

# Independent Evaluation of UPNG-ANU Partnership

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## Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by the Crawford School of Public Policy, in the College of Asia and the Pacific of The Australian National University (ANU).

Our commission has been to make an independent evaluation of the partnership since 2015 between the School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP) in the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and the Crawford School, based on our own assessments, and we believe we have done so.

We thank the many people in Port Moresby, Canberra and elsewhere who have responded generously and helpfully to our requests for inputs to this evaluation.

The UPNG-ANU partnership has been supported since 2015 by funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of the Australian Government: from here on we call it the Project.

Our evaluation findings can be summarised as follows.

### EVALUATION OF RESULTS – TEACHING

Results in terms of the first objective – an immediate improvement in teaching – are uniformly impressive.

Evidence of results in SBPP graduates' subsequent employment is limited, but strongly positive.

The flow of blogs produced by students and graduates of SBPP and published by the Crawford School's Development Policy Centre (Devpolicy.org) is a further strong indication that teaching has improved.

The number of graduates in economics each year from SBPP – around 25 to 30 – is substantial in relation to the overall number of those recruited each year for employment as economists or for other work applying economic knowledge. The number of graduates in public policy who have been taught by ANU-provided lecturers is a little more, averaging 36, which is much less in relation to annual recruitments in the public sector, but still significant.

Even if not in formal employment, it is likely that graduates contribute to their communities through the generic skills developed in ANU-taught courses at SBPP.

### EVALUATION OF RESULTS – SBPP TEACHING CAPACITY

Results in terms of the second objective – developing the teaching capability of SBPP's own staff – are in our view substantial, in the light of what could realistically have been expected.

Progress towards this second objective has been hampered by one tragic and untimely death, by UPNG's limit on funding for SBPP positions regardless of the extra courses developed in the last five years, and by unreliable performance of UPNG in staff management.

## EVALUATION OF RESULTS - RESEARCH

The results of the annual Economic Update exercise have been impressive. These reports, presented at each PNG Update Conference, have provided solid economic analysis of the latest economic trends in PNG.

The broader range of research work funded under the Project has fully met the objective of developing a new generation of Australian expertise on PNG. It has also contributed to progress in developing PNG researchers. However, looking to the future, further work is needed in developing PNG leadership of analytic work.

The PNG Update Conference has emerged as a premier forum for discussing PNG development issues. Attendance is increasing, a majority of the papers submitted for sessions are now from PNG participants, women are taking a stronger leadership role in Update Conference sessions and participation by leading government officials is now routine. A clear success story.

Workshops, conferences and seminars have played an important role in building capacity, reaching beyond PNG and in disseminating the results of the research funded under the Project. Workshops have provided training in skills key to solid research; regional conferences have ensured increased attention to PNG issues and seminars have provided excellent fora for the discussion of research products. We believe these activities can also contribute to improved PNG capacities in research.

An impressive program of public outreach has succeeded in increasing attendance and mobilizing greater PNG participation in the PNG Update Conference, improving PNG participation in the Devpolicy.org blog, and opening up access to analytic work through a dedicated PNG Facebook page. It is hoped that increased public awareness of key development issues and active interest in them will play a constructive role in PNG's future.

## INVESTING IN A NEXT PHASE

We suggest the key considerations for future investment are:

- continuing to understand the Project's objectives as requiring a decades-long process;
- envisaging an eventual and more sustainable form of Project, reduced in numbers and cost, but continuing for the long term;
- linking this tapering down directly to an increase in numbers as well as capability of the PNG staff of SBPP;
- having UPNG's cooperation in personnel management and enough funding for SBPP so that the process just described can take place, and
- seeking other reforms in UPNG which could multiply the Project's beneficial effects and strengthen UPNG as a whole.

## CONCLUSION

We believe, based on experience in our own careers in economic development, that by providing high-quality training in economics and public policy this Project provides support of a kind which is vital for PNG's future.

The Treasury Minister of PNG, the Honourable Mr Ian Ling-Stuckey, has a strongly positive view of the Project and its relevance to PNG. In a press release on 30 January 2020 he said:

As Treasurer, I am acutely aware of the need to improve the quality of the graduates coming into the PNG Treasury, Central Bank and other key economic agencies. This sort of program responds to that need by lifting the quality of teaching and research at UPNG. Since its inception five years ago, the impact of the partnership has been evident to all to see, whether in terms of teaching, or research or outreach.

The Project has delivered effective teaching capacity, both in the near term and for the long term, an extensive and productive research program, and an impressive outreach program informing public debate in PNG.

Its cost of about \$2 million a year is very modest in relation to its benefits, and savings can probably be secured over time if the present use of remote learning proves successful.

The fact that DFAT has foreshadowed ending a set of its PNG investments which include the Project has required it to be managed with 2020 as its final year. This has already put in jeopardy the prospect of a further phase which would be continuous in terms of staffing, and further delay in deciding on the Project's future funding could make restarting it impracticable. In our assessment, continuation of funding for the Project should be agreed as soon as possible so that its component activities can continue with a minimum of disruption.

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## Introduction

The authors of this report are –

- Jim Adams, former Vice President of the World Bank for Asia and the Pacific and former head of the Independent Evaluation Committee of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and
- John Eyers, a former official of the Australian Treasury and former secondee to the Treasury Department of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The report was commissioned by the Crawford School in the College of Asia and the Pacific of the Australian National University (ANU), and we have been greatly assisted in preparing it both by Professor Stephen Howes and his colleagues in the Crawford School, and by Professor Lekshmi N Pillai, Executive Dean of the School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP) in the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), and his colleagues.

Our Terms of Reference in full are in Annex A. Our objectives were to –

- assess the Project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability,
- identify achievements, problems and constraints, and
- identify lessons learnt.

We have made an independent evaluation based on our own assessments.

Our report deals with the Project’s components in three sections, addressing respectively the strengthening of SBPP’s teaching (both immediately through ANU-provided lecturers and for the long term through training new PNG lecturers), the research and public outreach component, and the management component.

We should make clear at the outset that the components share a single Project narrative or philosophy, which has been articulated in the series of [published](#) progress reports and an end-of-project report (provided to us in draft form). This narrative emphasizes –

- the decades-long nature of the Project’s tasks,
- the need for flexibility and pragmatism so that activities can be adapted quickly to changes in the situation,
- the fact that the Project builds on SBPP as well as the Crawford School having “skin in the game”, and
- a realistic set of expectations.

We wish to thank the many people in Port Moresby, Canberra and elsewhere, listed in Annex B, who have responded generously and helpfully to our requests for inputs to this evaluation.

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# Teaching and Capacity-Building Components

## OBJECTIVES

The Project's objectives in respect of teaching were dual –

- to assist with an immediate shortage of qualified staff in SBPP by providing additional lecturers, and
- to help build teaching capacity in SBPP over time, mainly by providing the means for some of the best PNG students or tutors to qualify as lecturers.

In addition, the teaching component shared the Project's objective of improving the quality of public debate in PNG on issues of government policy.

## MEANS

The means used for attaining these objectives were at first obviously appropriate ones, but to a notable extent they were extended and adapted in order to circumvent obstacles and grasp opportunities, throughout the period of DFAT's funding of the Project. The ability to adapt activities flexibly and quickly is a clearly positive aspect of the Project's management arrangements, addressed in a separate section of this report.

