

ANU-UPNG Partnership: 2026 Annual Plan

February 2026

Table of contents

<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience</i>	2
<i>Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach</i>	5
<i>Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges</i>	6
<i>Stream 4: Project management</i>	7
<i>Cross-cutting considerations</i>	7
<i>Performance</i>	8
<i>Annex 1 Project philosophy</i>	10

Introduction

This annual workplan of the ANU-UPNG Partnership is the **first for the third phase** of the ANU-UPNG Partnership project funding. Phase 3 of the partnership commences from 1 March 2026 to 28 February 2030. This and the successive annual workplans under Phase 3 will endeavour to build on the successes achieved and foundations laid in the last two phases.

In phase 1 and phase 2, the partnership focussed largely on economics and public policy divisions of UPNG's School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP). Under phase 3, the partnership will expand support to other divisions of SBPP, particularly in relation to research, summer school program, support to student associations, and ANU scholarship. Specific details for 2026 are provided in the workplan.

The project philosophy is outlined in [Annex 1](#). The key **objective** of the project is to address weaknesses within SBPP and help realise a stronger SBPP. The project also aims to build a deeper and lasting relationship between UPNG and ANU. The project has four work areas or "streams" to achieve these objectives. They are:

1. Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience;
2. Collaborative research and outreach;
3. Student and faculty exchanges; and
4. Project management.

Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience

Support for MEPP

- ANU lectures will teach in the Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP) to maintain the current teaching and learning quality for students.
- The partnership will continue to make modest payments to non-ANU visiting lecturers to teach MEPP courses, which has been a cost-effective way of involving other academics in this partnership.
- An ANU lecturer will collaborate with a UPNG lecturer to review, restructure, and update the content of two courses (Cooperate Governance and Business Ethics and Strategic Management), ensuring they are aligned with the MEPP program's learning objectives.
- Up to two MEPP scholarships will be provided to SBPP staff. (*More information under Stream 3 – Masters students*).
- An MEPP alumni database will be established, and the interim executive members of the MEPP Alumni (elected in 2025) will be supported to formalise the MEPP alumni network and register it as an association with PNG's Investment Promotion Authority.
- The draft lecturing schedule for the MEPP is below.

Postgraduate teaching by ANU and ANU-supported lecturers (MEPP)

No.	Course name	Lecturer/s name	Year Level
Trimester I (Feb-May)			
1	Quantitative Research Methods	Thomas Wangi	1
2	Governance and Institutions	Terence Wood	1
3	Corporate Governance and Business Ethics	Elly Kinkin and Grant Walton	2
Trimester II (May-Aug)			
4	Development Thinking and Policy	Cameron Hill	1
5	Qualitative Research Methods	Safa Fanaian	1
6	Macroeconomic Analysis and Policy	Martin Davies	1
7	Global Economic and Policy Issues	Andrew A Mako and Stephen Howes	2
Trimester III (Aug-Dec)			
23	Applied Cost-benefit Analysis	Thomas Wangi	1
24	Issues in Public Sector Management	Nematullah Bizhan	1
	Strategic Management	Elly Kinkin and Grant Walton	
Yearlong course			
25	MEPP research papers	Lawrence Sause and Nematullah Bizhan	2

Strengthen the Economics, Public Policy and Strategic Management Division

- An important achievement of the project in phase 2 has been the localisation of all undergraduate teaching in economics and public policy: UPNG’s economics program was transformed from near-collapse to now full staffing capacity mainly by recent ANU graduates who were sponsored by the partnership. Going forward, we will continue to work with UPNG to maximise opportunities for returning graduates.
- Five recent ANU graduates (Jollanda Mathew, Bobby Kunda, Kingtau Mambon, Anna Kapil and David Poka) will teach undergraduate economics courses in 2026. Jollanda and Bobby are on multi-year permanent contract with UPNG. Kingtau Mambon, Anna Kapil and David Poka are currently on temporary fulltime contract with UPNG, which means that they are not paid during semester breaks. The Partnership will continue to support Kingtau, Anna and David who are on partial-year contracts with stipends. A major objective for the year is to work with UPNG to provide these staff with full-year contracts.
- The partnership helped recruit a top 4th year economics students at the end of 2025 to be a tutor in

the economics division in 2026 - Dorothy Kaupa was selected through a competitive process, and is expected to start teaching undergraduate economics courses as a tutor in semester 1 of 2026.

