

ANU-UPNG Partnership: 2026 Semester 1 Report

Name of Organisation: Development Policy Centre, Australian National University
Project title: ANU-UPNG Partnership
Project objectives: To help realise a stronger UPNG School of Business and Public Policy, as well as a deeper and lasting relationship with ANU.
Reporting period: First half of 2026

Table of Contents

<i>Implementation progress – first half of 2026.....</i>	<i>3</i>
Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience.....	3
Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach	10
Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges	12
Stream 4: Project management	16
<i>Performance.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Crossing cutting issues.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Challenges, risks and lessons learnt</i>	<i>18</i>



The ANU-UPNG team presenting to RESET@50, 8 June 2026

This is the **first** semester report under **Phase 3** of the ANU-UPNG Partnership. Phase 3 was officially launched by H.E. Mr Ewen McDonald, Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea on 8th April 2026, and will last four years (March 2026 to February 2030).

The launch received press coverage, including the following excerpt of an [article](#) in *The National* by Meshach Ruri:

“This is not just press release achievement – it means classrooms filled, lecturers trained, and graduates stepping into Treasury, Planning, Internal Revenue Commission, and provincial administrations with skills the country urgently needs...ANU scholars teach at UPNG along local staff....Knowledge transfer happens locally, building lasting capacity. PNG’s biggest deficit is not money, it’s human capital. Partnerships like UPNG-ANU close the gap, preparing the economists and policymakers who will shape the nation’s future...”

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 **has expanded support to other divisions of SBPP**, particularly in relation to research, summer school program, support to student associations, and ANU scholarship. Progress made in the first half of 2026 is covered by this report.



Photo: The ten 2026 ANU-UPNG Summer School students (holding certificates) with H.E. Mr. Ewen McDonald, Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea (backrow, 5th from left); Dr Kate Rogers (Minister-Counsellor Economics, Health & Infrastructure, Australian High Commission); Prof Stephen Howes (Director ANU’s Development Policy Centre); Prof Ian Findlay (Vice-Chancellor of UPNG); and Ms Diana Ni (First Secretary-Economics, Australian High Commission) at the Launch of Phase 3 of ANU-UPNG Partnership in Port Moresby, 8th April 2026. The ANU-UPNG Partnership’s Phase 3 is funded by the Australian aid program. Phases 1 and 2 were also funded by the Australian government since 2015.

Implementation progress – first half of 2026

Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience

Teaching

Four ANU and ANU funded lecturers, five ANU-trained lecturers and three ANU sponsored MEPP graduates taught **seventeen** courses with **425 female (36%) and 749 male students as well as 2 students with disability (1,174 in total)** in Semester 1 and Trimester I of 2026. All courses were taught in person and online. The details of the courses taught are provided in the table below. Given that UPNG does not regularly require course evaluations, by requiring all courses to be evaluated the Partnership is both trying to help especially young lecturers and set a good example. And this has paid off, because this year the following UPNG lecturers volunteered to have their courses evaluated in Semester 1: Kenneth Baliwasa, Loretta Dilu, Jack Assa, and Issabelle Vilau. Except for Jack Assa, the lecturers graduated with Master of Economic and Public Policy (MEPP) from UPNG-their studies were sponsored by the Partnership as part of strengthening SBPP's faculty.

All courses were evaluated (with the exception of MEPP Research papers and Foundation Economics) and the average score on the evaluation of the courses was 4.1 out of 5. The average evaluation score on lecturers was 4.2 out of 5. Scores above 4 are good. Overall performance was therefore good, but there is certainly room for improvement in some cases.

