, reported limited job/career opportunities for some alumni, and other push-pull factors for migration.

Whilst many Fiji private sector organisations have other retention policies (including bonuses, non-cash incentives, training and study support, career planning, work-lifestyle balance), there is still a need for all employers to take responsibility for providing meaningful work and appropriately rewarding its alumni employees in order to retain them for as long as possible.

Despite the efforts by AusAID Fiji to contact overseas alumni, only four of the survey respondents were living overseas (in Australia, PNG and New Zealand). There were therefore insufficient responses to provide reliable data on the impact (e.g. proportion living overseas, reasons for moving, remittances) of alumni living overseas. As the responses could not be considered representative, it will be necessary to undertake separate research into the impact of the alumni who have emigrated. This could perhaps be done on a regional basis, including overseas ADS/ARDS alumni from the other Pacific countries.

Recommendation: That AusAID undertake further analysis into the impact of Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni living temporarily or permanently overseas (through for example, remittances to their home country, or contributions to other countries in the region).

9 Key Study Outcomes

9.1 Contribution to the human resource needs of Fiji

As one of the lead overseas donors of scholarships for tertiary training for Fiji, AusAID has contributed to Fiji's human resource development over many years, increasing the number of post-secondary qualified human resources in areas of identified training need, particularly in the public sector. Between 2000-2010, 272 Fiji citizens have completed ADS/ARDS funded training, 54% in undergraduate and 46% in postgraduate study. The ADS awards in particular have enabled training in fields of study not available in Fiji.

Through the equal allocation of awards to females as well as males, the scholarship program has promoted gender equity in human resource development. Whilst there have been gender differences in the fields of studies undertaken, AusAID Fiji has been pro-active in selecting females for traditionally male dominated employment sectors.

Table 16: Number of ADS/ARDS alumni by scheme/award end year and level of study

Scheme	Award End Year	Level of Study		Total
		PG	UG	
ADS	2000-2003	5	49	54
	2004-2007	17	10	27
	2008-2010	21	5	26
ADS Total		43	64	107
ARDS	2004-2007	47	38	85
	2008-2010	35	45	80
ARDS Total		82	83	165
Total		125	147	272

Source: OASIS/SOFEA

In consultation with the Fiji government, the 2000-2010 ADS/ARDS alumni were selected to undertake post-secondary education across a wide range of fields of study. In response to Fiji's development priorities (and in the absence of in-country training in fields such as engineering) at the time, the majority of alumni have been trained in the fields of health (19%), society and culture (19%) and engineering/related technologies (18%). Table 17 shows that in response to AusAID's overall program strategies for Fiji more alumni have undertaken health sector training (particularly MBBS) in recent years. It is noted that whilst education is a key focus for AusAID's program in Fiji, only 9% of the alumni have been trained in this area. This reflects the lesser need for undergraduate donor scholarships in education, as the GoF's has its own programs for in-country teacher training. The level of training for the education sector may also be undercounted, as some alumni may have been trained in other fields of study (such as science) to support education sector activities.

Table 17: Number of ADS/ARDS alumni by field of study and award end year

Field of Study	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010	Total
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	13%	3%	14%	9%
Architecture and Building	13%	2%	1%	4%
Creative Arts	2%	0%	0%	0%
Education	4%	16%	5%	9%
Engineering and Related Technologies	33%	13%	16%	18%
Health	6%	17%	29%	19%
Information Technology	4%	0%	1%	1%
Law	2%	2%	7%	4%
Management and Commerce	7%	17%	10%	13%
Natural and Physical Sciences	2%	6%	2%	4%
Society and Culture	15%	24%	15%	19%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: OASIS/SOFEA

Alumni are working across all Fiji employment sectors. Only one of the contacted 2000-2010 alumni reported being currently unemployed and looking for work. The scholarships have most contributed to capacity development of the Fiji public sector. Of the contacted alumni, 64% are working in the Fiji public sector, with a further 9% working in a Fiji State Owned Enterprise. 10% of the alumni are working in the private sector, 16% of the alumni are working in non-government organisations, particularly regional organisations such as USP and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Undergraduate alumni (17%) and the 2000-2003 alumni (21%) are more likely to be working in the private sector than postgraduates (6%) and the 2008-2010 alumni (8%).

Table 18: Number of alumni by organisation type and level of study

Organisation Type	Sub-Sector	Level of Study		Total
		Postgraduate	Undergraduate	
Public	Education	20%	0%	12%
	Health	16%	42%	27%
	Other ministry	30%	19%	26%
SOE		10%	8%	9%
Private		6%	17%	10%
NGO	Local	4%	0%	2%
	USP	4%	8%	6%
	Other regional	10%	6%	8%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Source: Fiji ADS/ARDS contact mapping, 2011

As shown in Section 6.3, the majority of the survey respondents are currently employed in positions that are to a great extent relevant to their studies (76%). The respondents are working in a wide spread of occupations reflecting the priority areas for the past decade. 30% of the surveyed alumni are working as medical doctors or university/secondary education teachers. After employment in specialist/technical positions, a number of alumni have now moved into senior and influential positions in Fiji. These include senior government officials (Permanent Secretaries and Directors), chief executive officers of major private sector companies, and senior policy and planning managers.

Contribution to the human resource needs of Fiji (and overall sustainability of scholarship impact) is reduced if alumni, particularly those trained to meet very specific HRD needs, leave Fiji to work overseas within a few years of their scholarship. However, as an unintended scholarship outcome, there is enhanced opportunity for qualified alumni to work overseas. Relative to their Fiji-qualified counterparts, Australian-qualified Fiji citizens are able to more easily find work in the Australian job market³⁸. Of the 2000-2003 alumni able to be contacted for the tracer survey, 18% were living overseas. Given that contact was not able to be made with a further 28% of the sampled alumni (particularly for those who completed their award more than three years ago), it is likely that a significantly higher proportion of alumni are now living overseas.