- The partnership has also actively supported faculty strengthening of the public policy and strategic management division. Despite this, there are still lecturer shortages in public policy (and strategic management). To address this, we will continue to fund up to two MEPP scholarships per year. Current (2024/2025) recipient, Walo Katabali a tutor in PPM division, will complete his second year of MEPP in 2026. Emily Tongia Kawapuro, another PPM tutor, was selected for MEPP scholarship for 2026/2027, and is expected to commence MEPP studies in 2026. Upon graduation, the recipients of the scholarship are expected to deliver courses in public policy.
- In 2026, we will work to maintain the improved performance in the annual economics exam achieved in 2024 and 2025, by applying the same strategies put in place in the last two years. These include: conduct awareness and motivate students; conduct remedial classes on past exams; award prizes to top performing students; and award certificates to students who do the exam.
- We will plan this year to reintroduce the Economics Honours program next year.

Expanded support

- **Student associations:** In 2026, as part of expanding support more broadly to SBPP under phase 3, the Partnership will provide financial support to all SBPP student associations to run extracurricular activities. The Partnership has allocated a budget of up to **K2,600 per year** for student-led learning and outreach initiatives for **each of the eight student associations** linked to the eight divisions of SBPP (accounting, banking and finance, economics, strategic management, public policy management, tourism & hospitality, business management, and human resources management). Funding to the student associations requires submission of a formal budget and activity plan to Partnership staff and heads of division. Student associations can access the grant only upon approval of the budget and activity plan (as well as an acquittal report of previous grants).
- **Alumni Association:** As part of the Partnership's effort to maintain contact with UPNG alumni (especially of economics graduates where we have maintained contacts with), we will continue to promote and expand alumni through social media (especially WhatsApp group), which are useful for discussions and contacts. This initiative also enables graduates to stay better connected after the completion of their study at UPNG.
- **Reading workshop:** As in the last two years, in 2026 we will hold a series of reading workshops to provide UPNG undergraduate students with an opportunity to practice reading and analysing academic papers on PNG-related issues. Former ANU Scholarship recipient, Jollanda Mathew will lead the coordination of the series (with the support of Andrew A. Mako and other economics colleagues), and plans to hold a workshop two times per semester. We will include topics on climate change.
- **Career talk and alumni sharing workshop:** Building on the success and positive feedback from the previous years, in 2026 we will work with the student associations to hold a career talk and alumni sharing workshops. These initiatives will enable third and fourth year SBPP students learn career development skills from invited speakers from both public and private sectors, and job-searching tips from UPNG alumni.
- **Job placement:** The Partnership will continue to work with SBPP to support students for job

placements, including writing references, collecting CVs and transcripts of the final-year students and sending them to various government departments.

- **Support for Accounting Division:** This will commence in 2026. See section on exchange.

Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach

Continuation of research and outreach

- The **PNG Update** is the country's premier conference on economics and development issues. ANU and UPNG have agreed to move the conference to a biennial cycle. The next PNG Update will be held in 2027.
- **ANU-UPNG seminar series:** The ANU-UPNG seminar series was introduced in 2021. The monthly seminars are run in a hybrid format (in-person and online), and held in two venues – ANU Crawford School and UPNG SBPP – simultaneously. This series will resume in March 2026 and run until October or November.
- We will keep our databases up to date.
 - **PNG MP Database** (<https://devpolicy.org/pngmps/>)
 - **PNG Budget Database** (<https://devpolicy.crawford.anu.edu.au/png-project/png-budget-database>)
 - **PNG Elections Database** (<https://devpolicy.org/pngelections/>)
 - **PNG Economic Database** (<https://devpolicy.org/pngeconomic>)
- **The Devpolicy Blog:** Devpolicy.org is the online research outreach portal for the Development Policy Centre at the ANU. This website is increasingly used by UPNG and other PNG researchers. Many blog posts are republished in the PNG media, expanding the readership further to inform policy debates and discussion. This will continue in 2026. 'Devpolicy Blog PNG' Facebook page will continue to make full-text versions of blog posts available, to increase access to this work among people based in PNG who are able to access Facebook, but not webpages such as blogs, without additional data costs through their mobile providers. The Blog Incentive Scheme, launched in 2018, will continue. This scheme encourages blog submissions from UPNG staff and students, and occasionally other PNG writers. The scheme offers 200 Kina for blogs that are published on the Devpolicy Blog.
- **Supervision of research students:** We will continue to supervise MEPP research students and PhD research students.
- **Devpol PNG Project News:** The newsletter is sent out to subscribers every four weeks to provide Partnership-related updates, and research and blogs on PNG.

