

ANU-UPNG end of project report

April 2021

“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 Hon Mr Ian Ling-Stuckey, PNG Treasurer, 30 January 2020

“[T]he new economics grads [to PNG Treasury] seems more confident, and more capable, than they did in the 2008-2012 period. I suspect the ANU program might be part of the reason.

Bede Moore, Australian Treasury, who interacted with PNG Treasury prior to 2012 and then again in 2019, 6 November 2019

[B]eing your teaching assistant this semester ... was an amazing experience... Especially your teaching in terms of the way you deliver your lectures were very precise and in a very simplified way. You are also very open when delivering your lectures; thus the lectures have been very interestingly interactive between you and the students. ... I think I'll embrace your teaching method in the future.

UPNB SBPP tutor email to one of the ANU lecturers.

“The ANU-UPNG Partnership is the best thing that ever happened to UPNG, and the country as a whole. I am very pleased with this ANU-UPNG partnership and am very grateful to the ANU for assisting UPNG.”

UPNG student survey response, 2017.



2017 PNG Update (Mike Cookson)

This report is written by Professor Stephen Howes, Director, Development Policy Centre with the assistance of various colleagues. The author would like to thank all the many ANU and UPNG colleagues who have not only provided input to the report, but have also contributed over the years in so many ways to the success of the ANU-UPNG partnership.

Contents

ANU-UPNG end of project report	1
Executive Summary	4
2. Background and context	8
3. Key events and narrative	8
4. Project philosophy.....	9
5. Project objective and components.....	10
6. Project results.....	11
6.1 Faculty strengthening: ANU lecturers at UPNG	11
6.2 Collaborative research and outreach.....	13
6.3 Staff and student exchange	17
6.4 Relationships and management	17
7. Monitoring and evaluation	18
9. Project risks and challenges	22
10. Lessons learnt and conclusion	23

Annexes (separate document)

- A. UPNG-ANU MOU (2015 version)
- B. PNG Treasurer Press Release, January 2020
- C. Project description
- D. Staff survey regarding ANU-UPNG partnership (2017 H2)
- E. Student survey regarding ANU-UPNG partnership (2017 H2)
- F. Economics exam (2020 report)
- G. ANU teaching summary
- H. The two ANU-UPNG books
- I. ANU staff research summary and outputs
- J. List of ANU-organised/facilitated workshops

Executive Summary

Background

Decades of experience have shown that reform to boost development and reduce poverty only succeeds when it is home-grown, not externally imposed. For this reform to occur, a country needs a cadre of good economists and public policy experts, both to work in government and to promote public discussion of key policy issues.

While the University of Papua New Guinea economics department has a proud history, by 2010 it had started to become run down, with senior staff leaving for jobs elsewhere resulting in a shortage of lecturers. A partnership between the Development Policy Centre at ANU and UPNG's School of Business Administration (now called the School of Business and Public Policy, or SBPP) began in 2013, with expanded arrangements in place from 2015 with the signing of an MOU between the ANU and UPNG vice chancellors (refreshed in 2018) and support of the Australian Government. This project, known as the ANU-UPNG Partnership, is the focus of this end-of-project report.

The project design is provided in the ANU-Palladium contract (Annex C), which states that the objective of the project is to:

address critical weaknesses within the existing School of Business Administration and help realise a stronger SBPP, as well as a deeper and lasting relationship with the ANU

To achieve this objective, the project included four components

1. The placement of staff at UPNG, referred to as "faculty strengthening"
2. Collaborative research and outreach
3. Staff and student exchanges
4. Project management

The main link from the components to objectives was explained by the statement that "the most important constraint on the performance of UPNG's School of Business Administration at the current time is a shortage of highly qualified faculty. This reduces teaching quality, and negatively impacts on research as well." This constraint was to be addressed in the short-term by placing ANU staff at UPNG (component one) and in the long-term by training up future lecturers at the ANU (component three). Given the Minister's focus, and Crawford's own expertise, the scope of the project was extended beyond economics to include public policy. The ANU staff at UPNG were intended to be lecturers rather than advisers, but they also had a broader role of training, running workshops, engaging in and supporting research, encouraging government-university interactions, and facilitating student activity.