In some sectors where there are high emigration rates, it is likely that the AusAID scholarships are being used to replace staff that have left Fiji after previously receiving scholarship funded training. In such cases, the scholarships may not be making a significant net increase to the level of skilled resources in Fiji. There is a need for greater emphasis by employers on skill retention, and where appropriate sectoral/regional approaches in key areas such as the health sector.

Scholarships that attract employees away from organisations can weaken (in the short term at least) the capacity of those institutions at critical times of their development. Public service ministries are responsible for implementing training plans to ensure that service delivery is not affected by overseas training programs. The backfilling arrangements for staff training are ministry-specific and reflect available budget. Service delivery/organisational development is likely to be affected where staff are promoted to act in a more senior position and do not have their own position back-filled. The PSC is currently reviewing the impact and results on service delivery arising out of its training program. "As government continues to up-skill its workforce through in-service training, it is aware of the

³⁸ Fiji Submission into the 2008 Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Enquiry into the main Economic and Security Challenges Facing Papua New Guinea and the Islands of the South Pacific.

impact of having workers absent from their normal workplaces. Such absence, affects the continuity and efficiency of workplace performance. It is quite costly to provide scholarships and simultaneously release them on full pay.” The review is therefore expected to recommend improvement strategies for the administration of in-service scholarships awarded to civil servants; ascertain the effect on the continuity and efficiency of work normally performed by officers when they leave for studies and the financial impact on the ministries budget, when civil servants go on study leave with or without pay³⁹.

9.2 Scholarships Framework

9.2.1 Alignment with Fiji's HRD Priorities

Fiji ADS/ARDS are development awards with objectives to enable Fiji citizens to gain the knowledge, skills, and international experience required to contribute to social and economic growth and stability, consistent with the focus areas of the bilateral aid program. In accord with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and even through the current political situation, AusAID has actively engaged with the relevant government agencies in Fiji to align ADS/ARDS allocation to the GoF's HRD priorities.

ADS/ARDS awardee selection is based on academic merit and relevance to national training needs as a means of contributing to development objectives. Given these objectives, AusAID for many years awarded scholarships based on the health and education sector training needs and the public sector HRD priorities as advised by the PSC. In recent years, in addition to the health/education sector training needs, awardee selection has been based on the MNP National Training Needs list (Annex I) which encompasses both public and private sector HRD needs. As the MNP list of training needs is extensive, AusAID have also directly engaged with the PSC (representing the public sector) and the FCEF (representing the private sector) to confirm and prioritise the training needs in their respective sectors. Effective dialogue with the community sector to confirm their scholarship training needs has proved challenging, as there is no recognised umbrella CSO in Fiji. Inclusion of a CSO representative in the Joint Scholarships Selection Committee will assist in this regard (as recommended in Section 5.2).

The broad training areas for the 2012 ADS/ARDS intake were economic growth, public sector management and reform, international trade, rural development and agriculture, climate change, health, education. The related fields of study are tabulated against the likely post-award employment sector in the table below. The majority of the fields of study listed in the scholarship advertisement (shown in more detail in Annex H) are common to the MNP National Training Needs list.

2012 ADS/ARDS Training Priorities	Likely Post-Award Employment Sector				
	Health	Education	Other Public Sector	CSO	Private sector
Health specialists	ADS				
Education		ADS			
Fire-fighting			ADS		
Environment			ADS	ADS	
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry			ADS	ADS	ADS
Engineering			ADS		ADS
Transport and Civil Engineering			ADS		ADS
Shipping/Marine					ADS
Economics and Finance			ADS		ADS
Human resource management			ADS	ADS	ADS
Sales and Distribution					ADS
Manufacturing and construction					ARDS/TVET
Tourism					ARDS/TVET

³⁹ PSC Media Release 003 of 2011. 11 January 2011.

As scholarship impact is likely to be improved through more specific targeting of levels and fields of study, there would be merit in AusAID Fiji engaging with public, private and CSO stakeholders (as well as with staff of the other AusAID program activities in Fiji) to further refine the priority list (from the over 60 programs of study listed for the 40 ADS awards for the 2012 intake) for future intakes. This would be particularly valuable if the scholarship program moves to closer linkages with other AusAID programs in Fiji and with targeted organisations (as discussed below).

Recommendation: That AusAID more specifically target the ADS/ARDS awards by reducing the list of priority fields of study in consultation with key stakeholders in Fiji.

Effective scholarship targeting is restricted by the limited availability of reliable labour market information and national HRD planning. With the time available for this study, and without further analysis and consultation, only some very preliminary and subjective observations on field of study prioritisation can be offered for consideration:

- advice should be sought from the AusAID sector specialists and in-Fiji project teams with regard to health and education sector priority training needs;
- advice should be sought from CSOs and relevant AusAID sector specialists with respect to selecting awardees for fields of study relevant to social protection, human rights and disability services;
- as significant numbers of Fijians have already been trained in economics and finance, HRM and the solely private sector outcome of sales/distribution training, subject to further discussion with the key stakeholders, these may be areas which are not included as priorities in future years, unless a very specific public sector need is identified;
- fire-fighting is not included in the current National Training Needs list, although it is consistent with the AusAID objective to provide emergency/humanitarian support to Fiji; and
- the TVET fields of study should reflect the MNP list, subject to further consultation with the FCEF.

Whilst the priority fields of study for the award of scholarships would not be expected to change significantly from year to year, there is still a need for annual review and consideration of emerging priorities in line with GoF needs and overall AusAID development program assistance to Fiji. It is for example, noted that Mining/Lands and Mineral Resources has been included in the MNP National Training Needs list, with the FCEF also advising of the need for HRD to meet expected growth opportunities in this area. Evidence based training needs analysis (including consideration of the provision of short-term and other training modalities) should be undertaken prior to its inclusion in the AusAID scholarship priorities.

