Devpolicy News (August 16): 5 problems with new Pacific solution | Aid in the elections | Our post-2015 proposal

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Five problems with the new Pacific solution

It’s been a busy month for us, responding to the Government’s plan to transfer asylum-seekers to PNG and now Nauru. In our blog coverage, we’ve made five main points:

- The agreement between PNG and Australia has shifted the balance of power in the Pacific. As Michelle Nayahamui Rooney puts it, it has placed “Australia into a position of dependence on PNG… undermining Australia’s ability to take PNG leaders to task on matters of significant importance for Australia in the PNG development arena.”
- Then there is the damage done to PNG. As Grant Walton writes: “painting PNG as a basket case now underpins asylum seeker policy.” The self-inflicted damage to PNG’s reputation by this announcement is a form of “negative nationalism” and will undermine the country’s development prospects.
- But will the “solution” work? Stephen Howes argues that implementation weaknesses in PNG undermine the credibility of the PNG-Australia agreement. Non-credible agreements do not provide enduring solutions.
- The agreement will have a cost in terms of not only aid dollars but also aid effectiveness. Stephen Howes argues here that the agreement has diluted the focus of the Australian aid program on PNG, which had until last month maintained a strong focus on maintenance and service delivery, by diverting efforts into construction.
- Finally, Robin Davies has exposed the fact that the August budget statement and MOUs with PNG and Nauru suggest that the introduction of off-shore community detention is imminent and will be charged to the aid budget, almost certainly in contravention of DAC guidelines.

Aid in the elections

Labor hasn’t said much so far on aid policy, but Julie Bishop has been vocal, calling aid one of the three
main foreign policy differentiators between Labor and the Coalition. Read our coverage here and here. Bishop has also indicated she would reconsider PACER Plus, the ill-fated trade agreement with the Pacific, and that she would expand the Seasonal Worker Program.

We held a packed ACT election forum on aid with Oxfam, Oaktree and Make Poverty History this week. The podcast is available here.

For related analysis, see here on the August aid cuts. And watch out for our forthcoming analysis of key aid issues and party policies.

**A new post-2015 proposal**

Robin Davies, Associate Director, Development Policy Centre

*Thursday 29 August @ 12:30-1:30pm*

*Barton Theatre, Level 1, JG Crawford Building 132, Lennox Crossing, ANU*

Robin Davies has assessed the proposals now available for what should replace the MDGs after 2015, and he’s come up with his own compelling proposal in the process. Robin suggests nine goals, six for people, three for enablers. Come along on Thursday August 29th to find out more. Register here.

**Rationalising the G20’s development agenda**

Robin has also been busy writing about what the G20 should do for development. You can read his article in the most recent *G20 Monitor* from the Lowy Institute. Robin argues for a more focused approach, with an emphasis on infrastructure, social protection, and concessional financing.

Robin has posted an abstract of his paper here as a brief. You can download the full G20 Monitor here.

**The Australian aid stakeholder survey**

The [Australian aid stakeholder survey](#) is our effort (as explained here) to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the Australian aid program, and suggestions for its improvement. Whether you are involved in the aid program or simply interested in it, whether you live in Australia or overseas, and whether you are on the giving or the receiving end of the aid relationship, we are interested in hearing from you. The survey will be open until the end of August. Results will be released after the Australian federal election.

We have had more than 200 responses to the survey so far. If you haven’t participated yet, you can fill out the survey here. It only takes about 15 minutes.

**NZ aid beyond 2015**

*Wednesday 4 September*

*Wellington, New Zealand*

The New Zealand Aid and Development Dialogues (NZADDs) is running a half-day forum at the Victoria University of Wellington on 4 September on aid’s role amid the shifting context of global development, and how New Zealand’s aid and development efforts can best respond. Devpolicy Director Stephen Howes will be speaking on the topic: ‘The future of aid: does it have one, and if so, what does it look like?’. Click here for more information.

**PNG’s lost decade? The next PNG budget forum**

*Thursday 19 September*

*Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*

Our next budget forum jointly organised with PNG’s National Research Institute (NRI) will be held on Thursday, 19 September at NRI. We’ll be comparing findings from our 2012 survey of more than 200
schools and 150 health facilities from across PNG with a similar survey from 2002 to judge to what extent PNG has been able to translate its massive resources boom into better services for ordinary people. For more information contact Colin Wiltshire or Andrew Mako.

2014 Australasian Aid and International Development Policy Workshop

February 13-14, 2014
Australian National University

In February 2014 the Development Policy Centre, together with the Asia Foundation, will be hosting the first Australasian Aid and International Development Policy Workshop. The convenors of this multidisciplinary workshop, Professor Stephen Howes, Director of the Development Policy Centre at ANU and Dr Joel Negin, Senior Lecturer in International Public Health at the University of Sydney, welcome papers on a range of topics relating to aid effectiveness, the political economy of aid, aid from non-traditional donors, international public goods, the international development architecture, international climate change policy, and migration and trade.

Abstracts should be submitted to devpolicy@anu.edu.au. Submissions are welcome from academics, students and practitioners. For more information, click here.

Welcoming our Semester 2 interns

Two new interns have joined us this semester from the Australian National Internships Program. Parima Panpruet is an ANU student in her third year of an economics and finance degree and Wilma Gillies is a University of Sydney student in her final year of studying economics and psychology. During their time with us, Parima will look at Australian aid flows over time while Wilma will be analysing the availability of project level information on the AusAID website.

Blog summary

You can find a summary of all posts since our last newsletter on August 1 in the list below.

Analysis

Aid

Joining the African Development Bank: practicalities and politics by Robin Davies and Joel Negin

AusAID needs a technology for development strategy by Gerard McCarthy

Foreign aid in the August statement: pushing back the scale up for the fifth time; more details on aid to PNG by Stephen Howes

AusAID’s favourite group of Australian NGOs gets a little bigger by Jonathan Pryke and Robin Davies

Global development policy

Foreign agents at the Bolshoi: what Australia can learn from the Russian civil G20 process by Nancy Waites

The Pacific

Tara Chetty: Fiji democracy and women’s rights by Tess Newton Cain and Tara Chetty

How to respond to the impasse in Fiji? by Jon Fraenkel

PNG
Solid waste management in Papua New Guinea by Thomas Wangi

Setting the stage for community detention in PNG and Nauru by Robin Davies

A whole new set of questions: asylum seekers in PNG communities? by Robin Davies and Stephen Howes

Asylum seekers, negative nationalism and the PNG solution by Grant Walton

Greg Taylor on super reform in PNG by Greg Taylor and Stephen Howes

Greg Taylor on PNG with options by Greg Taylor and Stephen Howes

In brief

Foreign aid tops list for cuts … but from what base?

Cambodia’s elections and aid: what will happen now?

Vietnam’s disadvantaged kids outperform Indian students in education survey

PNG’s lost decade? PEPE budget forum – 19 September at PNG’s National Research Institute

New report shows shockwaves of PNG’s family violence epidemic

Pacific Islands Development Forum launch in Fiji

Bishop-Carr debate shows key points of difference on aid

Cautious optimism for malaria vaccine

The reality of healthcare in PNG

A sweet TV spot that shows potential of development

Humanitarian agencies respond to North Korea flood disaster

Visualising the incredible rise of remittances

Nauru asylum seeker announcement: no additional aid and no resettlement?

Vanuatu: Supreme Court decides two important cases with implications for government stability

What plot?—rationalising the G20’s development agenda

Analysis of the ‘PNG solution’ and the August economic statement

Call to increase cap for New Zealand’s Pacific seasonal worker scheme