Instances of adaptation in teaching SBPP courses include –

- the first lecturers in economics were provided during 2015 through improvised arrangements in parallel with negotiating the contract for DFAT funding,
- plans were made for introduction of additional courses in economics – history of economic thought, monetary, public, labour – suitably ahead of lecturers being available to teach them,
- the interruption of teaching through closure of the UPNG campus in mid-2016 was used to develop courses for the Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP) program, described below, and
- to deal with coronavirus precautions, the presence in SBPP of all but one of the ANU-provided lecturers has been replaced by remote teaching by internet, organised rapidly and proving to be effective.

The ANU-provided lecturers supplemented their lecturing by adding forms of support for students – providing extra resources for study, opportunities to see how economics and public-policy skills are applied, and help in applying for employment. The range of these supplements is impressive. They include:

- providing sets of textbooks for economics courses, and later (during 2017) a librarian for the SBPP library,
- providing Excel and STATA software in SBPP's computer lab, with tuition in its use,
- arranging a donation (by the Lowy Institute, outside the Project) of computer terminals and flat-screen monitors for use in SBPP's computer lab,
- improving electrical infrastructure (before construction of SBPP's new building),

- providing textbooks and course materials in soft form on memory sticks for each student in later-year courses,
- providing a guide to online resources such as journal articles,
- establishing websites for economics courses,
- arranging a program of film nights (first *Economics Inspired* and from 2017 *UPNG Inspired*), some with guest speakers, to provide opportunities for students to link with employers, be exposed to economic thinking and discuss economics,
- reviving the Economics Students Society, and later the PPM Students Association, and including activities focused on current public issues,
- running ‘Work-ready’ sessions and giving other informal help with job applications, and
- establishing a Facebook page for UPNG Economics alumni.

These forms of support for students were not specified at the outset of DFAT funding – they were additions, through the initiative of ANU-provided lecturers based on students’ needs, and with support and encouragement from the SBPP Dean and his senior colleagues.

#### Summer schools

Summer schools at ANU were planned during 2016, deferred in 2017 because of the effects of the mid-2016 closure, and so held annually in 2018, 2019 and 2020. For each summer school the ten most promising undergraduate students were selected before their final year – five in economics and five in public policy, with a preference for female candidates since they were under-represented in SBPP courses. The summer schools have involved five weeks of academic and extracurricular activities, designed to broaden the students’ perspectives, motivate them and build self-confidence as well as to educate. Adding these summer schools has shown the innovative ability of the Project leaders, and the complementary nature of its components.

#### Building teaching capacity within SBPP

This has been done mainly through the obvious means of scholarships for study at ANU. Each year the most promising graduate in economics has been selected to have a year of employment as a tutor, then receive a scholarship for a two-year course at ANU for the degree of Master in International and Development Economics, then return to employment as a lecturer on a promise to remain for the five years of an initial contract.

The scholarship component has been accompanied by a range of additional means, chosen and adapted by agreement between the senior staff of SBPP and those of ANU. The professional development opportunities offered to existing lecturers and tutors of SBPP make an extensive list, although a few were limited in their effect by conditions in SBPP or UPNG as a whole. Omitting opportunities related specifically to research, which are described in the next section of this report, the main ones are these:

- a program of weekly sessions designed to improve the professional skills of SBPP staff, which started in early 2016 with a core group of 17 SBPP staff members, but

petered out after the disruption of mid-2016 and the additions in teaching loads thereafter, and was replaced by a less time-consuming program of workshops,

- workshops such as one in late 2016 about online research methods and free data sources, one on strategic planning for SBPP in October 2017, and one on curriculum review in November 2017 (full details of 34 workshops are in Annex J of the end-of-project report),
- induction and mentoring for tutors, first in economics and later in public policy as well,
- trialling of a web-based Learning Management System (LMS) to release notes and lectures to students – which stalled with the UPNG effort to set up a university-wide LMS, and
- visits of SBPP staff to ANU in Canberra, and of ANU staff to SBPP, to provide professional stimulus as well as to consult on Project management.

These varied activities through the Project, accompanying the provision of extra lecturers and scholarships for promising young students to become tutors and later lecturers, represent substantial efforts to develop the latent capacities in incumbent SBPP staff.

#### New lecturers

The small cohort of new lecturers returned from studies at ANU have been receiving support, and are still doing so despite the present constraint of coronavirus precautions, through the handing-on of course materials developed by ANU-provided lecturers and by mentoring, or in one case where extra support was needed by co-lecturing. This professional support is aimed not only at the lecturers' success in teaching, but also at making their careers at SBPP additionally worthwhile despite the lure of much higher salaries available elsewhere. These lecturers' ability in research opens opportunities for them to do consultancy work in PNG. Moreover, through the Project's encouragement for PNG media to cover the PNG Update conferences and other research outputs, and the growing practice of the *Post Courier* newspaper and other local media of reporting PNG-related blogs, the new SBPP lecturers can build their own public profiles in PNG. A prominent example is Maholopa Laveil: ABC [Pacific Beat](#) recently ran his comments about the coronavirus pandemic's effects on the PNG Government's budget.

#### Ownership

We have examined the claim in successive reports that UPNG as well as ANU had "skin in the game", and we're satisfied this is true of the three senior staff in SBPP. The ANU secondees and others confirm that they encouraged and cooperated in a range of initiatives, and took part in promoting research and in activities aimed at professional development of other PNG staff of SBPP. This commitment of time and effort on the part of senior SBPP staff was not remunerated through the Project, except for assistance with their travel to the ANU and conferences at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. We say more about the important roles played by ANU Professor Stephen Howes and SBPP Director Professor Lekshmi N Pillai in evaluating the Project's management component.



## Contributions to public debate

As the principal means towards the objective of contributing to the quality of public debate in PNG, the ANU-provided lecturers' approach in designing and teaching their lecture courses and guidance for tutors has emphasised relevance to PNG, promoted critical thinking and developed problem-solving skills. This is amply clear from the evaluations and survey answers by PNG students and SBPP staff, as well as from the lecturers themselves. It represents the broadest base of preparing graduates, whatever their employment, to contribute constructively and effectively to public debate. The other levels building on that broad base have been:

- encouragement for both students and staff to comment on public issues in blogs which reach the standard for being published on the Devpolicy.org website and its PNG Facebook page, and
- among SBPP staff and other UPNG staff, promotion of research into public issues as described in the following section of this report.

## Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP)

The MEPP represents another substantial addition to the Project's components since 2015. It is a two-year, part-time course combining economics and public policy subjects. It has been targeted mainly at public-sector employees at mid-career level, with the aims of contributing to their professional qualifications, critical thinking and ethical standards. It has also been a means for tutors in SBPP to improve their qualifications for progressing to lecturer positions.

The assessment we have formed from the relevant inputs and interviews is that while the MEPP course serves its main purpose well, it involves a number of issues for SBPP management, in addition to the one noted in progress reports of there being some students for whom the research component is too taxing.