AusAID has been responsive to other changing priorities identified by the GoF. Until 2011, to reflect the training needs and comparative cost advantages of in-Fiji study, significantly more ARDS than ADS were awarded each year. However in discussions with AusAID⁴⁰, the MNP identified the need for additional scholarships to support high cost postgraduate training in Australia that the GoF is not currently able to afford (e.g. in specialised areas such as veterinary science, animal pathology, oncology). Whilst GoF scholarships have in the past been awarded for study in Australia, due to financial constraints, the interim government has in recent years sourced alternative, cheaper study placements in countries other than Australia (particularly in Malaysia). However study in Australia is still recognised as a valuable source of HRD, particularly for skills acquisition and/or upgrade not currently available at Fijian institutions. Australian education is also highly valued by applicants and employers. For example, the alumni interviewed made positive comments about the advantages of scholarship study in Australia including the provision of a stipend that was sufficient for them to concentrate on their studies, the known academic reputation of Australian institutions, the English-language tuition, the international recognition of Australian qualifications for further study and employment and the higher level of recognition by Fiji employers.

The MNP also confirmed that Fiji now has reduced need for donor scholarships for local study, as the GoF awards over 3,000 scholarships per annum to pre- and in-service applicants for study at local institutions. There is also extensive employer funded training support and a student loan scheme.

AusAID responded to Fiji's current need for support for overseas training by scaling-up the number of ADS from 10 places in 2010 to 40 awards in 2011 (at the same time reducing the number of ARDS awards). This responsiveness to ensure that AusAID's growing scholarship program is aligned with Fiji's national plans for human resource development is consistent with AusAID's Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda.

⁴⁰ And for example through Fiji's submission to the 2008 Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Inquiry into the Main Economic and Security Challenges facing Papua New Guinea and the Islands of the Southwest Pacific.

As a smaller number of ARDS awards were to be offered, it was decided that they would have relatively small impact unless highly targeted. The ARDS 2012 intake was therefore targeted to sub-degree training (Certificate, Associate Diploma and Diploma) study, with 60% of the awards for TVET courses. This targeting was made in response to a number of factors: the already large number of GoF scholarships available for bachelor degree training (and a reported over-supply of Bachelor graduates), significant skills gaps in the TVET area⁴¹ and employment demand at this level in key areas in the private sector.

As TVET remains a high HRD priority in Fiji, and for policy continuity, it is recommended that this ARDS targeting be continued at least in the short-term. For maximum impact the awards should however be restricted to sub-degree programs in priority technical-vocational areas only (such as hospitality, welding, automotive engineering, as identified in the National Training Needs List, subject to any further prioritisation by the FCEF). Where possible, duplication should be avoided with training (and scholarships) available at the APTC, perhaps through targeting a pre-service student profile (as many APTC students are currently employed). As anecdotal evidence indicates that it is currently difficult for Diploma students to find employment without work experience (particularly in areas where there is an over-supply of bachelor graduates), examining the educational pathways, employment and skill utilisation outcomes of this new group of alumni will be critical questions for future evaluation studies.

Recommendation: That AusAID, in response to Fiji's priority training needs, continue the allocation of a higher proportion of its bilateral scholarships for in-Australia study, and subject to further evaluation as to the outcomes, target TVET study through ARDS.

Given the success of AusAID's contracts with USP and FSMed in building scholarship/education management capacity, if Fiji ARDS support for TVET continues, consideration should be given to developing a similar contract with the FNU/FIT to provide appropriate support to the Fiji (and other Pacific ARDS) awardees studying at the institution.

9.2.2 Country Program Linkages

In 2010-11 total Australian Official Development Assistance to Fiji is estimated at A\$37.2 million, of which A\$18 million is for bilateral aid. The Australian Government remains committed to support the welfare of the ordinary people of Fiji by maintaining aid programs to support the delivery of essential services, help vulnerable groups, and to improve economic opportunity. It has however suspended assistance where the actions of the interim government render its programs ineffective or compromised⁴². The 2011 country program's priorities for Fiji as articulated through AusAID activities in Fiji are to:

- a. support the delivery of core health and education services, including addressing the MDG goals of improving maternal health and reducing child mortality;
- b. partner with civil society and regional organisations to support the people of Fiji including assistance for: income generation; private sector and enterprise development; health; education; climate change; human rights; people with disabilities; the elimination of violence against women;
- c. provide social protection and financial inclusion measures, including rural enterprise development and emergency and humanitarian response.

The bilateral program includes 15% for post-secondary scholarships (A\$2.7m in FY10/11)⁴³. The AusAID Scholarships Section 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 demonstrably increase their effectiveness and to more readily assess their medium to long-term impact at the institutional level⁴⁴.

Australia's development cooperation program with Fiji is managed outside of a Pacific Partnership for Development framework. Health and education programs have been constant features of AusAID's assistance to Fiji for many years and continues to be key areas of support. This has been reflected in scholarship selection, with 53 of the 2000-2010 alumni trained in health and 25 in education courses (almost 30% of all alumni). In addition to the allocation of scholarships for health and education studies, closer integration between ADS/ARDS and the other aid programs in Fiji should be achieved through the AusAID Fiji scholarships team systematically engaging with AusAID sector

⁴¹ The ADB has identified the following needs: plumbers; carpenters, electricians, building finishing of high quality; building technicians; maintenance workers; civil construction workers; air conditioning; hospitality workers; hospitality; and IT workers (ADB, 2008).

⁴² AusAID website, Fiji Country Profile, downloaded 8 September 2011.

⁴³ Due to the increase in the number of ADS awards, the ADS/ARDS expenditure is expected to increase to AUD4.1m in FY11/12 and A\$5.5m in FY12/13.

