

Best of the Blog 2025

by Amita Monterola

15 December 2025



It's been a massive year for aid and development in Australia and globally. The Development Policy Centre was proud to host events and publish a stream of blog articles and podcasts that brought together academics, policy makers, development practitioners and younger researchers to discuss global and regional changes and debate ideas for a more generous, peaceful and sustainable future.

Ahead of the federal election, we published [a blog series](#) based on an important piece of research by Alyssa Leng, Ryan Edwards and Terence Wood which found that people's perceptions of migrants are inaccurate, but can be changed when additional information is provided. We also co-produced [a special election podcast](#) to provide a comprehensive look at the competing priorities and policy proposals shaping the aid debate with the Australian Council for International Development, the International Development Contractors Community and the Safer World for All Campaign.

Our Pacific labour mobility research team launched [Wave Two](#) of the Pacific Labour Mobility Survey while continuing to track [Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme changes](#) and [the scheme's impacts on regional communities](#) — as well as reporting on the outcomes of the first and second round of the Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) allocation process. Catch up with Natasha Turia's PEV analysis [via blogs](#) and [a podcast](#).

We brought together academics and government representatives at the [2025 Pacific Update](#), co-hosted by the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, from 3-5 July. Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General Baron Waqa [called for Pacific unity](#) and Tovi Amona brought us [a story of hope](#) as PNG businesses fund the fight against violence. Stephen Howes and Rubayat Chowdhury launched a discussion paper which argues that GDP is a misleading indicator of economic performance in the Pacific, and that [the focus should be on Gross National Disposable Income](#).

The 50th anniversary of [Papua New Guinea's independence](#) on 16 September was an important milestone which the Centre celebrated in a number of ways in PNG

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and Canberra. Stephen Howes led a team of ANU and University of PNG (UPNG) economists which co-authored a new economic history of PNG, *Struggle, Reform, Boom and Bust*. We co-hosted a special program at the **2025 PNG Update** on 21-22 August at UPNG which featured reflections from significant public figures such as Bougainville's John Momis, Dame Carol Kidu and Sir Bart Philemon.

Looking towards the future, Grant Walton and Michael Kabuni launched a comprehensive report on **anti-corruption efforts in PNG** at the August Update. We supported the PNG Canberra Students Association to host a symposium in September at the Crawford School of Public Policy featuring eminent academics, former UPNG Vice-Chancellor Albert Mellam and Ron May in conversation with members of the new generation of PNG researchers.

At the start of the year, while everyone was reeling from **the dismantling of USAID**, Robin Davies mapped **the donor funding landscape** to assess whether we are really seeing the end of foreign aid. Blog authors **were concerned** about the sudden gaps in aid funding and also humanitarian leadership, citing multiple protracted crises such as **Africa and the Middle East**, in particular **the conflict in Gaza**, and close to home **in Myanmar**. Yet some saw **grounds for optimism**.

So from 3-5 December, when we held the **2025 Australasian Aid and International Development Conference** in Canberra with our long-time co-hosts, The Asia Foundation, more than 600 people joined us to reflect and look ahead. The conversation ranged over topics from the recent **International Court of Justice ruling** on climate inaction to continuing human rights violations in places **like Afghanistan**. And Eric Olander gave us a reality check during the annual Mitchell Oration — saying that China will not replace aid from Western donors but is **rebuilding the international development arena** in its own way.

Finally, Robin Davies, Finn Clarke and I produced the 12th season of the Devpolicy Talks podcast this year. We had excellent guests including Helen Durham who delivered the AAC dinner keynote, **Biman Prasad** on Pacific economics and **Nina Schwalbe** and **Judith Cefkin** on the Trump-era aid landscape. We started the year with a series on the important issue of **food security in the era of climate change** and end with the voices from our region talking about **the strength of Pacific democracy**.