- As is probably found in courses anywhere which students take part-time, and some years after their graduation, the differences among students in previous education and aptitude for study pose challenges for both teaching and learning.
- Its demands on a limited number of highly-qualified lecturers are considerable, in terms of preparation and teaching hours, for only a few students relative to those in undergraduate courses.
- It's not clear how well completing the MEPP qualifies graduates to lecture in SBPP: they may need more support than mentoring, such as co-lecturing, to learn to perform well.

We understand the MEPP was introduced with an expectation on the part of the university partners that DFAT funding for ANU support would be provided in further phases beyond the five-year period of the Project's initial contract and funding. Indeed, because of the current requirement that the lecturers in its courses hold PhD degrees, it largely relies on ANU support through the Project.

## EVALUATION OF RESULTS – TEACHING

Results in terms of the first objective – an immediate improvement in teaching – are represented in three forms. The first is the stream of annual groups of over 60 graduates (on average) in economics and public policy with better knowledge and skills than they would have had without the teaching and related assistance provided through the Project.

Evidence of improvement in these graduates' knowledge and skills has been gathered within SBPP through course evaluations, results in successive economics exams, surveys of those graduating, and the staff survey in 2017. This evidence is uniformly impressive. Evidence from the graduates' subsequent employment is as yet limited: a follow-up [survey](#) in 2017 of those who graduated in economics in 2015 which elicited very positive feedback, and comment from an Australian Treasury official who was seconded to PNG Treasury around a decade ago and again last year. This official has noted that the more recent economics graduates are more confident, have better presentation skills and see things more through an economic lens – differences to which he thinks the Project may have contributed.

A second result is the benefit of ANU-provided teaching of economics and public policy as units of courses for SBPP's other degrees. From the reported numbers of students in all courses taught by ANU-provided lecturers, we estimate that there have been around a hundred each year attending these courses in addition to those studying for economics or public policy degrees. There is evidence that they too have benefited in the overwhelmingly positive student evaluations of these courses.

The flow of blogs produced by students and graduates of SBPP and published by [Devpolicy.org](#) is a strong indication that improved teaching has given them a greater disposition and ability to contribute to public debate on economic and social issues.

The third set of results is represented by those who have taken or are taking MEPP courses. Few have graduated with an MEPP as yet (two are mentioned in progress reports), and there's no indication that they have been asked for evaluations or surveyed about the application of their studies to their work. However, the ANU-provided lecturers have told us that informal feedback from MEPP students is positive, indicating that the tools and insights developed in their coursework have energized or strengthened performance in their regular government assignments. A number have shown in blogs a rapidly developed readiness to think for themselves about policy issues related to their work or research topics.

Most of this evidence is already on the Project [website](#), and more will come in the end-of-project report and its annexes.

The number of graduates in economics each year from SBPP – between 25 and 30 – is substantial in relation to the overall number of those recruited each year for employment as economists or for other work requiring economic knowledge. The number of graduates in public policy who have been taught by ANU-provided lecturers is a little more, averaging 36, which is much less in relation to annual recruitments in the public sector but still significant.

Even in quite different or non-formal employment, it is likely that graduates contribute through the generic skills developed in ANU-provided courses at SBPP – analytical thinking, data analysis and report writing – as members of civil society, for example in the NGOs now active on fintech and digital economy issues.

## EVALUATION OF RESULTS – SBPP TEACHING CAPACITY

Results in terms of the second objective – developing PNG teaching capability – are in our view substantial, in the light of what could realistically have been expected.

There are two PNG lecturers in SBPP with ANU Master's degrees who are lecturing satisfactorily, and two more in the scholarship pipeline. A fifth scholarship winner returned with an ANU Master's degree to lecture at SBPP but soon after died, tragically and unexpectedly.

The two new PNG lecturers are being mentored in their early years by ANU-provided lecturers. They and other lecturers have the benefit of course materials developed by ANU-provided lecturers in electronic form and handed on. Through the Project they have encouragement in good professional practices, such as updating courses which incorporate PNG data and issues, guiding of tutors, having their courses evaluated by students, and devoting a proportion of their time to research.

Progress towards this second objective has been hampered to some extent already by patchy performance of UPNG in staff management, in some cases delaying appointments, and by UPNG's inability to provide the important benefit of housing on campus. Progress will be hampered much more in the years ahead if UPNG does not provide enough funding for the progressive replacement of some ANU-provided lecturers by new PNG lecturers with degrees from ANU or elsewhere.

# Research Component

## OBJECTIVES

Two objectives provided the context for the Research Component (RC):

- To ensure the development of the “next generation” of Australian researchers on PNG
- To support the development of the research capacity of PNG scholars.

## MEANS

Four activities have been central to the RC:

- The so-called “PNG Project” involving a substantial analytic work program that is focused on key economic and sectoral development issues confronting PNG.
- The PNG Update Conference, an annual discussion of key development issues held at UPNG (an event that preceded the Project but now is an integral part of UPNG/ANU cooperation).
- A series of workshops, conferences and seminars directed at ensuring that research capacity is strengthened and that research products reach a broad audience.
- An active program of outreach supported by the Project.

Key elements of each of these activities are discussed below.

### The Broad Research Effort

The RC was a central focus of the ANU Project from the program’s initiation. The 2015 MOU between UPNG and ANU specifically discussed cooperation in research, stating that ANU and UNPG academics would “seek out opportunities for mutually beneficial research collaboration and publications”. Indeed, even before this Project began ANU had initiated work on PNG economic issues; as reviewed below this work has been retained as a key focus of the RC.

The RC has been central to expanding research in PNG and delivering impactful research. A broad range of analytic work on economic and sector issues has been sustained over the life of the Project which has, in turn, produced an expanding number of research publications on key PNG challenges.

The economic work supported by the Project has included the completion of an annual “PNG Economic Update (EU)” over each of the past five years. Each EU has provided a broad overview of the economy and focuses on two or three key issues facing PNG policy makers and every EU has been presented at the corresponding PNG Update Conference (further discussed below). The 2019 EU was typical in summarizing recent economic growth performance, discussing balance of payments and exchange rate issues, inflation and monetary policy, fiscal policy and governance. The analysis in EUs is typically crisp and concise. EUs are targeted at informed and interested audiences, not simply formal economists. While supervised by Professor Howes, they typically draw heavily on the academic staff hired under the Project and from members of the UPNG faculty. Over time they have been more widely disseminated and there is evidence that in the recent debates

on exchange rate policy the EU work had an impact on PNG policy. For the first time, the 2019 EU was published in “Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies”.

Beyond the long-standing macroeconomic focus of ANU work, the RC has facilitated an impressive expansion of research into a range of PNG sectors which present important challenges to development in PNG and which typically have received less attention than macroeconomic analysis. This program has included work on:

- the implications of PNGs resource dependency;
- road maintenance and infrastructure issues;
- financial inclusion;
- improving tax compliance in PNG;
- PNG’s household surveys;
- links between PNG’s resource boom and employment;
- labour mobility;
- governance and anticorruption efforts;
- domestic violence;
- public service reform;
- education policy;
- the telecommunication sector; and
- elections and political behavior in PNG.

Much of this work has resulted in publications in a range of journals. A full list of published work is attached to the draft end-of-project report. While this evaluation’s review of this work had been less systematic than its full review of past EUs, our conclusion is that it is providing important insights into an impressive range of development issues. Clearly much of this work has direct links to future government investments and policy reforms.