⁴⁴ AusAID ASG Review of Scholarship Effectiveness, 2008.

specialists and in-country project staff to increase awareness of the scholarships and to seek advice regarding specific training priorities,. Staff in other AusAID development programs could be utilised to identify and encourage suitable candidates to apply, maintain contact with and providing mentoring to awardees while studying, facilitate work attachments for pre-service awardees, and through assisting alumni to reintegrate to the workplace and utilise their skills/knowledge effectively. Any negative impact on other programs could also be minimised through seeking program advice on avoiding the award of long-term training scholarships to Fiji program staff that are critical to program success.

AusAID is to commence a Fiji Community Development Program (FCDP) from early in 2012. Once established, consultation should be made with its program staff as to ways in which the scholarships program can better support the post-secondary training needs of CSOs, to mitigate the social and economic hardship faced by communities in Fiji.

Recommendation: That AusAID more closely integrate its scholarships program (from pre- to post-award activities) with its other development program activities in Fiji.

The engagement of Fiji alumni as technical advisers and consultants has potential to enhance AusAID program effectiveness and in-country analysis through combining relevant expertise with local knowledge and perspectives, and at reduced (travel/accommodation) cost. It would also provide alumni with an opportunity to increase their experience, potentially making them better able to succeed in applying for other work in Fiji and the region.

Recommendation: That AusAID increase their utilisation of the ADS/ARDS alumni to provide advice and undertake consultancy work in AusAID's development activities in Fiji.

A Local Consultant Register could perhaps be maintained by the Fiji Australia Alumni Association. Where a local consultant may not have the full range of experience required by AusAID, consideration should be given to pairing them with a more experienced overseas consultant, so that they may benefit from skills transfer.

9.2.3 Scholarships Targeting

Based on the above findings and analysis, the following figure presents an initial framework for the targeting and allocation of awards for the ADS and ARDS schemes. To guide the targeting of specific awardee profiles, AusAID should agree the number of awards to be allocated against each level of study/target group. For transparency, and so that applicants can be selected for fields of study relevant to their employment sector, separate indicative allocations should be made to in-service applicants from the public, private and CSO sectors (and applicants ranked within these groups).

ARDS (20 new awards for 2012 intake)			
Level of Study	Target Group	Field of Study Priority	Rationale
Diploma	Pre-service (20)	TVET – Manufacturing, Construction and Hospitality	<i>There is still strong employment demand for TVET trained graduates. Training in Fiji for this level of study would be more cost-effective than if undertaken in Australia. A more selective field of study and applicant profile would provide greater focus and potentially impact. To avoid overlap with the in-service candidates with work experience explicitly targeted by the APTC, pre-service candidates only should be targeted (particularly those who have undertaken TVET studies in secondary schools).</i>
Bachelor	-	-	<i>Support for local training at this level is well-provided through GoF and employer sponsorships. Flexibility would need to be retained to offer MBBS, and to transfer undergraduate engineering training from ADS to ARDS once it becomes available in Fiji.</i>
Graduate Diploma/ Masters	-	-	<i>Support for local training at this level is well-provided through GoF and employer sponsorships.</i>
PhD	-	-	<i>Training need at the Doctoral level not identified for Fiji</i>

ADS (40 new awards for 2012 intake)			
Level of Study	Target Group	Field of Study Priority	Rationale
Diploma	-		<i>Training available at this level in Fiji</i>
Bachelor	Pre-Service and In-service: - Public sector - Private sector - CSO sector	MNP National Training Needs list to be used as initial guidance, with more specific targeting based on discussions with FCEF, PSC, CSOs and other AusAID programs	<i>For Bachelor level training not available in Fiji and too expensive to be provided for by GoF. There is a continued case for providing undergraduate ADS training across all four applicant profiles. This includes providing training for Fiji's youth, as pre-service candidates who may return to work in either the public or private sector dependent on employment availability at the time of return, and to provide undergraduate training not available in Fiji for public, private and CSO sector employees.</i>
Graduate Diploma/ Masters	In-service (Public sector)	Support of other AusAID programs (in health, education and community sectors) and specific PSC nominated priorities	<i>For PG level training not available in Fiji, and too expensive to be provided for by GoF. These awards should be more narrowly targeted to in-service applicants from the public sector to meet the strong demand for specialist postgraduate training in the Fiji public sector to replace those who left the public sector due to the retirement age changes and to support public sector reforms essential for Fiji's development. The survey findings also indicate higher levels of outcomes for postgraduate public servants</i>
PhD	-		<i>Training need at the Doctoral level not identified for Fiji</i>

Assuming that candidates above a certain academic benchmark have sufficient academic ability to successfully pass their nominated program of study, consideration should be given to decreasing the selection weighting for academic merit and increasing the weighting to factors that are most likely to impact on alumni contribution to their organisation/Fiji's development. This would include increasing the weighting to relevance of study to the priority training needs (for pre-service applicants) and to the strength of likely contribution to organisational/development impact as reflected in the applicant/employers statement of support for the training (for in-service applicants). It is suggested that the workplace of in-service applicants be included on the summary shortlisting report, so that the relevance of the proposed training can be considered against their current workplace.

9.2.4 Scholarship Coordination

Despite the large number of scholarships awarded by the various Fijian and donor agencies (over 3,000 per annum), there is minimal coordination between the agencies. For example the PSC scholarship awards take into account the MNP list, as well as their own public service data on current staff, forecast employee exits based on age profile etc. PSC selection is done after AusAID's scholarship selection but last year did not take into consideration allocations made by AusAID. The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, which awards more than 1,000 scholarships a year, is not a member of the GoF's HRD Technical Committee and does not provide relevant data to it, such as on the profile of their awardees that will be entering the workforce each year.