				Students			
No.	Course	Lecturer	Year Level	Female	Male	People with a disability	Total
Trimester I (Feb-May)							
1	Quantitative Research Methods	Thomas Wangi	PG1	15	24	0	39
2	Governance and Institutions	Terence Wood	PG1	14	26	1	40
3	Corporate Governance and Business Ethics	Elly Kinkin and Grant Walton	PG1	7	12	1	19
Semester I (Feb-Jun)							
4	Foundation Economics	Jollanda Mathew and Albert Prabhakar	UG1	92	190	0	282
5	Principles of Microeconomics	Jollanda Mathew	UG2	29	71	0	100
6	Public Economics	Bobby Kunda	UG4	13	21	0	34
7	Cost Benefit Analysis	Bobby Kunda	UG4	13	21	0	34
8	Advanced Microeconomics	Anna Kapil	UG3	10	16	0	26
9	Quantitative Economics I	Kingtau Mambon	UG3	28	41	0	69
10	International Economics	David Poka	UG3	10	16	0	26
11	Natural Resource Economics	Kingtau Mambon	UG4	12	20	0	32
12	Theories of Motivation	Kenneth Baliwasa	UG3	9	18	0	27
13	Corporate Governance	Kenneth Baliwasa	UG4	9	21	0	30
14	Philosophy of Science	Loretta Dilu	UG2	25	33	0	58
15	Strategic Leadership	Loretta Dilu	UG3	9	18	0	27
16	Elements of Public Administration	Issabelle Vilau	UG1	128	192	0	320
Yearlong course							
17	MEPP research papers (year long)	Lawrence Sause and Nematullah Bizhan	PG2	2	9	0	11
	TOTAL/AVERAGE			425	749	2	1174

UG=Undergraduate; PG=Postgraduate

MEPP

The Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP) is a major focus of the project. The program is delivered jointly by ANU and UPNG, where ANU staff teach into the project, supervise research students, and help coordinate the program from ANU side.

Key progress and challenges: ANU and ANU funded lecturers taught three Year 1 MEPP courses in Trimester 1: Quantitative Research Methods, Governance and Institutions, and Corporate Governance and Business Ethics. In Trimester 2, ANU and ANU funded lecturers are teaching three Year 1 courses and one Year 2 course: Macroeconomic Analysis and Policy, Qualitative Research Methods, and Development Thinking and Policy, and Global Economic and Policy Issues, respectively. In addition, an ANU lecturer is co-delivering the year-long MEPP Research Paper course to Year 2 MEPP class. All Trimester 1 courses were evaluated. Trimester 2 courses will be evaluated before the end of the trimester. Key progress and challenges are highlighted below.

- The enrolment in Trimesters 1 and 2 stood at 40 students including 14 female students. This is consistent with last year's figure and aligns with the Partnership's agreed objective of maintaining a maximum admission cap of 40 students.
- Although total enrolments have remained within the agreed cap, the current number of postgraduate students continues to place significant demands on lecturers. Given the increased teaching load, maintaining teaching quality and ensuring the sustainability of the program's current format remain key priorities. Accordingly, tutoring and marking assistance is available to those teaching post graduate courses.
- Our efforts to get more PNG lecturers with internationally recognised qualifications to teach into the MEPP are working and will be continued.
- A research grant of K1,500 was introduced by the Partnership in 2021. By early 2026, 9 (including 6 female) students received their final instalment of research grants (K750) after submitting their final research papers. ANU and UPNG researchers continue supervision of the students' research projects.
- Twenty-six students graduated in April 2026, with a Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP), including ten female students. Of the total, ten of the students, including six female students, completed the MEPP research paper which were supervised by ANU and UPNG academics.
- The Corporate Governance and Business Ethics course content was revised to give it a stronger public sector focus and to better align it with the objectives of the MEPP program.
- Prior to Trimester 1, ANU staff teaching in the MEPP program met to discuss lessons learned from previous teaching experiences, explored approaches to addressing challenges associated with the growing use of AI, and shared insights and best practices to improve educational delivery.



Photo: A group of students from the MEPP Year 1 class (Governance and Institutions) in Term 1 2026 with lecturer Dr Terence Wood (centre, seated).



Photo: 2026 MEPP Graduates with faculty members of UPNG's School of Business and Public Policy.

Initiatives to improve teaching

- Lecturer and tutor guidance:** The returned ANU Scholarship recipients and former MEPP scholarship recipients through the Partnership continued to be mentored and supported by ANU lecturers, including through research collaboration such as on PNG Government's RESET@50 (more on this later), and Payday Lending research. Informal discussions are also

held on issues such as teaching and research. This is important part of the Partnership's mentorship of young SBPP faculty.

- **Tutor Support to SBPP:** As in the previous two phases, the Partnership continues to support SBPP with tutors under phase 3. In Semester 1 of 2026, seven tutors who are/were sponsored by the Partnership taught various undergraduate courses at SBPP, including in the economics, public policy management and strategic management divisions.