In discussing this program with the researchers involved, a number of issues were reviewed. First, while most of the researchers had support for PNG work from a range of sources, there was broad appreciation of the additional opportunities the RC created. Second, considerable efforts were being made to increasingly engage PNG experts in the research program. One sees some evidence of this in the list of authors of Project publications. Finally, some activities involved direct support for the PNG Government – we come back to this below in the results section.

Of particular importance, elements of this program have led to the development of two databases, a research portal available to all interested researchers, and preparation of two books on PNG. The first database involves a “PNG Budget Database” that compiles information from PNG budgets from 1989 to the present. This work is providing important and organized data to a broad range of interested parties from the private sector to multilaterals. The second is the “PNG Election Database” which compiles election results from all post-independence national elections. Both databases are regularly updated.

The PNG Pacific Research Portal was created in 2017 to improve the access of all PNG universities to relevant open-access academic journals. This Portal provides the capacity to search over 1000 websites that cover PNG and the Pacific and averages above 100 inquiries a month. Finally, within the next six months past economic work and the broader range of sector work reviewed above are expected to contribute to the completion of two textbooks on PNG. One volume will focus on PNG’s Post Independence Economic History and the

second will involve a broader review of contemporary PNG Issues: “PNG - Economy, Society and Government”.

### The PNG Update Conference

The PNG Update Conference has become an important annual event at UPNG; the seventh and most recent Update Conference was conducted on 8-9 August 2019 in Port Moresby. By most accounts it has established itself as a premier meeting in PNG on key social and economic issues. This meeting is open to the public and attendance has increased consistently over time - doubling from an estimated 400 participants in 2015 to over 800 in 2019. In addition, the latest meeting was livestreamed over Facebook, reaching an additional 1000 viewers.

The number of presentations and the range of topics covered during Update Conferences has expanded rapidly. In the 2019 meeting 77 analytic papers were presented over the Update Conference’s two days; the corresponding number in 2014 was 27. Perhaps most important, efforts have been made to ensure increased PNG ownership and participation in meetings. The share of meeting presentations by Papua New Guineans first reached 50% of total presentations in the 2015 Update Conference; it rose to 60% in 2019. Participation by PNG women has made an important contribution to this trend – at the initial Update Conference there was one female PNG presenter, in 2019 there were 23. Gender issues have also received increased attention. About 20% of presentations involved gender issues in 2019, more than doubling the number in 2017 and 2018. Student engagement was marked by an impressive development in 2019 – for the first time a paper by an MEPP candidate (Kenneth Tame) was the focus of an Update Conference session.

Accompanying increased PNG participation, the Update Conferences have also attracted the attention and involvement of senior Government officials. There has been consistent participation by PNG ministers in past Update Conferences (particularly from the economic ministries) and in 2019 the newly elected PM, the Honorable James Marape, participated in both opening and closing sessions.

Finally, while the Update Conference remains a joint UPNG/ANU activity under the Project, over time UPNG has assumed greater responsibility for organizing and supporting the event; it now oversees all administrative services required for the meeting.

### Workshops, Conferences and Seminars

Over the life of the Project a series of workshops, conferences and seminars has been funded. These have been providing and improving key training activities, ensuring appropriate discussions on key analytic outputs and enriching the development dialogue on challenges facing PNG. While summarizing the considerable range of activities involved is a challenge, we attempt to group them into a coherent discussion below.

As noted above, workshop and training activities have focused on strengthening a number of basic and appropriate skills. To date some 34 workshops have been held, about five per year. Typical examples include work on report writing, quantitative analysis, research methods and data, impact evaluation and survey software. Some training has been directed at strengthening knowledge of or involvement in specific Project activities - media outreach in PNG is a good example. While resource constraints prevent presenting all programs annually, there has been reasonable consistency in ensuring that basic topics are covered on

a regular basis. These workshops have engaged both PNG based Project staff (as noted above) and visiting staff working on specific analytic topics. Participation in or leadership of a number of workshops has reached beyond Project participants - including the UNDP, World Bank, ADB, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and a number of PNG Government units.

The conference work has focused on the preparation and delivery of the PNG Update Conference (discussed in detail above) and allowed for increased participation in three key regional meetings – the annual State of the Pacific Conference and the annual Australasian Aid Conference as well as the Pacific Update Conference. This has facilitated wider dissemination of key Project analytic products across the Pacific.

Seminars or lectures on all the key analytic work being conducted under the Project have been a regular feature of the Project. Leaders of research tasks have appreciated the opportunity to engage PNG actors in their work. In addition, the Project has on occasion provided space to hold high level seminars in both Canberra and Port Moresby with senior officials involved in PNG development. A good example was the 2016 ANU launch of the memoirs of Hon. Sir Julius Chan, Governor of New Ireland Province.

#### Public Outreach

Finally, the RC has consistently focused on ensuring improved outreach efforts on PNG development issues in both PNG and Australia. As summarized above, the Update conference has been central to reaching out to a broader audience in PNG. The participation of Project staff in conferences and seminars in both PNG and beyond has ensured greater dissemination of their analytic pieces on PNG issues. In addition to these routine efforts, the Project has undertaken a number of innovative activities to ensure wider dissemination of RC work. First, encouraging submissions to the Devpolicy.org blog has been a success. Every year about 75 blogs are being produced on specific PNG concerns. More important perhaps, these blogs are increasingly the products of PNG authors; last year they comprised 60% of the blogs published. Project staff have supported this trend by working with students on potential blog submissions. In addition, creating a modest 200 kina incentive scheme has played a role – this subsidy (equivalent to \$80) has been helpful in encouraging UPNG students and staff to contribute blog posts. Through active encouragement of blogs on PNG issues and their increasing coverage by PNG media such as in the [Post Courier](#), a serious forum for discussing major development issues in PNG has emerged.

The regular monthly publication of the PNG Project Newsletter since early 2017 is also a timely and useful source of information on Project developments. Finally, the creative use of Facebook by the Project to share information has been impressive. After the posting of PNG-related Devpolicy.org blogs on the PNG Facebook site, the number of subscribers to this free site has dramatically increased from 100 to over 10,000.

#### EVALUATION OF RESEARCH COMPONENT RESULTS

The RC has been designed and implemented within the framework of the broad Project philosophy described in the Introduction. The RC has taken a long-term approach to research, with impressive continuity. Most of the researchers engaged have been involved for the length of the Project and the surveys developed under the RC have been regularly updated to ensure they remain timely and relevant to interested researchers. Partnership

and ownership have been central to the workings of the RC. Senior SBPP and ANU managements have been involved for the entire duration of the Project and have worked jointly to define key elements of the RC, monitor performance and address the various challenges the program has faced. As discussed above, efforts have been made to ensure increased PNG participation across all the components of the RC. In addition, this effort has led to increased understanding of how research can contribute to better teaching and policy making. The RC has been adaptive and learned from its experience: above, we cited a number of activities that emerged out of early Project experience or were identified to improve RC impact. Finally, the RC has been pragmatic and realistic. In parallel with engaging the highest political levels of PNG in the PNG Update Conference, it has also emphasized an extensive outreach program to better engage students and other actors in the RC.