Throughout the project on average about five ANU staff were based at UPNG, with support from research and project management colleagues in Canberra. In early 2020, there were actually six staff based in POM (the highest). During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, five staff returned to Australia and taught remotely, while one has remained.

Through various contract amendments, and under two different managing contractors (Palladium and Abt Associates), the program ran from 2016 to February 2021.

The project was part of a broader package of Australian tertiary and training support to PNG through the *Pacific Leadership and Governance Precinct*, but this report is limited to a review of the ANU-UPNG Partnership.

Project results

Project results are summarised below.

Teaching and learning. The project has taught 3,651 students in 100 courses. On average, partnership lecturers taught about three courses per year. Initially the focus was on undergraduate teaching, but this shifted throughout the project to a balanced distribution between undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, and an increased emphasis on co-teaching and mentoring (see below). All classes were asked to evaluate their lecturers and courses, with almost universally excellent results.

ANU Masters Scholarships Creating a pipeline of new lecturers in economics to address staff shortages at SBPP was a key component of the project. Five economics lecturers will have been trained at ANU (four male, one female) in the Masters of International Development Economics at Crawford School. Four have already returned to PNG after completing their studies. Tragically, one died in 2020. The other three are now lecturing at UPNG in economics. All have committed to teaching for at least five years at UPNG. Already, the first of these lecturers to return has started publishing, commenting for the media, and working as an economic consultant in addition to their teaching. The training of future public policy lecturers took longer to get off the ground, but the project is also sponsoring two public policy tutors to undertake the MEPP in PNG.

Training and mentoring. As well as teaching, ANU staff also mentor and train junior university staff. They co-teach and/or guide some of the returned staff, they engage and guide tutors, and since 2107 have conducted annual day-long tutor/lecturer teaching workshops.

Masters of Economic and Public Policy (MEPP). The project has been responsible for the establishment of a new two-year postgraduate program in economics and public policy at UPNG, with world-class teaching, and annual enrolments now around 20-30 students, mostly mid-level public servants. Ten scholarships for public servants provided by DFAT, at a cost of \$14,000 per student, have supported enrolments. On average, it costs the Australian government about \$150,000 to send a Papua New Guinean Masters student to Australia for two years. To send 20 students to Australia each year would therefore cost about \$3 million per cohort. The MEPP delivers a world-class education at a fraction of this price. Australian Awards has indicated that they want to keep providing scholarships for the MEPP in 2021.

The PNG Update. The PNG Update, hosted at UPNG since 2014, has become PNG's premier public policy forum, growing in the number of attendees and presenters each year. Some 400-500 participants attend each of the two days of the event, and in 2019, it was opened and closed by Prime Minister James Marape. The Opposition Leader was also a keynote speaker. Evaluations from participants are overwhelmingly positive. The increase in the number of PNG, PNG female, and UPNG presenters over the years has been particularly noteworthy.

Collaborative research. Research topics have included family and sexual violence, elections, education, decentralisation and the macroeconomy. Research collaboration has reinvigorated the research culture at SBPP, and the research program has become increasingly collaborative as staff capacity at UPNG has been developed and interest in research grown. The research is currently being capped off by the joint production of two books: one on PNG's economic history, and a textbook on contemporary policy issues in PNG. Research was not on the agenda of SBPP staff prior to the partnership. Representation of PNG and UPNG authors on the Devpolicy Blog has grown rapidly. The Devpolicy Blog has published on average 74 blogs a year on PNG between 2015 and 2020. In 2015, only 9% had a PNG national as author; by 2020, that had grown to 70%. The project

has also focused on creating databases of use to the broader PNG research community: an elections database, a fiscal database, and a research portal.

Summer Schools and other exchanges. The ANU-UPNG Summer School program (2018, 2019 and 2020) provided the opportunity for the top five final-year undergraduate students from both economics and public policy to travel to Australia to complete six weeks of academic coursework at the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy, as well as many extracurricular activities such as meetings with key figures and organisations involved in the Australia-PNG relationship. The Summer Schools were overwhelmingly successful at a very low price. Other exchanges and visits took place during the project, with ANU and UPNG faculty visiting the respective partner institution.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation has been a strong part of project from the outset.