Expanded Support

- **Student associations:** In Semester 1, as part of expanding support more broadly to SBPP under phase 3, the Partnership made available K1,300 each to eight student associations linked to the eight divisions of SBPP (accounting, banking and finance, economics, strategic management, public policy management, tourism and hospitality, business management, and human resources management) to run extracurricular activities. Six student associations made use of the funding support in Semester 1 to organise various activities to support student learning. We also work with the student associations to ensure female students are also part of the leadership group of the student associations.



Photo: Economics students at their 2026 Motivational and Orientation event Semester 1.



Photo: Tourism students at their Motivational and 2026 Orientation event Semester 1.



Photos: Students and invited speakers at the 2026 Motivational and Orientation event for public policy management students in Semester 1.



Photo: Strategic Management students and invited guest speakers at the Motivational and Orientation event Semester 1.

- **Career talk and alumni sharing workshops:** The Partnership worked with six student associations in Semester 1 to organise career talk as part of their orientation programs. The events featured invited guests including alumni who shared their experiences of transitioning from classroom to the workforce. These events are important to motivate students to work hard at school, as well as to be aware of the expectations of employers and industries.



Photo: Human Resources Management students and invited guest speakers at their Career talk and Orientation event Semester 1.

- Undergraduate Alumni association:** As part of the Partnership's effort to maintain contact with UPNG alumni, the Partnership worked with student association such as Economics, Human Resources and Public Policy Management to promote and expand the Partnership's network for recent graduates, by inviting recent graduates and industry experts to provide insights about opportunities after university, as networking with current students. These were carried out mostly in the student associations' events such as the orientations in Semester 1.
- MEPP Alumni Network.** As part of the Partnership's effort to maintain contact with UPNG MEPP alumni a WhatsApp group and LinkedIn Group have been established. These platforms are used to keep the students connected, informed about opportunities and facilitate exchange of experience and ideas. The Interim Executive Committee of the MEPP Association, elected in 2025, met with the SBPP and ANU teams to discuss the Association's constitution, activity plan and registration process. A draft constitution and activity plan have been prepared and are expected to be finalised in Semester 2, alongside the formal registration of the Association.
- Reading workshop:** This series of reading groups was introduced in 2021 to provide UPNG students and staff members with an opportunity for discussions outside the classroom. As in the last two phases, in Semester 1 we held two 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 led the coordination of the reading workshops (with the support of Andrew A. Mako).
- Job placement:** In semester 1, to support final year students to apply for various job opportunities, including graduate development programs of various companies in PNG, the Project Coordinator provided reference letters and advice to students who sought the Partnership's support and guidance.
- Support for Accounting Division:** The support for Accounting Division began in Semester 1 with Accounting Tutor Lucy Kerua commencing studies at ANU in early 2026 for a two-year

master program funded by the Partnership. More details are in section on exchange.

Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach

ANU-UPNG seminar series

The monthly seminar series co-hosted by ANU and UPNG was introduced in 2020 to provide a platform for research supported through the Partnership and to invite guest speakers who are also working on issues in PNG. We continued the series in Semester 1. From March to June, five hybrid seminars were held across two venues – ANU Crawford School of Public Policy and UPNG School of Business and Public Policy. The seminars were well attended with more than 60 registrations for each seminar. The seminar series will continue in Semester 2 of 2026.

Collaborative research

Collaborative research was pursued in the first semester of 2026. Key research projects include the following:

