



2023 ANNUAL LETTER DEVELOPMENT POLICY CENTRE

2023 was a busy year with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) releasing its latest International Development Policy in May and the passage of the Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) by the Federal Senate in November.

We kicked off the year with our monthly hybrid seminar series with UPNG and delivered our signature aid budget breakfast.

[The Pacific Update](#) at The University of the South Pacific in Fiji was held in June. The Update continued the popular format of including a one-day workshop on Pacific migration, which included [a keynote address](#) by Malama Meleisea.

[The PNG Update](#) was held at The University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) Waigani campus in August. Following an opening address by the Hon. James Marape, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, we were privileged to hear Professor Brian Schmidt speak on the UPNG-ANU partnership during one of his last overseas trips as ANU Vice-Chancellor. Together with UPNG Vice-Chancellor, Schmidt then announced and signed a new and expanded [Memorandum of Agreement](#) for the partnership.

In September, the Centre joined with the Australian Council for International Development and the International Development Contractors Community to co-host the International Development Policy Forum at the Crawford School with DFAT. Opened by Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific, [the Hon. Pat Conroy](#), the forum featured panels on climate change resilience, locally led development, inclusion and aid evaluation.

[The Australasian AID Conference](#) (AAC) was again co-hosted with The Asia Foundation in December, consolidating its place as the aid and development community's premier end of year event. AAC again attracted more than 600 people to hear presentations of regional importance such as Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister Professor Biman Prasad call for [a visa-free Pacific](#).

During 2023, four UPNG students were studying the Master of International and Development Economics (MIDEC) at the Crawford School, including one female student. The [Greg Taylor Scholarships](#) fund these students and the scheme marked a major milestone when the first Masters graduate, Thomas Wangi, received his PhD in Economics from the Crawford School with a thesis on PNG monetary policy in 2023.



Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister Biman Prasad calls for a visa-free Pacific at AAC2023 (Alexandra Orme Photography)

Our Pacific migration team prepared government submissions and provided expert commentary on significant changes in Australian labour mobility legislation relating to the PEV, the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme and the Tuvalu-Australia Falepili Union. The Centre released a joint report with the World Bank, [The Gains and Pains of Working Away from Home](#), with key findings from the first wave of a new multi-country Pacific mobility survey covering workers in three different schemes in Australia and New Zealand.

The Hon. Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, remarked at the [2023 ANU Migration Update](#) that "... the Development Policy Centre at the ANU, whose research about the Pacific is both rigorous with regard to evidence and methodology, and digestible for a general audience via their well-read blog."

Our aid and development policy researchers completed a report on recent trends in Australian aid performance and a discussion paper on Australia's gender aid investments.

After over a decade in the role I handed over editor-in-chief responsibilities for the Devpolicy Blog to Honorary Professor Robin Davies, who is back with us at Devpol after his earlier stint in the mid 2010s. During 2023, we published 252 blogs, as well as 2 discussion papers and 5 reports. Our thanks to everyone who writes for and reads the Devpolicy Blog and our other publications, and who presents at and attends our conferences, workshops, and seminars.

We are also grateful for the many individuals who support us, our various conference partners and sponsors, and principal funders, DFAT and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and our founding sponsor, the Harold Mitchell Foundation. Harold Mitchell died on February 10 2024. You can read [my tribute](#) to him on the Devpolicy Blog.

Finally, thanks to our host institution, the Crawford School of Public Policy, and the many other parts of the Australian National University to which we link and from which we draw. We're very proud to be part of Crawford and the ANU.



Professor Stephen Howes
Director, Development Policy Centre



Left: AAC2023 - Pacific Disability Forum Chief Executive Officer Setareki Macanawai, CBM Philippines Country Director Hercules Paradiang & CBM Australia, Head of Policy & Advocacy Conor Costello at Unlocking Agenda 2030 panel; Australian aid effectiveness panel. (Alexandre Orme Photography) Above: Devpol staff at Christmas 2023.

In previous years we have provided a financial statement. While our main funding sources continue, the volume of funding we receive has been reduced over the last couple of years, resulting in some staffing cuts. As a result, we are no longer in a position to provide an annual financial statement. We continue to receive funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for our work on PNG and the Pacific, including on labour mobility, and from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for our work on Australian aid. And we still benefit from earlier grants provided by the Harold Mitchell Foundation. We also benefit from support from the Asia Foundation and other sponsors and partners, including individual donors. Thank you to all.