Staff survey. A staff survey was conducted in late 2017 to assess views of UPNG staff towards the project. On average, staff rated the overall effectiveness of the partnership at 4.3 out of 5. Strengthening teaching was rated as the greatest strength of the program, with a score of 4.4 out of 5, with strengthening research rated 4.1 out of 5, and strengthening outreach 4.0 out of 5.

Student survey. Likewise, a student survey was also carried out in the second half of 2017 to capture the views of students. Some 264 students responded, nearly all in a very positive way.

Economics exam. Since 2013, ANU staff have conducted an economics exam for third and fourth year students. The standard of the exam has been kept constant over time. In 2013, the average student failed – badly. From 2017, the average student has passed, and the average continues to rise, albeit more slowly now after the initial rapid improvement. We are not aware of any other effort to measure improvements in learning outcomes from an aid-funded training or education program in PNG.

Course and other evaluations. All courses are evaluated by the students who take them. The results are excellent. Participant evaluations are also sought for all major workshops, conferences and the summer school. Detailed reports are available on request, but universally show outstanding results.

Reporting and monitoring. Reports were sent to DFAT every six months and are published on the web for transparency. Progress reports use a traffic light system to indicate progress against annual targets.

Employer feedback Positive feedback has been received from Treasury, BPNG and Nasfund on the improved quality of graduates as a result of the project.

Independent evaluation. An independent evaluation of the project was undertaken by a former senior Australian Treasury official, John Eyers, and a former World Bank Vice President, Jim Adams. It was finalised in September 2020, and [published](#) on the web. The evaluation is very positive about the project, and recommended its continuation.

Challenges and lessons

Many of the issues faced by SBPP are beyond its control, with the need for reform at UPNG. The project was designed to and did make gains despite broader stagnation on university reform. Instability created disruptions in the project, in particular the university shutdown and protests of 2016. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 was an unforeseen risk, significantly disrupting university and

project operations. Having an adaptive approach to project management was key in this environment.

COVID-19, though disruptive, has provided an opportunity to test out a new model of partnership. As four project lecturers returned to Australia, remote lecturing and teaching was set up and proved more successful than anticipated. The one staff member still in country has played a critical role. A blended model with some remote teaching could provide a way forward for the partnership at a lower cost.

Gender imbalances affected the project. It was difficult to recruit female expatriate staff to PNG to teach which meant in-country staff were predominantly male, while student enrolment at UPNG SBPP also skewed towards males. Various equity measures have been implemented through project activities to encourage more female leadership and participation among the student body. Research on gender issues, including gender-based violence, has formed an important part of the project's collaborations.

Sustainability is a significant concern, though the decision by DFAT to support a second phase of the project from 2020 onwards significantly reduces sustainability risks. There are still risks that the young and inexperienced faculty now at UPNG will not stay.

Costs and value for money

The original project was funded at \$9.034 million for three years (2016-2018, with a small amount of spending in 2015). Due to significant cost savings, the original budget lasted almost four and a half years, and an additional \$1.02 million was provided to push the project out to just over five years (to February 2022) increasing the total budget to \$10.054 million (excluding GST), of which \$9.840 million was spent.

The budget excludes indirect costs relating to security, accommodation and transport which were significant. Including an estimate for these increases the cost estimate to from \$9.840 to \$12.0 million. The project leveraged significant in-kind ANU and UNPG contributions and paid only modest academic rather than much higher adviser salaries, indicating good value for money.

Conclusion

The ANU-UPNG Partnership has been a large and complex undertaking for those involved. It has been highly successful, providing excellent teaching to undergraduates and postgraduates, rejuvenating faculty at SBPP, and producing extensive research and outreach. Collaboration between UPNG and ANU with funding from the Australian government has succeeded in lifting not only the quality of teaching in economics and public policy in PNG, but also the quality of public discourse.

1. Introduction

This report is a contractual requirement. It is also a useful opportunity to document an important project, that is, the DFAT-funded partnership between the Development Policy Centre at the ANU Crawford School and the School of Business and Public Policy at the University of Papua New Guinea, between 2015 and 2020. An earlier draft of this report was prepared (and circulated and published) in September 2020 as an input to the [Independent project evaluation](#), and then was revised in April 2021 at project completion, with final revisions in July 2021.