Aid and Development

The casual cruelty of USAID's demise by Bob McMullan

Burden-shedding: the unravelling of the OECD aid consensus by Robin Davies

[“Manufactured chaos”: Trump 2.0 puts his stamp on US foreign aid](#) by Cameron Hill

[A Silver Linings Playbook for the aid sector in 2025](#) by Lisa Denney

[2025 federal election special Devpolicy Talks podcast](#)

[Have Trump’s cuts made Australians kinder? 2025 aid attitudes survey](#) by Terence Wood and Cameron Hill

The [Beyond Aid series](#) on the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development by Nicola Nixon, Mandakini D. Surie, Su Lae Yi and Ojashwi KC

[China, the Global South and the post-American international order](#) by Eric Olander

[The continuing ban on girls’ education in Afghanistan](#) by Matiullah Qazizada

[Beyond the rhetoric: youth and anti-corruption efforts in Indonesia](#) by Garry Rosario da Gama

[Message for Myanmar: “If you need anything, let me know, naw.”](#) by J Hlaing

[How should Australia respond to the starvation of Gaza?](#) by Annabel Dulhunty

[Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders Australia series](#)

The Pacific

[Public opinion on immigration: more malleable than you think](#) by Alyssa Leng, Ryan Edwards and Terence Wood

[Understanding Pacific communities in Australia: where do they live?](#) by Huiyuan Liu and Toan Nguyen

[GNDI: a new approach to measuring economic performance in the Pacific](#) by Stephen Howes and Rubayat Chowdhury

[The 2025 Pacific Engagement Visa is open — how did it go in 2024?](#) by Natasha Turia and Stephen Howes

[No evidence SWP affected domestic farm worker earnings](#) by Ryan Edwards and Toan Nguyen

[Women in New Zealand’s RSE scheme: a small but stable workforce](#) by Charlotte Bedford

[Pregnancy, parenting and the PALM scheme](#) by Lindy Kanan

[The burden of chairing the Pacific Islands Forum](#) by Sione Tekiteki

[Vindicating Pacific climate leadership: what does the ICJ decision mean?](#) by Bal Kama

Papua New Guinea

[Struggle, reform, boom and bust: a profound wake-up call for PNG](#) by Ian Ling-Stuckey

[Papua New Guinea at 50 – a reflection](#) by Maholopa Laveil

[50 years of independence has failed the Polopa people](#) by Busa Jeremiah Wenogo

[Ten things to celebrate on PNG's 50th anniversary of independence](#) by Luke McKenzie

[PNG's fight against corruption must draw on its culture](#) by Yuambari Haihuie

[Political will and anti-corruption reform in PNG: between hope and reality](#) by Grant Walton and Michael Kabuni

[Bel isi PNG: a public-private partnership responds to family and sexual violence](#) by Tovi Amona

[Respectful relationships: the missing piece in PNG's education curriculum](#) by Michael Suau

[Gendered differences in student attitudes to gender](#) by Anna Kapil and Stephen Howes

[What women want: water access and representation in PNG](#) by Safa Fanaian, Grant Walton and John Cox

[Unwanted births and fertility in Papua New Guinea](#) by Kingtau Mambon

[To you, who hold power and will listen](#) by Naomi Woyengu

Reflections

[Vale Charles Lepani](#) by Stephen Howes

Honouring our sister, Agnes Titus by Helen Hakena, Julie Bukikun, Shamima Ali and Sabet Cox

Ovu ga hoe! I will not go! by Gordon Peake

Join the conversation

The Devpolicy Blog is produced by Robin Davies and Amita Monterola. We are pleased to be able to share our content daily with the Pacific media outlets thanks to our regional consultant Sadhana Sen.

We welcome blog submissions from a range of authors including academics outside ANU, policy makers, development practitioners, journalists and students. Please read [our guidelines](#) carefully before submitting a blog.

We are taking a break from publishing from Friday 19 December until Monday 12 January. However you can submit at any time via our [article submission form](#) and, for new authors, the associated [contributor profile form](#). We will get back to you in the New Year.

We are happy to take suggestions for podcast guests and topics. Please email your suggestions to devpolicy@anu.edu.au.

This is the 15th article in the annual [Best of the Blog series](#), which started in 2011.

Author/s:

Amita Monterola

Arunn Jegan is Humanitarian Affairs Lead at Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) Australia. He is an experienced Head of Mission and Emergency Coordinator and has worked in occupied Palestinian Territories, Yemen, Syria, Venezuela, Bangladesh.

Link: <https://devpolicy.org/best-of-the-blog-2025/>