The GoF has however taken some initial steps to better coordinate the scholarships - through plans to consolidate its three major schemes and through developing a single National Training Needs list for use in scholarship award by GoF agencies, AusAID and other scholarship donors. The impact of the scholarship available for Fiji citizens would be further improved through key stakeholders meeting more regularly to share:

- labour market data to facilitate evidence-based training needs analysis and prioritisation;
- information on scholarship targeting so as to avoid duplication (which could lead to serious distortions in trained labour supply with consequent graduate unemployment), whilst gaps in specialist skill needs may be ongoing;
- scholarship award and M&E data to better inform scholarship policies and management;
- information on initiatives for assisting alumni to find relevant employment; and
- information on initiatives for increasing the impact of alumni through skill/knowledge utilisation and transfer (and retention).

Recommendation: That AusAID meet regularly with Fiji government and other donor scholarship agencies to improve coordination and the impact of the scholarship training provided to Fiji.

9.3 Reintegration Planning

Lessons learnt from other AusAID scholarship programs indicate that developing more in-depth relationships with organisations can assist to better understand training needs, ensure more relevant nomination of applicants and selection of study program/institution, and facilitate alumni reintegration/skills utilisation. The approach can also help to develop a critical mass of targeted expertise in an organisation. “Reintegration planning” has been implemented in AusAID scholarships programs in some other countries for a purposes including: ensuring clarity of an applicant’s study/career intent in ways that can assist with selection process, including whether appropriate courses have been nominated; obtaining organisational buy-in to support a scholar’s application; focusing student learning during the scholarship experience; appraising applications by scholars to change courses midway through study; obtaining organisational support (resources, incentives, location within organisation, skilling up others) for the scholar to be able to apply learning following return to the organisation; and monitoring and evaluating scholarship outcomes⁴⁵.

The scholarships management approach in Fiji is primarily targeted to individuals, selected on the basis of academic merit and proposed training program, rather than an organisational approach whereby individuals are selected based on their nomination by target organisations. Given the targeting of pre-service and in-service individuals rather than organisations, limited resources and the difficulties of engaging with Fiji public sector agencies, AusAID Fiji does not directly engage with individual employers throughout the scholarships cycle (aside from a statement of endorsement in the application form). Nevertheless, to maximise the impact of the awards, where possible, AusAID Fiji should increase its engagement with selected organisations to strengthen the links between awardee (particularly in-service) selection of program of study/institution and organisational needs and to maximise workplace contribution. Interviews with alumni and the survey data indicate a need, particularly in the public service, for a more structured approach to support alumni entering/resuming work in organisations and to encourage the active adoption of their knowledge/skills and other learnings to contribute to organisational and development outcomes.

Recommendation: That AusAID pilot reintegration planning for ADS/ARDS alumni in selected agencies in Fiji to support alumni to apply and transfer their new knowledge/skills effectively.

A draft reintegration plan template has been developed for the Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni (Annex K)⁴⁶. The template has three sections, to be completed pre-award (an “action plan”), during or immediately after the scholarship (at reintegration) and for review after an agreed period (indicatively twelve months after alumni commencement/return to the organisation). The inclusion of a section in the template for reviewing achievement of proposed responsibilities /tasks/outputs should help from the start of the process to reinforce the importance of a holistic approach to the scholarship (from careful choice of program of study/institution to the planning and support of the alumni on their entry/resumption to the workforce). For M&E purposes, alumni and their employers would be asked to make an overall assessment of extent to which the planned activities/outputs were implemented/achieved within the agreed period.

The pre-award section (which could include relevant data taken from the application form) would indicate specific training priorities which would be used to guide program of study/institution choice at application time, and elective unit choice during the study. Where organisational engagement is possible (for in-service awardees), the plan should outline a proposed strategy for utilising the applicant’s knowledge, skills and qualifications including the position/role and responsibilities that the awardee would be likely to return to, as well as examples of the tasks, projects, other outputs they would be likely to undertake. Recognising the need for flexibility to adjust to changing awardee/organisation circumstances, the plan will need to be updated on completion of the award. Review of plan achievements should take a positive approach on things that worked well and not just focus on the challenges experienced. Although called a re-integration plan, primarily applicable to in-service awardees being selected from and returning to their employer, the post-award section relating to skill/knowledge utilisation and transfer is still relevant to be completed for pre-service alumni.

Reintegration planning promotes (and requires) commitment from alumni and their line and senior managers to achieving organisational outcomes. During in-country consultations, the concept of using reintegration plans was given provisional support by the PSC and the FCEF, although the FCEF noted that many private sector organisations in Fiji already have well-developed systems for providing opportunities for new employees (induction processes, development of training/work/succession plans, job rotations etc) to integrate and use their skills. Where appropriate, existing organisation template/processes should be used to avoid duplication.

⁴⁵Funnel, S. (2011). *Guide to Re-integration Support for Long-Term Development Awards (ADS/ALAS)*. July 2011

⁴⁶ Based on the templates included in the *Guide to Re-integration Support for Long-Term Development Awards (ADS/ALAS)*

Reintegration planning should be a proactive process that facilitates discussions and agreements between the alumni and their employers on how the study learnings will be applied in the workplace. It is likely that not all alumni (particularly pre-service) may feel comfortable in initiating such discussions, and not all supervisors may be willing participants. If necessary, AusAID may need to provide facilitation between alumni and employer to support the process. AusAID Fiji staff (or a designated contractor) resources would be required to brief awardees/alumni/employers on the purposes of the reintegration plan, follow-up to ensure completion of the plan at each stage, and to arrange appropriate storage of the document for ready access for later monitoring and evaluation. The process would also need to include an annual review of all the completed plans as a basis for discussions with employers regarding knowledge/skill utilisation and transfer and as input into future selection processes.