The next section provides background and context. Section 3 gives key events and a summary narrative. Section 4 sets out the project objective and components, and Section 5 the project's results. Section 6 brings together findings from the project's M&E system, and Section 7 summarises

project costs. Section 8 expounds on project challenges, and the final section concludes with lessons learnt. Ten annexes provide useful background information.

2. Background and context

Decades of experience have shown that reform to boost development and reduce poverty only succeeds when it is home-grown, not externally imposed. And for reform to be home grown, a country needs a cadre of good economists and public policy experts, both to work in government and to promote public discussion of key policy issues. The University of Papua New Guinea is the only university in PNG where economics is taught, and one of only two where public policy is taught.

While the UPNG economics department has a proud history, by around 2010 it started to become rundown, with senior staff leaving for jobs elsewhere. By about 2013, there was only one full-time staff member, a tutor. At the same time, the Development Policy Centre, part of the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy, started developing a partnership with UPNG and its School of Business Administration, as it was then called, within which the economics department was housed. This involved some volunteer lecturing, and the introduction of an economics test at UPNG to assess student capabilities in 2013. In 2014, the PNG Update was held at UPNG, after a long absence.

In 2014, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop asked the ANU to provide more support to UPNG in the areas of economics and public policy. The result was a scaled-up version of the pre-existing partnership between the Crawford School's Development Policy Centre and the School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP, as it was renamed).

In March 2015, an MOU was signed at the vice-chancellor level between ANU and UPNG to formalise the Crawford-SBPP relationship. The three-year MOU (Annex A) was refreshed in 2018 (in very similar form) following a second visit, for another three years.

Two ANU-sponsored staff at UPNG started work in 2015, under various ad hoc arrangements (via the volunteer program, and one of the Australian advisory programs). In the same year, the contract for the full ANU-UPNG partnership (the “project” in this document) was agreed on. The contract was with Palladium – one of the contracting companies DFAT uses. The contract value was \$9 million. This project was to run for three years, 2016 to 2018 (with very limited spending in 2015), though it ended up running to February 2021. In this report, we assess the project from 2015 to February 2021, but financially report against the contract, that is, from 2016 to February 2021 (with very limited spending for 2015).

The funding for the ANU-UPNG partnership was part of a broader package of Australian tertiary and training support to PNG, through the Pacific Leadership and Governance Precinct (The Precinct), which supported both SBPP and the Institute of Public Administration, and which was also announced in 2015. In practice, the ANU-UPNG partnership had little connection to the broader Precinct, though there were certainly some useful links (see especially the MEPP discussion below) and other benefits for SBPP (most notably a new building). The Precinct was the flagship project of Minister Bishop, but ceased activities last year. This report is restricted to an assessment of the ANU-UPNG partnership only.

3. Key events and narrative

Basic background on the period up to 2016 is provided in the previous section. After contract signing in August 2015, ANU staff hiring commenced in earnest, and the first staff actually on the ANU payroll started working at UPNG in early 2016. The first big bump in the road came after just a few months when a student strike commenced at UPNG in May 2016, culminating in the [shooting of several students](#) in early June, followed by the burning of parts of UPNG by protesting students. The

university was closed for much of the year, but the academic year was completed by running late into December. The enforced break in the mid-year resulted in the ANU team working with UPNG counterparts to develop a new Masters in Economic and Public Policy (MEPP). This is a good example of the project's adaptive approach (Section 4).

After 2016, the project experienced fairly smooth sailing at an operational level through to early 2020, though in 2019 there was an episode of gross [political interference](#) in the governance of the university which led to a staff strike, though it was resolved fairly quickly.

In March 2020, most project staff in Moresby returned home on account of the pandemic. One staff member chose to stay. Before departing, video streaming between Canberra and Port Moresby was tested, and it worked surprisingly well. The project continues with a heavy reliance on remote lecturing from Canberra, and regular video consultations with UPNG counterparts. The 2020 PNG Update was cancelled.