- **Reset@50:** As requested by the RESET@50 team, the Partnership is finalising policy papers to support the PNG government's RESET@50 team. Work began early 2026 and draft findings were presented and draft reports submitted in the first week of June (see photo at the start of the report). Final policy papers are expected to be submitted to the government end of July 2026. Lecturer Kingtau Mambon is writing the report on family planning (Big Bet 3). Lecturer David Poka is writing the report on national electrification (Big Bet 4). Project Coordinator Andrew Anton Mako is writing the report on expanding internet access (Big Bet 4). Professor Stephen Howes is writing on evidence-based policy making (Big Bet 5) and on three other specific policy issues.
- **Review of PNG's MTDP IV and PNG SDP:** The Department of National Planning and Monitoring has invited the Partnership to review MTDP IV and SDP in Semester 2. Work is expected to commence in July 2026.
- **Disability in PNG** The partnership supported UPNG graduate Jerry Hanson to write a report "[Disability support in PNG: current state and future strategies for improvement](#)" and [blog](#) on the same topic.
- **Forestry sector economic modelling:** Kingtau Mambon was invited by PNG Forest Authority to provide technical support to the national Technical Working Committee to carry out forestry sector economic modelling for PNG.
- **Tracer study of community economic projects in Porgera:** Kingtau Mambon, Dorothy Kaupa (economics tutor at SBPP), and Andrew A Mako were engaged by New Porgera Ltd to carry out an evaluation of community projects implemented in Porgera district prior to the temporary closure of mine in 2020.
- **Payday Lending:** Dr Nemat Bizhan of ANU, together with Loretta Dilu, Kenneth Baliwasa and Issabelle Vilau of UPNG, are collaborating on this research. The study involves a survey of staff across UPNG, Port Moresby General Hospital, the Department of Personnel Management and Femili PNG. Preliminary findings are expected to be presented in Semester 2 as part of the ANU-UPNG Seminar Series.
- **WASH project for Usino Bundi Gama district:** David Poka was engaged as a consultant by Usino Bundi District Development Authority (DDA) to put together funding submission

(including cost-benefit analysis) for WASH project in the district. The WASH project is off the ground with funding successfully secured.

- **Building infrastructure for Lufa district:** David Poka is being engaged as a consultant by Lufa DDA to assist with funding submission (including cost-benefit) to fund government building infrastructure projects in the district.
- **Annual student survey:** Professor Stephen Howes and Dr Terence Wood from ANU, along with Anna Kapil from UPNG began work on the third annual UPNG student survey and, building of this, preparations for the first annual national public opinion survey.
- Along with UPNG's Maholopa Laveil, Dr Terence Wood published a discussion paper analysing the results of **PNG's 2022 general election**.
- **GST reform:** Returned lecturers Bobby Kunda and Kingtau Mambon undertook field research with the World Bank on the price impact of GST zero-rating on essential commodities in PNG. Findings were presented at the 2025 Australasian Aid Conference, and will also be presented in July (Semester 2) at the ANU-UPNG Seminar series.
- **Research on use of AI at UPNG:** Raymond John of UPNG and Dr Nemat Bizhan of ANU are collaborating on this research and published key findings from a preliminary survey of students at UPNG in a DevPol blog post.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis of Buka Truck Road:** This is a consultancy for DT Global carried out by Bobby Kunda and Kingtau Mambon.
- **Corporate governance and ethics in the PNG banking industry: challenges and opportunities.** Research carried out by Kingtau Mambon in collaboration with S. Babu, LN. Pillai, P. Angopa, and K. Yogomin, and published by International Journal of Management Research and Review
- **Migration and Remittances:** The Partnership is supporting commentary and research into the new PEV in PNG, and also researched on remittances earned by PNG workers by participating in temporary labour schemes in Australia (PALM) and New Zealand (RSE).
- **PNG's Superannuation performance:** 2025-26 recipient of Greg Taylor Scholarship, and current ANU-scholarship recipient, Jezreel Kassam, carried out research on the performance of superfunds in PNG in collaboration with Prof Stephen Howes. Findings were presented through a blog post on Devpol.
- **Institutional sources of cooperation, competition and conflict:** Dr Nemat Bizhan and Professor William Maley of ANU published a working paper with Development Policy Centre which examines how institutional design can incentivise cooperation, competition, or conflict by analysing cases of civil service administration in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021 and in PNG after independence in 1975. A blog post summarizing the paper's key findings was also published on the Devpolicy blog.

PNG Databases

The Partnership continues to maintain the databases established in phases 1 and 2. These databases are important for policymakers, researchers, students and anyone who is interested in PNG's development.

- **PNG MP Database** (<https://devpolicy.org/pngmps/>): This database has been kept up to date.
- **PNG Elections Database** (<https://devpolicy.org/pngelections/>): Analysis on data from the 2022 elections was published in a Development Policy Centre discussion paper in March 2025, and launched with presentation at UPNG in May 2026.

PhD supervision and examination, and MEPP research supervision

Dr Nemat Bizhan, Dr Grant Walton, Dr Toan Nyguen, Dr Thomas Wangi, and Dr Terence Wood supervised MEPP students' research projects to the completion in 2025/26 and continue to supervise those students who didn't complete their research.