In implementing reintegration plans, consideration should be given to initially commencing the process at the post-award/reintegration stage (although data from the original ADS/ARDS application should still be incorporated if possible). This could be commenced for the completing 2011 students in early 2012. As AusAID Fiji will need to apply additional resources to implement the reintegration plan process, and currently has only limited engagement with GoF ministries, it is suggested that the reintegration plans be piloted for a few sectors in the first instance. The Ministry of Health already has well-developed processes for utilising MBBS graduates as health interns, including agreed major and minor projects that have to be completed within their first year. It is suggested that AusAID work with the Ministry of Health, supported by AusAID project staff working in the Ministry to pilot reintegration plans for the other health professional alumni. Engineering is of ongoing HRD need in Fiji, with a significant number of awardees graduating each year. As AusAID has commenced relationship development with the Fiji Institute of Engineers with regard to the employment of ADS engineers, it is suggested that AusAID also work with the association (and through them relevant private/public sector employers) to pilot the reintegration plans for engineers. The plans could perhaps at a later stage also be introduced in the agriculture or climate change sectors. At the re-entry workshops, other alumni could be invited to optionally use the reintegration plans for their own career development purpose.

9.4 M&E

9.4.1 Future Impact Studies

Consolidation of OASIS and SOFEA is underway to facilitate historical reporting and interrogation. This process should include data cleansing, particularly of key data fields, such as award end year, level and field of study commenced/achieved and award variations (extension, termination). There would be value in also recording the applicant profile category, target objective and the DAC sector of destination so that scholarship effectiveness of awardee selection could be measured at a later date. Maintaining up to date information about alumni is important not only for facilitating linkages and supporting them with activities but also for conducting high quality M&E. For this survey, contact was made with 72% of the alumni sample overall. There was a high contact rate with ADS alumni (100%) who completed their award after 2003. This is thought to be due to the higher frequency of contact that AusAID Fiji has with ADS awardees (including for regular visa processing). Only 59% of the ADS 2000-2003 alumni were able to be contacted, in part due to less emphasis on recording contact details at that time and perhaps in part due to movement of these alumni in the longer period since their award end. The contact rate for ARDS alumni was only 67%. This is likely to be due to the limited on-award contact that AusAID has with these awardees, especially with those at USP and FSMed where much of the on-award processes are managed directly by the respective institution.

Although scholarship numbers have recently increased, given the relatively small numbers of alumni completing each year, and the need for sufficient sample sizes for statistical analysis, contact should be maintained with as high, and as representative a, proportion of the alumni as possible. Given alumni mobility, especially after completion of their bond, contact mapping should therefore be done annually. This can be done by email in the first instance, with more pro-active follow-up required if the initial contact is unsuccessful (particularly for those who may be unemployed or living overseas). The contact mapping should collect data on email addresses (home and work), details of an alternative contact (relative etc) and alumni work place/position and location (within Fiji/overseas). This will enable the annual monitoring of overall employment and migration trends between the three-yearly tracer survey so that any necessary adjustment to the program (in terms of selection, post-award support or M&E) can be made as early as possible. Contact mapping could be undertaken by the alumni association, with alumni encouraged to keep the association informed of any contact detail changes.

Recommendation: That AusAID Fiji arrange regular contact mapping of all Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni, so as to be able to include them in alumni activities, annually monitor employment and migration trends and to obtain representative samples of alumni for M&E studies.

Whilst alternative approaches are required to assess higher-level organisational and development outcomes, tracer surveys are an effective method of gathering data for assessing individual scholarship outcomes, provided that there is a representative response. To enable comparison between surveys and between countries, future Fiji ADS/ARDS surveys should utilise as many of the questions from the Australian Awards tracer survey question bank (as for this 2011 survey) as possible. In addition to survey questions on the frequency of alumni linkages, it is suggested that questions on outcomes from these linkages be added to the survey question data bank. Additional questions could also be included to assess alumni role in leadership within the organisation.

For effective M&E, the tracer surveys should be undertaken on a regular basis, with every three years suggested by the AusAID Scholarships Section. Given the relatively small Fiji alumni population size and differences in impact with time, there is value in also surveying alumni that completed their award more than three years previously. If for example the next Fiji ADS/ARDS tracer survey were conducted in 2014, it could include alumni from the 2004-2007, 2008-2010 and 2011-2013 cohorts. Knowledge and lessons learnt from the M&E activities should be disseminated and discussed with key stakeholders and used to guide the allocation of future scholarships and to inform strategies to maximise the outcomes for alumni and organisations. Understanding of scholarship impact (and the setting of indicator benchmarks and targets) would benefit from comparative analysis with other data on award outcomes. This would include comparison between successive Fiji alumni surveys, with tracer survey data from other Pacific countries, with M&E data from the GoF, NZAID and other donors, and with surveys such as conducted by the Australian Education International on broader international (including non-sponsored) graduate outcomes and employer perceptions.

An interim study may be necessary for specific target alumni or if a significant (negative) change to likely impact is identified through consultation with key stakeholders or through the contact mapping. For example, as indicated in Section 9.2.1, the change in policy to focus ARDS awards on TVET studies needs to be carefully monitored and evaluated in terms of educational pathways, employment outcomes, skill utilisation, as well as comparative value for money compared to scholarships for TVET study at the APTC. An evaluation of the impact of these alumni should be undertaken in 2013, based on two years of award completions (typically on one year study programs). As only limited data was collected on overseas alumni, further M&E on the impact (through for example, remittances to their home country, or contributions to other countries in the region) of these alumni should be undertaken. This could potentially be done on a regional basis, including overseas ADS/ARDS alumni from the other Pacific countries.

Alumni interviews allow more open-ended questions and areas of enquiry, rather than the more closed tick-box format of written surveys. Although the interviews added value to this study, dependent on political/other sensitivities at the time of the next study, increased value would be obtained from recording/transcribing the interview to enable a more extensive analysis. Employer interviews with alumni line managers would also add value to M&E, for triangulating data on individual alumni outputs and perspectives on their contribution, as well as for providing complementary data on other factors influencing alumni contribution to organisational development. For government departments or sectors that have been more explicitly targeted in the scholarships, a case study approach may be most appropriate to examine the relative contribution of the scholarship training (through a number of alumni) to strengthening organisational effectiveness.