In 2016, the ANU contract was transferred from one contractor to another (from Palladium to Abt, who had won a major new governance contract with DFAT). Although the ANU-UPNG project was only for three years (2016 to 2018), it was always presented as needing to run for at least a decade (see "Project philosophy" below). In 2018, it was provided with a no-cost extension to take the project through to 2019, and then in 2019 it was given a costed extension through to 2020. It was further extended to February 2021 to allow time for a second phase of the project, arrangements for which have now been finalised.

4. Project philosophy

The project was always explicit about its project philosophy, sometimes called the project narrative, which was reproduced with minimal variation in every project plan and report. The emphasis was on: a long-term approach and continuity; partnership and having skin in the game; producing both tangible and intangible benefits; requiring high-level support; and being adaptive and realistic. The box below contains the version of the project's philosophy from the first progress report (for the first half of 2016).

This project philosophy has served the project well. High level support has been sustained, even with the departure of Foreign Minister Bishop. In particular, the successive UPNG VCs have continued to support the project. And The PNG Treasurer Ian Ling-Stuckey has emerged as a strong supported (see his January 2020 Press Release in Annex A).

ANU-UPNG project philosophy

The project takes a long-term approach. Aid funding for this partnership may wax and wane but the project has been set up to be here for the long term, at least a decade. Of course, there is no guarantee it will last for a decade, but that is the intent: there is little point to setting up a shorter-term project.

The concept of partnership is critical. Both parties have skin in the game. Both have made a long-term commitment to the partnership. Both are prepared to discuss and resolve issues in a transparent manner.

The benefits of the project are both direct and indirect. Perhaps the most important, certainly the most tangible, benefits of the project are for the students who otherwise might receive no teaching, and certainly a lower quality of teaching. These are the future leaders of PNG after all. But there are also important indirect benefits – the systemic changes, the research and outreach. This dual approach serves as both a risk mitigation approach and as a way to maximize project value.

The project has and requires strong support from the highest levels. The expansion of the project was initiated by Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs during a meeting in mid-2014 with the then ANU Vice Chancellor. It is strongly supported by ANU and UPNG at the highest levels. Given the difficulty of the project, this is critical for success.

The project has strong UPNG ownership. The project is as much a UPNG initiative as an ANU one. It was the UPNG VC's initiative to seek a new MOU with ANU, and it was his drive that brought that into fruition. The SBPP Dean plays a critical role in providing day-to-day support to the partnership and its various initiatives. Without this, the project would undoubtedly falter.

The project takes an adaptive, learning-by-doing, and adjusting-as-we go approach. This is the only approach that makes sense.

The project values continuity. To develop good relationships, and to learn to be effective, staff need to be in place for as long as possible. Long-standing relationships between ANU and UPNG faculty are key to the success of the partnership. If project staff do well, we want them to stay for as long as possible.

The project is based on realistic expectations, and seeks incremental gains. It would be foolhardy to wish away the systemic challenges which UPNG faces in a range of areas. No external intervention can turn UPNG around, or even a part of the university. However, an external intervention can make a difference, and be judged a success, provided realistic expectations are maintained.

Extracted from the 2016 first half year report

5. Project objective and components

The project design is provided in the ANU-Palladium contract (Annex C). This gives the objective of the project as being to:

address critical weaknesses within the existing School of Business Administration and help realise a stronger SBPP, as well as a deeper and lasting relationship with the ANU

To achieve this objective, the project included four components

5. The placement of staff at UPNG, referred to as "faculty strengthening"
6. Collaborative research and outreach
7. Staff and student exchanges
8. Project management

The main link from the components to objectives was explained by the statement that "the most important constraint on the performance of UPNG's School of Business Administration at the current time is a shortage of highly qualified faculty. This reduces teaching quality, and negatively impacts on research as well."¹ This constraint was to be addressed in the short-term by placing ANU staff at UPNG (component one) and in the long-term by training up future lecturers at the ANU (component three). Economics was perhaps the most extreme case, but all 8 departments (or divisions) within SBPP are short staffed. Given the Minister's focus, and Crawford's own expertise, the focus was expanded to include public policy.² The ANU staff at UPNG were intended to be lecturers rather

¹ This constraint was experienced first hand by the author, who, prior to the start of the project, participated in two hiring rounds for economics lecturers at UPNG, neither of which resulted in any hiring. It was also documented in the UPNG economics baseline report prepared in 2015.