Expanded collaborative research

- An expanded collaborative research program will be initiated. SBPP staff will be encouraged to do more research, and take advantage of the monthly **ANU-UPNG seminar** series, as well as the **PNG Update** (which will now be convened every two years with the next Update slated for 2027) to present their research. While a wide range of research activities will be undertaken and reported on, key research projects in which ANU staff are collaborating include the following:

- **Review of PNG's Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) IV and PNG Sustainable Development Plan (SDP):** The ANU-UPNG team have been requested to undertake a review of PNG's MTDP IV and SDP. Initial discussions are held, but arrangements are not yet finalised.
- **Reset@50 implementation** The ANU-UPNG team has been requested to assist with Reset@50 implementation, especially in relation to Principle 2 (human development), Principle 3 (evidence-based decision making) and Principle 4 (economic growth with a focus on migration). Initial discussions were held, and arrangements are being finalised. This research will be led by Stephen Howes in collaboration with Andrew A Mako Kingtau Mambon and David Poka
- **Payday lending in PNG:** A new program of research into payday lending – a widespread phenomenon in PNG – will be carried by Loretta Dilu, Kenneth Baliwasa and Isabelle Vilau in collaboration with Nemat Bizhan.
- **Public opinion survey:** A third opinion survey of students will be carried out in 2026. In addition, we intended to launch a phone-based public opinion survey. This research will be carried out by Anna Kapil and Terence Wood.

Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges

ANU-UPNG Summer School

The annual ANU Summer School is a four-week intensive program held at ANU. In the past two phases, the program supported the learning and development of UPNG's top ten undergraduate performers in economics and public policy. It prepares them to achieve their highest potential in their final year of study.

In phase 3 of the Partnership, participation in the summer school program will be expanded beyond economics and public policy and will include students from other divisions of SBPP. Under phase 3, the partnership will select **ten students** (five male, five female). We will agree on the selection process with SBPP.

Candidates for the 2027 ANU Summer School will be selected in Semester 1 of 2026, Gender balance will be factored into the selection process, as we have done in all past summer school programs.

Faculty exchanges

- Faculty exchange is a growing part of the partnership. We will continue with our **annual staff exchange program** which we have held in the last three years by inviting early-career returned graduates and other young economics/public policy/strategic management lecturers to visit ANU for two weeks in December to attend the Australasian AID Conference, build their networks and conduct research. We have found this approach extremely effective and it is now an important feature of the partnership, and is available to staff from other divisions of SBPP. We expect to invite about 10 staff down this year. Opportunities for other visits, including by SBPP staff who are undertaking PhD studies at SBPP/UPNG, will be explored.
- **ANU staff.** ANU staff will continue to visit UPNG to lecture and to research.

- **ANU scholarships:** In 2026 we will support three scholarship recipients: Masidah Tonaim (public policy) and Jezreel Kassam (economics) – both in the final year of studies at Crawford School, ANU. As part of expanding support to the Accounting division under Phase 3 of the partnership, Lucy Kerua, a tutor at UPNG’s Accounting division was awarded a scholarship to study Master of Applied Accounting and Master of Financial Management in 2026 to 2027. Lucy Kerua is the first ANU scholarship recipient under phase 3, and is expected to commence study at ANU, Canberra, in early 2026. We will aim to learn as much as possible from Lucy’s experience this year. Subject to lessons learnt, we will look to support and select a second accounting student this year for study in 2027.
- **MEPP scholarships:** To support the development of UPNG's public policy management division, the Partnership supports promising graduates to study the MEPP at UPNG per year. The 2025/2026 recipient, Mr Walo Katabali, a public policy tutor, will complete his MEPP study in 2026, and is expected to graduate in 2027. The 2024/2025 recipient, Ms Molly Yokko, the School Librarian, is expected to graduate in April 2026. The partnership has awarded the MEPP scholarship for the 2026/2027 round to Emily Tongia Kawapuro, a tutor at the PPM division of SBPP. She is expected to commence studies in early 2026. Under phase 3, as part of expanding support to rest of SBPP, staff from other divisions (apart from PPM and Strategic Management) are welcome to take advantage of this funded scholarship to strengthen their faculty. ANU and SBPP will discuss the selection of the next candidate for 2027/2028 MEPP scholarship round.

Stream 4: Project management

Partnership management

The Partnership management will continue to provide vital remote logistical and team support to ensure an effective and smooth project delivery. We will continue to monitor any changes in the security situation in PNG to ensure staff members’ safety, by maintaining regular contact with the Abt team in PNG. Regular communications and repeat visits by the Project Director, Professor Stephen Howes, will help maintain the lines of communication.

Cross-cutting considerations

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) - GEDSI is an important consideration for the partnership. The following initiatives will be part of the 2026 work program.

- We will ensure equal female-male representation in the Summer School.
- For the first time, the majority of our ANU masters students will be female (two out of three)
- Mainstreaming of gender issues in course content and research will continue.
- Continue to encourage and support research and analysis on GEDSI issues in the attitude survey and payday lending research.
- The partnership will provide support and accommodations for students with disability and to make all activities inclusive for students who may need additional academic and social support to successfully complete tertiary studies.
- Bring out at least one publication on disability issues and/or by persons living with a disability.