9.4.2 Outcome Indicators

Annex J contains a list of suggested indicators for the following outcome areas: return to Fiji, employment outcomes, personal outcomes, knowledge/skill utilisation, knowledge/skill transfer, reintegration, contribution to overall development objectives, linkages, alumni activities, overseas alumni and unintended or negative impacts. The data for these indicators needs to be collected through a range of M&E tools - contact mapping, tracer surveys, reintegration plan tracking, employer interviews and the alumni association database. Data for these indicators should be disaggregated by award type, gender, disadvantage, award end cohort, level of study etc. Given the range of factors that can affect outcomes, these indicators are set at a level where attribution/achievement of a given outcome indicator is to *at least a medium extent*. AusAID Fiji may wish to set the indicators at a higher level, where attribution/achievement of a given outcome indicator is to *a great extent*.

Whilst this study has produced data for some of these indicators, without the availability of comparative data, or time within the study to undertake further consultation with key stakeholders regarding their expectations as to satisfactory achievement of outcomes, informed judgments have had to be made as to whether the intended outcomes have been achieved. Consideration should be given to agreeing standard benchmarks (perhaps of high/medium/low achievement) for measuring success for selected indicators. These would be developed through meaningful comparisons with relevant data from other Pacific countries and in agreement with key stakeholders in Fiji.

The setting of realistic targets for improved performance may also be appropriate for some of the outcome indicators. It should be recognised however that in the context of scholarship programs, improved performance may be a medium-long term prospect (as for example, there may be up to six years lag between changes to awardee selection and outcomes of alumni commencing employment/utilizing their skills) or it may be beyond the scope of alumni to effect change in complex and challenging organisational environments. Evaluation as to the extent of impact should also take into consideration changes in the political, economic and employment context, changes in HRD needs and the time between awardee selection and commencing/resuming employment/skill utilisation.

10 Conclusions

The ADS/ARDS schemes have contributed to Fiji's human resource development over many years, through increasing the number of post-secondary qualified human resources in priority areas of training need. Between 2000-2010, 272 Fiji citizens completed ADS/ARDS funded undergraduate (54%) and postgraduate study (46%). The ADS awards in particular have enabled training in fields of study not available at the time in Fiji. A very high proportion of the awardees completed their qualification, and returned to Fiji to work, at least for the period of the AusAID scholarships embargo or GoF public service bond. Through the equal allocation of awards to females as well as males, the scholarship program has promoted gender equity in human resource development in Fiji.

In consultation with the Fiji government and in response to the identified HRD priorities at the time, the 2000-2010 ADS/ARDS alumni were selected to undertake post-secondary education across a wide range of fields of study. Some of these areas of study (such as law, creative arts, MBAs and information technology) are no longer listed by the MNP as national training priorities. Nevertheless, the majority of alumni tracer survey respondents still considered that their training is relevant at least to a medium extent to their current employment (94%) and also for Fiji's development (97%). In response to Fiji's development priorities (and the absence of in-country training in fields such as engineering) the majority of alumni have been trained in the fields of health (19%), society and culture (19%) and engineering (18%). To reflect AusAID's overall program strategies for Fiji an increased proportion of alumni undertook health sector training in recent years. It is noted that whilst education is a key focus for AusAID's development program in Fiji, only 9% of alumni have been trained in this area. This may in part reflect the field of education coding of awardee study (rather than destination sector), but may also reflect the lesser need for donor scholarships for undergraduate education, as the GoF's has its own scholarship programs for in-country teacher training.

Whilst there was an earlier ADS/ARDS focus on meeting public sector HRD needs, Fiji and AusAID's more holistic approach to national development has resulted in the inclusion of private sector training priorities. Alumni are working across all sectors of Fiji, although the scholarships have most contributed to capacity development of the Fiji public sector. Of the contacted alumni, 64% are working in the Fiji public sector, with a further 9% working in a Fiji state owned enterprise. 16% of the alumni are working in non-government organisations, particularly regional organisations (such as USP and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community), 10% of the alumni are working in the private sector. 39% of the contacted alumni are working in the health and education sectors currently prioritised in Australia's development assistance for Fiji. AusAID has also been responsive to Fiji's changing HRD needs, most recently through increasing the allocation of awards for in-Australia study and for targeting TVET in-country study.

Annex L summarises the outcome data obtained from the Impact Study. Assessment of outcomes and impact needs to take into consideration the political, economic and social context in which the alumni are working. Currently in Fiji, this includes ongoing political instability, high levels of unemployment, high levels of competition for employment opportunities, low economic growth rates, occupational discrimination and gender segregation, a fragile public sector with significant disruptions and funding shortages in public sector programs, management and staffing and weaknesses/lack of coordination in human resource development and organisational planning. Nevertheless, whilst there are some variations between different groups of alumni, overall positive outcomes are that:

- *The majority of alumni remained in Fiji for two years or more after completing the scholarship:*
 - 100% of the 2008-2010 survey respondents are still in Fiji, although this may under-report cases where alumni was not able to be contacted and may be overseas.
- *The majority of alumni took up or resumed a job to which their studies are relevant within 6 months of returning home:*
 - 100% of the 2008-2010 survey alumni that were looking for work took less than three months to find work;
 - 99% of the survey alumni reported that their first employment after their award was relevant at least to a medium extent to their studies (and 81% responded that it was relevant to a great extent).

- *The majority of alumni have used what they have learnt to take action that contributes to organisational objectives (and development goals):*
 - 94% of the survey alumni reported that the content, knowledge and skills gained during their studies was relevant at least to a medium extent in their current job;
 - 89% of the survey alumni reported that they are using their technical/subject matter skills at least occasionally in their current job;
 - 74% of the survey alumni have produced an output in their current job that is related to the knowledge/skills obtained during their studies;
 - 97% of the survey alumni reported that the skills/knowledge gained from their studies was at least to a medium extent relevant to Fiji's development needs (93% of postgraduate alumni reported that their study was relevant to a great extent);
 - 55% of alumni reported using their skills outside the workplace to at least a medium extent in community-based organisations; and
 - survey alumni reported frequent use of the “soft skills” gained on award: such as communication, analytical and critical thinking (which were used daily by 89%, 85% and 84% of the respondents respectively). The alumni interviewed also mentioned that their studies had helped them to develop a work ethic, to improve their time management and to have greater confidence in presenting opinions in the workplace.