### EVALUATION OF RESULTS – PNG ECONOMIC UPDATE (EU)

Assessing past EUs is reasonably straightforward. Published on a regular annual basis and featured as a key session in all PNG Update Conferences, the EUs now have a central role in the public dialogue on economic developments in PNG. While economic reporting is completed by other important actors in PNG (including the IMF, World Bank and ADB), the EU has had the advantage of continuity of authorship and more recently the sourcing of key inputs from UPNG staff. A review of past EUs shows clear understanding of economic developments over time and competent analysis of the key issues facing the PNG economy. While technically solid, they are also readable for those with a basic understanding of economics. Clearly, we are impressed with the EU work.

### EVALUATION OF RESULTS - BROAD RESEARCH WORK PROGRAM

On the broader analytic program launched under the RC we have a number of positive reactions and two future concerns. First, we are impressed with the volume of work undertaken and the publications that have resulted. There is no question that the range of topics covered is considerable and that the RC program has provided important insights into many of the key development issues facing PNG. We would also note the number of publications in international and particularly regional publications. Clearly the range and quality of much of the work funded has met the “publication test”.

In addition, a new generation of Australian expertise on PNG has certainly been enhanced by this program. In particular, while the research program has been coordinated by ANU, we would note that institutions beyond ANU and UPNG are benefiting from this program - researchers funded are associated with a number of Australian universities, with a US university (that highlights the PNG work of the professor involved on its web site), with the World Bank and with the Lowy Institute. Finally, as noted above, we found evidence that PNG researchers are being more broadly engaged in Project research.

Looking to the future, we do see two areas of concern emerging on the research program. First, we believe the balance of Australian and PNG expertise involved in research needs to change. While PNG capacity has been increasingly drawn upon for many Project analytic tasks, and we accept the message from the interview with research leaders that they have made consistent efforts to ensure greater involvement of PNG nationals in their work, we would hope to see more examples of research where PNG scholars assume leadership positions. Properly managed, we do not feel this risks any decline in the quality of the



research supported. Second, we believe the present program has understandably been driven by a desire to rapidly produce a broad and comprehensive program and by the availability of interested/qualified researchers. While this approach certainly made sense when the program began, we now think it would be helpful to have an agreed strategy of research priorities between ANU and SBPP. This could facilitate increased PNG ownership of the program, secure greater PNG staff involvement in research, and allow for improved setting of priorities (particularly if funding is more constrained).

We are impressed with the work on the two databases and the research portal. The evidence that the databases are being regularly updated suggests both the seriousness of the sponsors and that these efforts are proving useful to the broader research community. Increased use of the research portal is also a positive development. Finally, we look forward to the completion of the two textbooks under preparation. Both could make important contributions to the materials available for both domestic audiences and the outside world.

#### EVALUATION OF RESULTS – PNG UPDATE CONFERENCE

Evaluating the Update Conference is straightforward. It is a clear success where impact has grown over time. A broadening agenda, growing PNG engagement, particularly by women, and participation by the highest level of PNG leadership all argue for its role as a key forum of engagement on development issues. Funding to support this activity is an obvious priority for PNG and its donor community. At the same time continuous efforts must be made to strengthen the Update Conference to retain its relevance and impact.

#### EVALUATION OF RESULTS – WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

The significant number of workshops, conferences and seminars makes an assessment of this component challenging. The complete listing of workshops suggests a sensible agenda of activities, and evaluations have been positive. On the other hand, no complete list of conferences attended was available. While we endorse the importance of PNG participation in the three regional conferences noted above (this can help ensure people across the Pacific are aware of PNG developments and that the PNG representatives are up-to-date on key regional innovations), we feel a clearer set of stated priorities for conference attendance would be beneficial. On seminars, we noted above the consistent use of seminars to support and disseminate research work funded under the Project. If the practice of providing a full list of all staff engagements and exchanges involved in the Project (as in the 2015 Annual Report) had continued, it would have made it clearer that outreach has been a high research priority throughout Project implementation.

#### EVALUATION OF RESULTS – PUBLIC OUTREACH

We judge the outreach work as outstanding for development projects. The impact and success of the Update Conference was highlighted above. We believe the outreach to media clearly has assisted the Update Conference process; other constructive activities have included solid work with PNG-related Devpolicy.org blogs and the clever incentives for these blog contributions. Finally, we would highlight the positive role of the Project Newsletter over the recent past and the innovative use of the PNG Facebook site.

There is a final sensitive issue we would note on Project results. In various discussions on the RC it is clear that Project analysis and/or staff capacity have on occasion played useful roles in supporting government work. While we noticed instances where Project staff have

been involved in work on tariffs, the budget, taxes and the exchange rate, this work has not been as prominent as we would have expected in the various reports produced under the Project. While we would acknowledge that there is a clear risk in this area – on the one hand it is excellent that this support is being provided, but on the other hand, one does not want to suggest that the Project is interfering with sensitive Government policy decisions - we would hope that an appropriate approach could be developed that ensures that proper credit is being given to Project work which influences Government decision making. Our view is that this is an area where the Project has made a number of sensible contributions to PNG policies and that this has been a more important role played by the Project than is suggested by existing reporting.

# Management Component

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Project Management component was structured to support all Project components. It has overseen the hiring process for the Project. With its presence in both Canberra and Port Moresby, it has actively facilitated Project implementation, solving issues as they arose. This component was also responsible for monitoring Project implementation. It oversaw the development of the Project planning and reporting systems and has actively managed both.

Project management has successfully confronted the difficult challenge of placing qualified staff in PNG. While staff turn-over in PNG has at times been an issue, all teaching positions have been fully staffed throughout the Project, and there has been one team leader for the period 2016-2020. There has been some interesting creativity in hiring - hiring Martin Davies annually during his summer vacation from his US university job is a good example.

The team has effectively addressed two major challenges presented by developments in Port Moresby. During the student boycott it ensured that an alternative work program was put in place and more recently capacity for virtual learning was established to deal with the Covid-19 challenge.

The Project Management team has been responsible for managing Project funding. It has ensured that expenditures remain consistent with Annual Plans, has had only minor reported issues in managing funds, and has worked successfully to ensure that funding was available for extending the Project into 2020. Moreover, there are a number of specific cases where the Project Management team has been flexible and innovative on managing resources. Recognizing that full time administrative support was not needed in Canberra, the resources allocated to that function were used for both administrative work and part time web and communications officers. As noted above, that decision has paid high dividends on the outreach front. The team has also sought out savings, identifying a lower cost health insurance program for staff in PNG and downgrading the Partnership Manager position when the Project was fully mature. It has also taken on additional responsibilities when required – for example it took over the responsibility for visas when the PNG Governance Facility stopped providing that service.

An important base of support for Project Management throughout the Project's life has been the roles played by ANU Professor Stephen Howes and SBPP Executive Dean Professor Lekshmi N Pillai. They were directly involved in its creation and have worked closely together throughout implementation to ensure that issues are resolved cooperatively and quickly and that deadlines are met. In the case of Professor Howes, it has also involved actively leading work on the economic updates and other tasks. This relationship has ensured impressive PNG and ANU ownership of the program yet has not involved any costs to the Project (beyond expenses). We suspect that there are few examples of this level of cooperation in any donor programs in PNG.

