

# Devpolicy news: The future of AusAID | PNG's “lost decade?” results | Fiji growth exuberance | Pacific aid and migration



by Development Policy Centre

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## If it was good enough for Downer...

On September 18, the new Government **announced** that AusAID would be ‘integrated’ into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Views vary on what should be done, but this is a rare chance to have a public discussion about an important aid policy question before a final decision is made.

Robin Davies **got** the discussion off to an excellent start with his argument that a return to pre-2010 arrangements, or something very close, would be “by far the best outcome.” Those arrangements placed AusAID under a Deputy Secretary with a direct reporting line to the Minister on matters of policy, and served John Howard and Alexander Downer well through their twelve years of stewardship of the aid program.

Terence Wood and Joanna Spratt **followed up** with advice based on both the academic literature and New Zealand’s recent experience with reabsorption. The three lessons they draw are: don’t use aid to subsidise business; avoid change for change’s sake; and don’t think that giving aid is easy.

We will be bringing you more blog posts on this critical issue for the future of Australian aid in the coming weeks, and also welcome submissions on it. You can keep an eye on all of our analysis and comments in the media **here**.

## Was it a lost decade in PNG?

On September 19, in collaboration with the National Research Institute (NRI), we launched the preliminary results of the 2012 PEPE ([Promoting Effective Public Expenditure](#)) survey of schools and health clinics. Our survey, which went back to the same schools and health clinics surveyed a decade ago, found very different results for schools (more students, more teachers, more and better classrooms, more textbooks) and health clinics (fewer patients, health workers and drugs). We attempt to provide some initial reasons in this summary [blog post](#). More information and all the presentations made to the forum are available [here](#).

The Health Department were so interested in our results that they invited us back last week to present our findings at the launch of their free primary health care policy attended by all provincial health managers and hospital CEOs. We look forward to sharing more results and analysis in the coming months.

## Fiji growth exuberance

In the latest Devpolicy discussion paper, USP economists Neelesh Gounder and Biman Prasad dissect Fiji's latest, promising growth performance, including forecast growth of 3% this year. Compared to the average of 0.5% since the 2006 coup, that's impressive. But Gounder and Prasad urge caution, noting the structural reforms that will be needed to support the continuation of growth, and the underlying rising national poverty trend. For more, read their Discussion Paper "[Economic growth, investment, confidence and poverty reduction in Fiji: semi-rational exuberance?](#)" or [blog post](#).

## Pacific aid and migration

We've had a number of blog posts in the last few weeks on Pacific aid and migration:

- [Seven reforms to expand Australia's Seasonal Worker Program](#): The Coalition has said it wants to expand the Seasonal Worker Program. Jesse Doyle and Stephen Howes suggest how it can be done.
- [Nauru: politics, asylum seekers & more](#): Another in Tess Newton Cain's excellent Pacific Conversations series. Tess talks to Nauru lawyer Katy Le Roy who among other things notes that Nauru has put a stop to any new expats coming to Nauru since it has run out of accommodation. So no more teachers or doctors thanks to the asylum-seeker deals.
- [Rising aid dependency in the Pacific](#): In the second of his two-part series on the aid boom in the Pacific, Jonathan Pryke documents that eight of the 20 most aid-dependent countries in the world are now in the Pacific, up from four a decade ago.

## Papers deadline approaching for 2014 Australasian Aid and International Development Policy Workshop

13-14 February, 2014

Australian National University

The submission deadline for paper abstracts for the first [Australasian Aid and International Development Policy Workshop](#) is only two weeks away. Papers are welcome 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](mailto:devpolicy@anu.edu.au). Submissions are welcome from academics, students and practitioners. Registration for the workshop is [now open](#), with early-bird specials available until Monday 11 November.

### Global solutions and international organisations

[Global solutions: Are international organisations up to the challenge of providing global public goods for development?](#) – Warren Evans, James Moody and Patrick Weller spoke at this event on September 25 chaired by Robin Davies.

Warren Evans gave a preview of his joint work with Robin Davies on this subject. He argued that organisations such as the World Bank faced a crisis of relevance. “Can there be a better balance between the country and global focus?” was the central question he posed. If the right balance isn’t found “then the relevance of the multilateral development banks will go down fairly quickly”. James Moody provided examples of institutional transformation and innovation that point the way forward. Patrick Weller drew on his extensive research into the governance of international organisations to summarise the formidable challenges involved in altering their strategies and management practices. You can find all the presentations [here](#).

To listen to this and all our events, don’t forget to sign up to our [podcast series](#) (also [available on iTunes](#)).

### Blog summary

You can find a summary of all posts since our last newsletter on September 16 in the list below.

### Analysis

### Australian aid

[Whither Australian aid?](#) By Terence Wood and Joanna Spratt.

[The future of AusAID: bend it, don't break it](#) by Robin Davies.

## **Global development policy**

[Why do some men rape? Looking for reasons behind gender based violence in Asia and the Pacific](#) by Ashlee Betteridge.

## **The Pacific**

[Seven reforms to expand Australia's Seasonal Worker Program](#) by Jesse Doyle and Stephen Howes.

[Nauru: politics, asylum seekers & more](#) by Tess Newton Cain and Katy Le Roy.

[Economic growth, investment, confidence and poverty reduction in Fiji: semi-rational exuberance?](#) By Neelesh Gounder and Biman Prasad.

[Rising aid dependency in the Pacific](#) by Jonathan Pryke.

## **PNG**

[PNG's lost decade? Understanding the differences between health and education](#) by Stephen Howes, Anthony Swan, Grant Walton, Colin Wiltshire, Thomas Webster and Andrew Anton Mako.

[The remarkable story of the nationalization of PNG's largest mine and its second largest development partner, all in one day](#) by Stephen Howes.

## **In Brief**

[New village-wide punishment for seasonal worker schemes divides Samoa](#)

[More progress needed on access to safe abortions: new report](#)

[Corruption scandal rocks Solomons health ministry](#)

[Interviews with the poor point to importance of social networks](#)

[How can the Global Fund get more health for its money?](#)

[Video: Robin Davies on AusAID integration into DFAT](#)

[AusAID no more? Abbott announces aid agency to be integrated into DFAT](#)

# DEVPOLICYBLOG

The new government and aid: our analysis

Abbott announces ministry: no room for aid or the Pacific?

PEPE team revisits surveyed provinces to share preliminary findings

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### **Development Policy Centre**

The Development Policy Centre is part of the Crawford School of Public Policy under the College of Law, Governance and Policy at The Australian National University.

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