However, the study findings with respect to the outcome “*alumni continue to maintain relationships and links with Australia(ns) and with alumni networks in their country and in Australia for two years or more*” were not so positive:

- 23% of the survey respondents have had none or minimal contact with their former institution. Furthermore, the frequency of contact decreased with time, ADS alumni contact with former lecturers was significantly less for the 2000-2003 alumni (67% reported never being in contact); and
- 34% of the ADS survey respondents have had none or minimal contact with their cohort of Australian students.

In addition:

- at least 11% of the alumni contacted are no longer living in Fiji. This proportion is higher for the 2000-2003 alumni (18%). As 28% of the alumni were not able to be contacted for this study, this figure is likely to significantly under-represent the actual proportion of alumni now living overseas;
- 62% of survey respondents reported experiencing difficulty in applying their skills/knowledge in their current job (78% in the public sector, 36% in the private sector and 31% in the NGOs sector);
- only 49% have, at least to a medium extent, passed on the skills and knowledge gained from their studies through formal training/teaching courses in their current job; and
- 15% of the survey respondents reported some negative impacts from their scholarship.

There were however insufficient responses to the tracer survey to provide reliable data on the impact of alumni living overseas (proportion living overseas, reasons for moving, remittances).

Table 19: Key Tracer Survey Data

Key Tracer Survey Data	Award End Year		
	2000-2003	2004-2007	2008-2010
First employer after scholarship was public sector	82%	67%	79%
Took three or more months to find work after award	50%	66%	0%
Relevance of study to first job after scholarship – to a great extent	82%	73%	88%
Current employer is public sector/SOE (contact mapping)	43%	72%	85%
Current employer is regional organisation (contact mapping)	28%	16%	8%
Relevance of content, knowledge and skills gained during studies to current job – to a great extent	44%	68%	93%
Current employment outputs relevant to study skills/knowledge	67%	74%	77%
ADS alumni contact with former lecturers	67%	23%	20%
Study skills/knowledge relevance to Fiji's development needs – not at all	10%	0%	0%
% alumni living overseas (of the sample alumni contacted)	18%	13%	6%
% of the sample alumni not able to be contacted	37%	31%	8%

Table 19 above illustrates differences in award outcomes between the alumni cohorts whose award finished recently (2008-2010), compared to those who completed between 2004-2007 and 2000-2003. Overall, over time, some alumni have moved out of the public into the private sector, regional and other organisations. This may in part be due to the need for job security and to find other work before the 55 years public sector compulsory retirement age. Alumni who graduated more than three years ago, and particularly those who graduated between 2000-2003 reported lower levels of current job relevance and outputs, and are more likely to be living overseas (or have been unable to be contacted) than the recent alumni. These findings point to the need to provide additional support to alumni so as to maximise their skill utilisation and transfer, particularly before they migrate or move into positions where their technical skills are not as relevant and they produce a lower extent of relevant outputs.

The study findings also indicate a need to encourage alumni to develop contacts made whilst they were on award and to support them to maintain and leverage linkages post-award. Whilst over time, alumni may utilise their training to a lesser extent, many will still be in positions where they can play a critical soft-diplomacy role, including through improving people-to-people links between Australia and its partners. There is also a need to support alumni networking with other Fiji alumni, as 39% of the survey respondents reported difficulties in utilising their skills in their workplace due to lack of a professional network to share ideas, challenges and solutions and 35% responded that they lack opportunity to continue to develop their skills and knowledge.

Based on the analysis of ADS/ARDS outcomes for the 2000-2010 alumni, interviews with the alumni and consultations with key stakeholders in Fiji, to improve the impact of the scholarships, it is **recommended** that AusAID:

1. develop ADS/ARDS applicant profiles to improve applicant targeting in Fiji;
2. strengthen its targeting of applicants with disability or applicants working with people with a disability;
3. strengthen its targeting of applicants from rural/remote areas to ensure equity of access from these areas;
4. in response to Fiji's priority training needs, continue the allocation of a higher proportion of its bilateral scholarships for in-Australia study, and subject to further evaluation as to the outcomes, target TVET study through ARDS;
5. more specifically target the ADS/ARDS awards by reducing the list of priority fields of study in consultation with key stakeholders in Fiji;
6. more closely integrate the ADS/ARDS program (from pre- to post-award activities) with its other development program activities in Fiji;
7. also include a Civil Society Organisation representative (in addition to the public and private sector representatives) on the Joint Scholarships Selection Committee;
8. provide re-entry workshops to support alumni enter/re-integrate to the workforce on completion of their award;
9. pilot reintegration planning for ADS/ARDS alumni in selected Fiji agencies in order to support them to apply and transfer their new knowledge/skills effectively;
10. increase its utilisation of the Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni to provide advice and undertake consultancy work in AusAID's development program activities in Fiji;
11. undertake a more pro-active role in supporting the Fiji Australia Scholarships Alumni Association to implement a regular program of activities and to maintain up-to-date alumni contact data;
12. arrange regular contact mapping of all Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni, so as to be able to include them in alumni activities, annually monitor employment and migration trends and to obtain representative samples of alumni for M&E studies;
13. undertake further analysis into the impact (through for example, remittances to their home country, or contributions to other countries in the region) of Fiji ADS/ARDS alumni living temporarily or permanently overseas; and
14. continue to closely meet regularly with Fiji government and other donor scholarship agencies to improve coordination and impact of the scholarship training provided to Fiji.