Outreach

- **The Devpolicy Blog:** Devpolicy.org is the online public outreach portal for the Development Policy Centre at ANU. In Semester 1 2026, Devpolicy.org continued to publish several posts related to or directly on PNG. Many of those blogs were authored or co-authored by Papua New Guineans, including from UPNG staff. In line with our aim to work more broadly across SBPP in this phase, blogs published this semester included those from staff in the Tourism Division and in the Business Management Division. These blog posts are widely read in PNG, and those focusing on PNG are often republished in PNG newspapers. The Blog Incentive Scheme continued in Semester 1 2026 to encourage blog submissions from UPNG staff and students and other PNG writers (authors are paid K200 per published blog).
- **PNG Project News:** The newsletter provided regular Partnership-related updates every four weeks during Semester 1 and continued to highlight PNG-related research, blogs and events, and currently has over 1,300 subscribers.

Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges

ANU Summer School

The ANU-UPNG Summer School provides an opportunity for five of the best third-year students from the Division of Economics and five of the best third-year students from Public Policy Management each year to attend a month-long intensive program of study at the Australian National University since 2018.

The **2026 ANU-UPNG Summer School** was held from 13 January to 14 February. A report has been prepared on the 2026 summer school, is available on request and is summarised below.

The 2026 Summer School participants were selected on the basis of a rigorous competitive selection process. 21 students were invited for an interview with representatives from ANU and UPNG to apply for the program based on their GPA scores. After the initial selection, five students from economics and five students from public policy were chosen. These ten students were selected on the basis of weighted combined GPA score (50%) and performance in the interview (50%). An appropriate gender balance was maintained for both the interviews and the final ten candidates (of 5 male and 5 female students).



Photo: SS2026 at their PNG High Commission meeting in Canberra

The students took three courses during their time at ANU. The two special courses *Data Analysis for Economics and Public Policy* and *Institutions, Resources and Development* taught them key data manipulation, visualisation and interpretation skills, as well as research, presentation and writing skills on topics relating to development respectively. The students also intended the Crawford School of Public Policy's pre-session program for postgraduate students, which taught them key academic and digital literacy skills, and gave them the opportunity to network with a range of other international students.

All students passed their Crawford academic skills course. The two special courses were graded on a scale from 0-100. In *Institutions, Resources and Development*, the average grade was a distinction (77%), consisting of 4 high distinctions and 4 distinctions and 2 credits. In *Data Analysis for Economics and Public Policy*, the average grade was also a distinction (74.8%), consisting of 3 high distinctions, 5 distinctions, and 2 credits. This year, awards were given to the top male and female students in each of the special courses. The top students for *Institutions, Resources and Development* were Moses Balagawi and Natasha Andrew. The top students for *Data Analysis for Economics and Public Policy* were Moses Balagawi and Joanne Cecil.

Extra-curricular meetings in Canberra were held with PNG's Deputy High Commissioner Minister-Counsellor Joe Warisan, and with staff from DFAT's PNG Economic and Operational Branch. These meetings gave students the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of the senior diplomats and bureaucrats who manage the Australia-PNG bilateral relationship. A series of guest lectures were also organised: Professor Stephen Howes spoke on PNG's economy and Associate Professor Grant Walton discussed corruption and development in PNG. The students also had informal "talk and eat" sessions with ANU scholars who discussed their research and experience on Papua New Guinea. These guests were Dr Amanda Watson, Maho Laveil, Dr Nemat Bizhan, and Natasha Turia.

The students also took a trip to Sydney as part of their program. There they met with staff of the Lowy Institute, who discussed aid and geopolitics in the Pacific and PNG, and staff from the World

Bank, who showed them useful databases and outlined the research activities they manage in the region. They also had a day to explore Sydney on their own and were taken on a ferry trip to Manly to explore the area.



Photo: SS2026 cohort at their World Bank meeting in Sydney

On their last day in Canberra, the Summer School cohort completed an online evaluation survey, which included feedback on their learning experience, extra-curricular activities, and the ANU support they received during their stay. The survey used the 'Likert scale' with a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agrees. The results suggest that the students had a very positive experience. Average scores across all survey questions rated equal to or above 4 (the only question to score 4 was for an outing that most students did not attend due to their workload; excluding this question, all scores were ≥ 4.4). Feedback indicates that course content was taught at the right level and the amount of work required during the Summer School was the right amount. All students strongly agreed that the content taught in all three courses would assist them with their 4th year of study at UPNG.