A second, perhaps more complicated issue, has been the role of Palladium (and now Abt Associates) in Project Management. On the one hand, we understand that these firms have always been responsible for the indirect costs of accommodation, transport and security for Port Moresby staff. This certainly makes sense – ANU would have limited capacity in these areas whereas consultants have to deal with this across their engagements. In addition,

a Project agreement was signed between ANU and Palladium; later Abt Associates took over this agreement. It seems to us that this arrangement proved to be a bit awkward. As ANU has the actual responsibilities for Project delivery, we would ask whether this is a situation where DFAT could have considered a direct relationship with ANU (in parallel with an agreement covering only supporting services). This would have the advantages that DFAT would be more fully aware of the details of the Project and its execution, and ANU would have a clear line of responsibility for the funding involved with its work. If additional funding does develop, perhaps this option could be considered to make Project oversight less complex.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A set of performance indicators was included in the initial contract for the Project in 2015 to be used for monitoring and reporting. These indicators have been used consistently for half-yearly progress reports up to the second half of 2019.

In our view the indicators nominated in the framework, mainly of outputs and in a few areas of outcomes, are suitable, and the half-yearly progress reports have been well done. As well as supplying data against all the indicators, they are informative about context, set-backs, adaptations and challenges. Information we have obtained through emailed inputs and vidcon interviews has substantially confirmed the reports' reliability in these respects.

However, there are two areas in which fuller reporting might have been helpful at the time:

- itemised descriptions of research projects were prepared for annexes of the two 2018 reports, but not before nor since until the end-of-project report; and
- the financial reports show salary costs for each of the four components, but without the substantial on-costs for ANU-provided lecturers and researchers while in Port Moresby (notably accommodation, relocation, transport, security and health insurance), since they were paid by DFAT separately through the contractor.

## VALUE FOR MONEY

This has not been assessed in any of the half-yearly progress reports, but there are two observations about it in the draft end-of-project report. One notes the high cost per student of scholarships for study at ANU in comparison with the much lower cost of the MEPP course, which is not estimated apart from \$14,000 per student for each of ten scholarships provided separately by DFAT. The other notes that the summer schools (for ten promising SBPP students) have involved non-staff costs each year of only around \$100,000.

We agree that both these observations strongly suggest good value for money, although the MEPP and study at ANU are not closely comparable.

Clearly the ANU-provided lecturers in SBPP represent the largest component of the Project's funding from DFAT; and in the circumstances of Port Moresby, the associated on-costs for those lecturers are probably unavoidable, at least in large part. Therefore if a reduction could be made in coming years in the number of those lecturers, as the draft end-of-project report suggests is possible by adapting some of this year's arrangements under Covid-19 restrictions, this would have the greatest effect on the funding requirement for the Project.

Value for money in the Project's component for faculty strengthening can be assessed, although at present only in approximate and limited terms. Using a guess that ANU-provided lecturers' on-costs added about one half to their salary costs (in round figures \$400,000), and adding two-thirds of components 3 and 4 (in round figures \$300,000) as its other overheads, this component in 2019 used DFAT funding of about \$1.6 million.

After the end of 2019 (as in other years) about 60 students graduated with first degrees in economics or public policy, qualifying them substantially better for professional careers than if they had been without those lecturers' contributions through their years at SBPP. In addition, as was noted above, a large number – probably at least 100 – graduated from SBPP with other degrees who had had taken some ANU-taught courses in economics or public policy.

If one makes an arbitrary attribution of \$1.2 million to “high-benefit” graduates in economics and public policy and \$0.4 million to other, “some-benefit” graduates (and ignoring year-to-year differences in lecturing contributions and student numbers), the Project has used DFAT funding of about \$20,000 for each “high-benefit” graduate and at most \$4,000 for each “some-benefit” graduate. That seems to us good value for money. The value assessment is better if one takes into account the likelihood of indirect benefits of the Project on other divisions of SBPP and other schools of UPNG, through the demonstration effects of better teaching and through participation in UPNG-wide workshops, movie nights and conferences.

The limitations of assessing value for money in faculty strengthening must be borne in mind. The amounts graduates have had of teaching by high-quality lecturers have varied from one graduate to another; how much the graduates have learnt through these courses is indicated only by limited data, mostly from course evaluations and exam results; and the counterfactual – how they would have fared without ANU-provided lecturers – is guesswork. If similar information about overall cost divided by numbers of graduates were available for other investments in improving PNG higher education, or in improving professional training of PNG public-sector employees, comparisons with the UPNG-ANU Project would still mean little without reliable assessments of how relevant and useful the improved education or training is for those graduating, and thereby how useful for PNG's economic and social development.

For most of the research efforts under the Project, it would be difficult if not impossible to estimate value for money, but there are three research areas where assessments can be made. First, there are the annual Economic Updates produced for the PNG Update conferences. It is estimated that having this work done by ANU and UPNG staff has required a yearly cash outlay in the order of \$20,000. We estimate that using consultants for a similar exercise would certainly cost twice as much, and note that most country economic reports in the World Bank cost a multiple of \$40,000. Clearly the value for money of this product is excellent.

Secondly, costs can be compared for the two textbooks under production. Because they draw heavily on the existing macro and sector work done under the Project, they will be completed for a fraction of what they would have cost in the absence of Project research work. Presently eight staff are working on the textbooks while doing their teaching, research

and administrative work, and so their additional costs are estimated to total only about \$120,000.

Thirdly, the two databases produced under the Project would probably cost in the order of \$100,000 apiece if done by consultants, and that would not include the regular updating that ANU has been providing (and is expected to continue). Again, this is a clear saving secured by synergy among the Project investments.

There are two things worth emphasising about value for money in the Project.

- Because its components complement and support each other flexibly, the Project as a whole represents better value for money than any of the main activities would be if undertaken by itself.
- As professionalism gets better established in SBPP, as competition for places in SBPP's courses grows and supports a rise in standards, and as the network of recent SBPP graduates in touch with each other expands, it is probable that the Project's benefits – especially its contribution to public debate in PNG – will keep on growing in relation to money spent on Project activities.

#### EVALUATION OF RESULTS - PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Management has been competent and effective. The record of dealing with real challenges (the boycott and Covid-19) is impressive. The hiring record has been consistent for both lecturers and researchers, and a number of personnel savings were implemented. Budgeting and financial record keeping have not presented major issues. A solid planning system was developed early in the Project and Project reporting has been timely. We believe this record, particularly with the challenges Port Moresby presents, is impressive.

## Considerations for Future Investment

### TIME-FRAME

As we said in our Introduction, the Project's narrative has been correct to argue for understanding it as a decades-long process.

At the five-year mark, the Project has come along well in respect of all its objectives – in our view, at least as much as could realistically have been expected. We say this in respect not only of the more measurable aspects of performance, but also of ownership, teamwork and development of a professional culture around teaching and research in SBPP.

Inputs to this evaluation from staff and students at SBPP have confirmed that the need will continue in the years ahead for ANU support with mentoring, updating of course content and materials, setting and assessment of the economics exam, and providing both conference and publication opportunities.

The fact that DFAT has foreshadowed ending a set of its PNG investments which include the Project has required it to be managed with 2020 as its final year. This has already put in jeopardy the prospect of a further phase which would be continuous in terms of staffing, and further delay in deciding on the Project's future funding could make restarting it impracticable. In our assessment, continuation of funding for the Project should be agreed as soon as possible so that its component activities can continue with a minimum of disruption.