Climate Change – In 2026, the partnership will seek to strengthen research in climate change by activities such as the following:

- Ensuring climate change issues are part of existing undergraduate courses, especially in key courses such as natural resources economics and environmental economics, as well as discussions by students in the inter-disciplinary reading workshops.
- Encouraging staff and students (especially second-year MEPP students who will submit a thesis) to undertake research in the economics of climate change.
- Include climate change as a case study in the MEPP Development Policy Course.

Child Protection (CP) and Protection against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

- All staff are required to sign the Abt Code of Conduct.
- All staff sign a voluntary code of conduct that binds them to the highest standards.
- Staff are also bound by the ANU Code of Conduct, which covers, among other things, the prevention of discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- The project has a Child Protection and PSEAH plan agreed to with Abt.

Performance

The Partnership undertakes several M&E exercises, including student evaluations of partnership-supported courses and lecturers and the annual economics exam. The Partnership also assesses its progress against key indicators. Performance against the indicators set out below will be assessed and reported in two six-monthly progress reports.

INDICATOR	Measures
Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience	
ANU lecturers teaching at UPNG	Number of staff teaching each term or semester at UPNG with a focus on the MEPP program; number of courses by program and number of students taught.
Teaching evaluations	Improved average scores of all ANU-supported and ANU-trained lecturers and all courses taught by them, including MEPP courses.
ANU-UPNG annual exam in economics	Maintain recent high participation in the annual exam with better performance.
MEPP alumni association	Progress and activity
Lecturer retention and inclusion	Hiring and retention of returned graduates
Collaborative Research and Outreach	
PNG databases	PNG database up to date.
ANU-UPNG research collaboration	Research program outputs.
Seminars	Monthly seminar series
Student and faculty exchanges in economics and public policy	
ANU-UPNG summer school	Successful 2027 Summer School
ANU scholarships	Current master's students successful completion of their studies at ANU, and satisfactory progress by MEPP scholarship holders at UPNG.
Faculty exchange	Productive two-way exchanges through the year
Program management	
Adequate M&E and risk management	Timely and comprehensive M&E and reporting; Adequate measures to manage risks.

Annex 1 Project philosophy

This project philosophy has been carried over (with appropriate updating) from the first phase of the project.

- **The project takes a long-term approach.** Aid funding for this Partnership may wax and wane (and we hope it waxes) but the project has been set up to be here for the long term, at least a decade. Of course, there is no guarantee it will last for a decade, but that is the intent: there is little point to setting up a shorter-term project. Focusing on longer-term outcomes enables us to adapt to the many surprises and unanticipated twists and turns along the way, including, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **The concept of partnership is critical.** Both parties have skin in the game. Both have made a long-term commitment to the Partnership. Both are prepared to discuss and resolve issues in a transparent manner.
- **The benefits of the project are both direct and indirect.** Perhaps the most important, certainly the most tangible, benefits of the project are for the students who otherwise might receive no teaching, and certainly a lower quality of teaching. These are the future leaders of PNG after all. But there are also important indirect benefits – the systemic changes, research and outreach. This dual approach serves as both a risk mitigation approach and as a way to maximise project value.
- **The project has and requires strong support from the highest levels.** Australia’s former Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop MP initiated the expansion of the project during a meeting in mid-2014 with the then ANU Vice Chancellor. The high-level champion of the project is currently the PNG Treasurer. Given the difficulty of the project, high-level support is critical for success.
- **The project has strong UPNG ownership.** The project is as much a UPNG initiative as an ANU one. It was the former UPNG VC’s initiative to seek a new MOU with ANU, and it was his drive that brought that into fruition. The SBPP Dean plays a critical role in providing day-to-day support to the Partnership and its various initiatives. Without this, the project would undoubtedly falter.
- **The project takes an adaptive, learning-by-doing, and adjusting-as-we-go approach.** This is the only approach that makes sense. We learn as we go, documenting what we learn along the way. The recent incorporation of online teaching into regular course deliveries is a good example of the project’s flexibility and evolution.
- **The project values continuity.** To develop good relationships, and to learn to be effective, staff need to be in place for as long as possible. Long-standing relationships between ANU and UPNG faculty are key to the success of the Partnership. If project staff do well, we want them to stay for as long as possible.
- **The project is based on realistic expectations and seeks incremental gains.** It would be foolhardy to wish away the systemic challenges that UPNG faces in a range of areas. No external intervention can turn UPNG around, or even a part of the university. However, an external intervention can make a difference, and be judged a success, provided realistic expectations are maintained.