Students suggested that the best aspects of the program included the ANU environment, which was considered conducive to learning, exploring Canberra by bike and public transport, and the various meetings they attended. The biggest challenge that the students faced was staying on top of their academic workload, as multiple students mentioned that the academic aspects of the program filled up much of their stay. The students offered suggestions for improvement on the courses, including extending the exam time for DEVP8008, encouraging more class debates in DEVP8000 and improving the lecturer's time management for CRWF7900. The students also suggested extending the Summer School's duration by 1-2 weeks and expanding the number of students who attended.

Joanne Cecil reflected on her experience at the Summer School. "My time at the summer school challenged me to see Papua New Guinea as part of a much larger global community. It encouraged me to think out of the box and broaden my perspective," she said.

Following the conclusion of the program, the students were invited to attend a ceremony hosted by the Australian High Commission in PNG. The third phase of the ANU-UPNG Partnership was announced at this event, and the students were awarded with their completion certificates.

"In addition to my coursework, I gained immense value from guest lectures and informal 'talk and eat' sessions, which provided practical insights into development policy and research. Through these experiences, I have developed a deeper appreciation for the role of data in informing evidence-based decision-making. Visits to the Lowy Institute, World Bank, DFAT and the PNG High Commission further enhanced my understanding of how research, diplomacy and policy intersect. These engagements also strengthened my awareness of the enduring diplomatic relationship between Papua New Guinea and Australia. Collectively, these experiences have motivated me as a young female Papua New Guinean to reflect on how I can meaningfully contribute to the development of my country and my people. I now feel more driven toward nation-building and am committed to making a positive and lasting impact."

Reflection by Natasha Andrew, 2026 Summer School student, at the Launch of Phase 3 of the Partnership.

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.

Selection for the 2027 Summer School has been completed, and it will include ten students from all eight SBPP divisions, reflecting the broader focus of the Partnership's third phase. Planning for the program and travel logistics is now underway.

Faculty exchanges

- **ANU staff.** ANU staff and ANU funded lecturers visited UPNG to lecture and to research, which included Prof Stephen Howes, Dr Terence Wood, Dr Nemat Bizhan, Professor Martin Davies, Dr Cameron Hill, and Dr Safa Fanaian.
- **ANU scholarships:** In 2026 we support three scholarship recipients: Masidah Tonaim (public policy) and Jezreel Kassam (economics) – both in the final year of studies at Crawford School, ANU. Masidah and Jezreel are both doing well. 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. Lucy commenced study at ANU, Canberra, in early 2026. We are learning as much as possible from Lucy's experience this year, and based on lessons learnt, we will look to support and select future candidates for 2027 and beyond.
- **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 by the end of 2026, and is expected to graduate in 2027. The 2024/2025 recipient, Ms Molly Yokko, the School Librarian, graduated in April 2026, and achieved the top GPA, alongside another MEPP student. The partnership has awarded the MEPP scholarship for the 2026/2027 round to Emily Tongia Kawapuro, a tutor at the PPM division of SBPP. Emily commenced studies in early 2026.



Photo: Molly Yokko after graduation, April 2026.

- To-date, eight scholarships have been provided to eight SBPP staff. 50% are female recipients:
 - Kenneth Baliwasa, Moses Sakai (2020/2021) – Graduated in 2022. Kenneth is currently teaching at SBPP. Moses joined National Research Institute in early 2024.
 - Raymond Dorum, Loretta Dilu (2022/2023) – Graduated in 2024. Loretta is currently teaching at SBPP. Raymond joined PNG Treasury department in the second half of 2024.
 - Issabelle Vilau (2023/2024) – Graduated in 2025 and is currently teaching at SBPP.
 - Molly Yokko (2024/2025) – Graduated in 2026 and works at the SBPP library.
 - Walo Katabali (2025/2026) – currently in second year of studies, and is also a tutor at SBPP. He's expected to graduate in early 2027.
 - Emily Kawapuro – currently in first year of studies and is a tutor at SBPP.