### FEWER ANU SECONDEES

In any next stage it would be wise to envisage an eventual and more sustainable form of Project, reduced in numbers and cost, but continuing for the long term.

The SBPP's "skin in the game", in the form of senior staff time and attention, will need to remain at least as great as at present, in order to bring about this tapering successfully while maintaining academic standards.

The crucial difficulty we see is that such a transition cannot be made unless UPNG fills several additional staff positions, in a timely way with multi-year contracts and the accompanying entitlements, notably to suitable on-campus housing and study leave.

Accordingly, tapering of ANU support should be envisaged as linked directly to an increase in numbers as well as capability of the PNG staff of SBPP in economics and public policy, possibly including a proportion of staff of other nationalities recruited by SBPP.

In other words, this tapering should come about as agreed from year to year by the heads of SBPP and the ANU's Crawford School in the light of SBPP's funding and staff situation, with a clear target but not through adhering to a timetable fixed in advance.

### SBPP AND THE REST OF UPNG

This interface remains as a set of constraints on what the Project can achieve in respect of teaching, research and especially SBPP's own capacity. SBPP requires funding from UPNG for its staff and other needs, and appointments of its staff are administered by UPNG's personnel unit. In addition, conditions in UPNG determine much of the learning environment for students and much of the professional environment for staff.

Restriction of funding or other obstacles to appointment of additional SBPP staff are the most obvious risks for the process envisaged in the Project of having well-qualified PNG lecturers progressively take over from ANU-provided lecturers. This was identified in the second half of 2018 as an emerging problem in a strategic [review](#) (page 22) of the Pacific Leadership and Governance Precinct, the facility for DFAT investments of which funding for the UPNG-ANU Project is part.

Clearly, sustaining the Project's teaching and research with fewer ANU secondees and still with high academic standards will require at the least several additional long-term positions. It may also require a reconfiguration of the MEPP so that it makes smaller additional demands on lecturers and research supervisors.

In several additional ways, for new and well-qualified lecturers to remain motivated to teach and research professionally and remain at SBPP will depend on factors governed not by SBPP management but by UPNG:

- prompt and honest processes of staff management – timing of appointments, promotion by merit, provision of suitable housing on campus;
- enforcement of disciplinary codes and incentives for professional performance, such as through requiring student evaluations of lecture courses, and taking account of teaching and research records in awarding promotions, study leave and scholarships for further study;
- physical security for students and staff, including protection from sexual harassment and a complaints mechanism; and
- fast and reliable internet access for themselves and their students, with capable IT support.

The scope of our evaluation does not extend to assessing progress in these matters in UPNG during the Project period, beyond saying that the aspects relevant to attainment of the Project's objectives, as seen by those involved in the Project, have not improved markedly, with the signal exception of DFAT's provision of new buildings. Accordingly, we emphasise that a successful program of related reforms in UPNG would multiply the beneficial effects of this Project.

At the same time, we emphasise that much has been achieved already by the Project within this constraint and other constraints in SBPP's situation. Similar achievements can continue, or indeed be increased, in a further stage of the Project.

We have been briefed about SBPP's working links with the University of the South Pacific, James Cook University and the Pacific Institute of Leadership and Governance, and we have detected no reluctance on the part of the Project's leaders to cooperate in these or other partnerships, with the usual proviso that they add enough value to be worth their cost in terms of management and administrative tasks.

Finally, we understand that DFAT is presently considering a broader program of investments in higher education in PNG. We certainly support the logic of broadening the DFAT program, but we would also underline two concerns. First, if the ANU Project ends this year or prematurely in terms of its objectives, it will send an unfortunate message that future such investments are at risk of being ended too soon. Second, we believe, as explained in the



concluding section, that ending support for the lone economics degree in PNG would send an incorrect message about the priority of improving economic capacity in PNG.

## POSSIBLE REFINEMENTS

We make the following suggestions for consideration in any extension of the Project.

**Course content**, especially in its applicability in PNG, will need periodic and collective review. For this purpose, drawing on third-party expertise or certification should be considered. This could also be assisted by obtaining further feedback on course content and teaching approach through tracer studies of graduates some years after graduation, and through periodic surveys of the main employers of graduates in economics and public policy. It could be complemented by further sponsoring of PNG-oriented textbooks, such as one devoted to monetary and financial economics, one to natural resource exploitation and its consequences for the non-resource sector, and one to labour markets, both domestic and Pacific-wide. And for MEPP students to obtain full benefit from teaching at an appropriate level, there may be a need for short preliminary courses for students who have gaps in their prerequisite knowledge.

Maturing of the Project should also include close attention to the **rigour of assessment and grading**. The annual ANU-administered exam in economics (taken voluntarily by undergraduate students in their third and fourth years) will, despite the measurement limitation inherent in its being voluntary, remain valuable as one indicator for year-to-year comparisons, as well as being needed for selecting candidates for summer schools and scholarships. The practicality and value of a parallel exam for students in public policy should be considered, and so should monitoring of SBPP's system for regular, compulsory assessment of students' progress in both the economics and public policy divisions.

A future investment program in research has more flexibility than the teaching program. The level of research supported can be more easily adjusted to align with resource availability on an annual basis.

We would make a number of suggestions for a future research program. First, as efforts over the last five years have secured the revitalization of Australian research on PNG, we would underline the importance of **sustaining a credibly-sized program**.

Second, we think the joint SBPP/ANU process proposed above for staff planning could provide an improved framework for **setting priorities** for research. Particular attention should be paid to any gaps in past research topics and to ensuring increased PNG engagement in research.

Third, we believe **sustaining support for the PNG Update Conference and the PNG Economic Update report** has high priority. It is important to ensure the continuation of a successful event that has generated expanding interest with increased PNG engagement, and an annual report on key PNG economic developments. In parallel with this, we would emphasize the importance of maintaining a **continuous review** to identify how these activities can remain relevant and be improved over time.

Finally, we would suggest close attention to the impact of the two **textbooks** under preparation. If these emerge as relevant and widely accessed resources in PNG, they could provide a model for converting later research into texts.

As the end-of-project report notes, the Project participants could and should look to go further with integration of **gender equality and social inclusion** approaches in teaching, research and outreach work.

We suggest it would be worthwhile to revive the **professional development** program of 2016 and 2017, or something like it, for SBPP staff with all divisions included. Despite the difficulty of finding time for preparing and participating in it, such a program can be expected to make net contributions to lecturers' and tutors' teaching and research. If this suggestion is adopted, a smaller function would remain for workshops for SBPP staff – such as in relation to preparing for conference presentations, media presentations and other optional adjuncts to staff members' work, or to tap the knowledge and contacts of visitors.

We understand that for adding in due course to their academic qualifications, SBPP lecturers can compete for UPNG scholarships for degree courses at other universities. It might be a useful addition if the Project could provide – for example through substitute lecturers - scope for **one-semester study leaves** for lecturing or research, to be taken up either at ANU or elsewhere.

The performance indicators adopted for the Project in 2015 remain suitable for a next stage, with two small changes we suggest:

- **Measurement of ANU-provided lecturers' teaching contributions** would be improved if the indicator of the number of students taught in each period in ANU-taught courses were replaced by the number of contact hours – the product of student numbers and contact hours in each course.
- **Financial reports** would be more comprehensive, and therefore more informative, if they could include the on-costs of ANU-provided lecturers as well as their salary costs, and if they could estimate the value both of the considerable time senior staff spend on direction and of other ANU-funded or UPNG-funded inputs to the Project.

## Conclusion

In this section we summarise the assessments required by our terms of reference which are contained in the preceding sections, and we add observations about the Project's relevance.

### Relevance

PNG is a country rich in natural and human resources, and yet with formidable challenges to overcome in its further development. Managing its economy has in the recent past involved many debates and much dissension among PNG's government and business leaders.

We therefore believe it is vital for PNG's leaders to have among them advisers and administrators with training in economics and public policy. Knowledge of economics, and the ability to gather and use evidence with professional discipline, are vital equipment also for PNG's business community, civil society and media in their interactions with government leaders at all levels – district, provincial and national.

Having seen in our own careers how other governments in the Asia Pacific region succeed in economic development through well-informed and well-considered policies, we strongly believe in the necessity for PNG to have more people of its own with a high-quality training in economics and public policy.

Full university courses in economics are available in PNG only at SBPP, and it offers one of only two PNG university courses in public policy.

In short, since this Project provides support of a kind which is vital for PNG's future, it could not be more relevant.

The Treasury Minister of PNG, the Honourable Mr Ian Ling-Stuckey, has a strongly positive view of the Project and its relevance to PNG. In a press release on 30 January 2020 he said:

As Treasurer, I am acutely aware of the need to improve the quality of the graduates coming into the PNG Treasury, Central Bank and other key economic agencies. This sort of program responds to that need by lifting the quality of teaching and research at UPNG. Since its inception five years ago, the impact of the partnership has been evident to all to see, whether in terms of teaching, or research or outreach.

And on 10 September 2020, in introducing the 2020 Supplementary Budget in PNG's Parliament, he said:

I would like to thank him [Professor Howes] and the ANU for the excellent work they do in supporting UPNG and economic graduates vital for our future...

### Effectiveness

Our assessment, as explained in the sections evaluating each of the Project's components, is that it has been fully effective in improving teaching of economics and public policy in SBPP, in building a program of research on PNG-related subjects, and in developing SBPP's own capability for that teaching and research, within the bounds of the available funding and SBPP's situation within UPNG.

### Efficiency

Our assessment, as explained in the section evaluating the Project's management, is that it has been highly efficient in three senses: while keeping resources focused on the main means of attaining the Project's objectives, its managers have adapted to set-backs and opportunities rapidly and constructively; economies have been made in the resources devoted to management as the Project developed; and value for money in the Project, so far as we can assess it, is very good.

### Sustainability

Our assessment, as explained in the sections on Project management and considerations for future investment, is that sustainability of the Project's outcomes mainly depends on:

- continuation of the exemplary commitment and leadership shown by the heads of SBPP and the ANU's Development Policy Centre,
- the obvious issue of future funding,
- the prospects of a tapering of ANU support directly linked to increases in the number and capability of PNG staff of SBPP in economics and public policy, and
- the extent of constraints, or opportunities for greater benefits, represented by SBPP's place within UPNG.

# Annex A – Terms of Reference for this evaluation

## **1 Background and Rationale for Evaluation**

### **1.1 Background**

The partnership between the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and the Australian National University (ANU) is long-standing, stretching back to the creation of the former. The partnership between the UPNG School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP) and the Australian National University's Crawford School of Public Policy (Crawford) commenced in 2012. In March 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between these two national universities, signed by their respective Vice Chancellors, provided a stronger foundation for this collaboration, and in 2018 the MOU was extended for a further three years. In August 2015 a new grant agreement between ANU and the Australian Aid program provided the means to significantly expand the partnership.

The ANU-UPNG partnership has a focus on faculty strengthening, collaborative research and outreach, and faculty / student exchange in economics and public policy.

#### **Faculty strengthening (ie ANU staff lecturing at UPNG)**

Since 2015, ANU staff (normally five) have been teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses across the Division of Economics and the Division of Public Policy Management. This has improved teaching quality, and enabled the introduction of a new Masters of Economic and Public Policy. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, five of the six teaching staff had to return to Australia at the end of March 2020. They are now delivering lectures to UPNG remotely, with the support of the remaining staff member still based in Port Moresby.

#### **Collaborative research and outreach**

The Centre and SBPP co-host the annual PNG Update which has been held at UPNG's Waigani Campus (Port Moresby) since 2014. The PNG Update is PNG's premier forum for the analysis of contemporary economic and social issues. The Centre's researchers also undertake collaborative PNG-related research under the rubric of the PNG Project. Important outputs include a range of journal articles, annual economic surveys, an Elections Database, a Budget Database, and a Pacific Research Portal. Outreach is via the Devpolicy Blog (which has a growing number of PNG authors), workshops and public seminars, podcasts, and advice. The culmination of the multi-year program of collaborative research is occurring this year with the production of an edited contemporary PNG issues volume, and a PNG economic history.

#### **Faculty and student exchange**

Three SBPP graduates have completed Masters in International and Development Economics at ANU, and two are currently undertaking studies. Three ANU summer schools have been held for the ten top SBPP undergraduates. Conferences and seminars also involve staff exchange.

### **1.2 Rationale for evaluation**

The ANU-UPNG project has been extended to 2020, but is scheduled to finish this year. It is a large project (about \$10 million) and a good learning opportunity. If the evaluation is positive, it would support an extension of the project, perhaps with a reliance on blended learning (as currently being deployed) with significant cost savings.

## 2. Objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability
- Identify achievements, problems and constraints
- Identify lessons learnt

The evaluation is commissioned by ANU and UPNG and intended to be independent. The evaluators are expected to provide the opportunity for feedback in relation to errors of fact and comment on the findings, but in the end the evaluation will be their product. Provided it is of sufficient quality, the evaluation will be made available publicly.

## 3. Approach and Methodology

A mixed methods evaluation technique is likely to be appropriate. This mixed methods approach may include, but not limited to:

- A draft end-of-project report will be provided to the evaluation team
- A desk review of past reporting, and M&E data: the project has involved extensive reporting and M&E. Start at: <https://devpolicy.crawford.anu.edu.au/png-project/anu-upng-partnership>
- Interviews with ANU and UPNG faculty, other stakeholders, students.

## 4. Evaluation team

- **James Adams** – former World Bank Vice President for East Asia and the Pacific, former chair of the Independent Evaluation Committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
- **John Eyers** – former senior Australian Treasury Official and former Adviser in PNG Treasury in 2006-08.

The two authors will be jointly responsible for the report, and the division of labour will be at their discretion.

## 4. Deliverables and Schedule

Draft report: End-July

Final report: End-August

Payment will be made on completion of the final report.

## 5. Delivery

The evaluation will be completed remotely using online and telephone methods of communication. Deliverables will be provided in soft copy via email.

## Annex B – List of those contributing to or consulted about this evaluation

We wish to thank the following people who have responded generously and helpfully to requests for inputs to this evaluation.

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### Asian Development Bank

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### ANU-provided lecturers, researchers and project managers

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