Stream 4: Project management

The Project Coordinator/Visiting Lecturer Andrew Anton Mako coordinated the project while based at SBPP, UPNG, as well as contributed to research and will teach a post-graduate course in MEPP in Term 2 of 2026. Monthly meetings are held with APEP and the Partnership. The project is managed in Canberra by Aloha Jeon. Dr Nemat Bizhan, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Partnership Team

Leader, leads the partnership, chairs the fortnightly meetings of partnership staff, coordinates the MEPP program, and teaches within the program, and contributes to research.

Performance

The project judges its progress against several important indicators as set out in each annual plan. Performance against these using a ‘traffic light’ rating system is summarised below.

INDICATOR	RATING	COMMENTS
Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience		
ANU lecturers teaching at UPNG (in person or virtually)		Three ANU and ANU funded lectures taught post-graduate (MEPP) courses in person and virtually in Trimester 1. Four ANU and ANU funded lectures are teaching in person and virtually in Trimester 2. And two MEPP courses will be partially taught online in Trimester 2.
Teaching evaluations		Average course score of 4.1 and lecturer score of 4.2 out of 5. However, evaluations reveal significant areas of improvement needed in some individual cases.
ANU-UPNG annual exam in economics		The result for the last exam conducted in July 2025 was good. It maintained the improved results 2024. We will aim to maintain or better the 2025 results in 2026 when the exam is conducted in July/August 2026. The result of the 2026 exam will be covered in Semester 2 report of the Partnership.
MEPP alumni association		The Interim Executive Committee of the MEPP Association, elected in 2025, met with the SBPP and ANU teams to discuss the Association’s constitution, activity plan and registration process. A final draft of constitution and activity plan have been prepared and are expected to be finalised in Semester 2, alongside the formal registration of the Association.
Lecturer retention and inclusion		All lecturers have complied with the terms of their scholarships so far.
Collaborative Research and Outreach		
PNG databases		Databases updated as required.
ANU-UPNG research collaboration		Major research projects, and other smaller projects underway.
Seminars		Five ANU-UPNG seminars held in Semester 1.
Student and faculty exchanges in economics and public policy		

ANU-UPNG summer school		The 2026 Summer School was successfully delivered.
ANU scholarships		Too early to say how the expansion to Accounting is going. Student is being monitored closely and supported.
Faculty Exchange		Six ANU and ANU-funded lecturers visited UPNG for teaching and research, while three UPNG staff members are completing postgraduate studies at ANU.
Program management		
Adequate M&E and risk management		Timely reporting. Risk management adequate.

Cross cutting issues

Cross cutting issues for the program are GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion) and climate change.

- We ensured there is gender balance in the Summer School program.
- We support equal participation in student leadership in student associations and academic activities.
- We have had more participation by more female students in our regular reading group events during the semester,
- 50% of MEPP Scholarships have been to females, and two of the three Masters scholars from UPNG currently at ANU are female.
- We worked with the student associations to ensure that female students are also part of their leadership.
- Equal participation has been ensured in the in the leadership of the newly established MEPP Association. Its interim executive leadership committee includes two female and two male current and former students.
- We supported and published an important piece of research by disability advocate Jerry Hensen on disability policies and realities in PNG.
- One of our ANU graduate lecturers is working on avoided deforestation.
- Climate change and gender were integrated in different courses in the MEPP program.

Challenges, risks and lessons learnt

Overall, while the partnership is progressing well, some risks and ongoing challenges remain:

UPNG

- The number of students pursuing MEPP research papers needs to continue to require to be limited.
- Many reforms are needed at UPNG, and they are not happening or not happening fast enough. For example, delays in the salary payments of temporary lecturers cause high levels of stress and undermine morale of lecturers.
- Safety for women, and vulnerability to sexual harassment at UPNG, continues to be an issue but efforts to improve campus security has been undertaken recently.
- Recent departures of senior managers from SBPP increase risk.

ANU

- With security always a risk, we continue to maintain good communication with the Abt Security team for support.
- With a larger number of staff and lecturers and associated with the team, improved communication is vital. This is achieved by fortnightly management and team meetings, and frequent visits to POM by key staff. We have also updated our staff guidelines.
- Close monitoring is required of UPNG scholarship holders while at ANU especially as we branch into new disciplines (accounting).