² It was originally proposed that the ANU could over time provide staff in other areas, but this never eventuated, and probably would have stretched the project too thinly.

than advisers, but they also had a broader role of training, running workshops, engaging in and supporting research, encouraging government-university interactions, and facilitating student activity.

Another component (number two in the list above) concerned collaborative research and outreach. This covered the PNG Update, other seminars and workshops, and a large program of research, which was labelled the PNG Project. As per the above statement, this component extended beyond UPNG to strengthening the ANU-UPNG partnership. Consistent with this, the project description included, under the research and outreach component, “investment in research capacity” at ANU.

The four components were operationalised as follows:

- The aim under the first component was to have five staff living in Port Moresby, teaching at UPNG. There were four staff by the second semester of 2016, and five by the first semester of 2017 to the end of 2019. In the first semester of 2020, it was agreed that one of the project’s Canberra staff would be temporarily transferred to UPNG to teach the large Economics Foundation course, and so there were briefly six staff in Port Moresby (until five were evacuated in March).
- The second component of collaborative research funded two researchers and one research officer in Canberra to strengthen ANU’s research capacity. These staff were in place for most of the period, though the budget was cut in 2020, and numbers reduced to one researcher. This component also funded the PNG Update, and many other workshops.
- The third component funded visits by ANU staff to UPNG and vice versa. It also funded an annual Summer School at ANU for UPNG undergraduates, and the training of selected UPNG graduates and tutors to undertake a Masters at ANU and to return to UPNG as lecturers.
- The project was managed by two Canberra-based staff, with some tasks delegated to Moresby. This was latter reduced to just one staff (full-time equivalent).

6. Project results

This section covers the results of the project in relation to the four components set out in the previous section.

6.1 Faculty strengthening: ANU lecturers at UPNG

This was the largest component of the project, and delivered results, from excellent teaching to course development, and from staff mentoring and student engagement.

Teaching. The most tangible achievement of the project has been to teach 3,651 students in 100 courses. See the summary table below (with details in Annex G). On average, lecturers taught about three courses per year. Initially the focus was on undergraduate teaching, but towards the end there was a balanced distribution between undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. All classes were asked to evaluate their lecturers and courses, with almost universally excellent results. (At ANU, anything above 4 is considered very good, and 4.5 or above is outstanding.) There was a definite male bias in the classes, something returned to later, under challenges. As well as the full-time, regular ANU lecturers, the project has also involved a number of lecturers from the PNG think tank, NRI, and from overseas from time to time.

Summary of project teaching

	Courses			Students			Ave. evaluation score (out of 5)
	Total	Undergrad	Postgrad	Total	Female	Male	
2015	5	5	0	127	42	85	4.9
2016	11	11	0	554	207	347	4.7
2017	18	12	6	638	176	462	4.5
2018	23	12	11	604	183	421	4.5
2019	20	10	10	719	172	547	4.5
2020	23	14	9	1009	246	763	4.5
Total/average	100	64	36	3651	1026	2625	4.6

Masters of Economic and Public Policy (MEPP). The project has been responsible for establishment of a new two-year postgraduate program in economics and public policy, with world-class teaching, and enrolments now around 20-30. Most students are mid-level public servants. Enrolment numbers have grown from under 10 in the first two years to 30 in 2019, 31 in 2020, and 36 in 2021.³ With the pandemic, numbers in 2020 fell to 22, Female enrolments have also improved from none in the first two years, to 13 in 2021. Most of the MEPP courses in which have been taught by ANU faculty, and some by faculty supported and financed by the ANU. An initial problem with the MEPP was the requirement that graduation required the completion of a research project. This proved to be beyond the reach of most students, and a coursework only variant version of this course has now been developed. Apart from that participation and completion rates have been satisfactory. On average, it costs the Australian government about \$150,000 to send a Masters student to Australia for two years. To send 20 students each year would therefore cost about \$3 million each year.⁴ The MEPP delivers a world-class education at a fraction of this price.

This part of the program was supported by ten scholarships for public servants provided by DFAT (through Abt), at a cost of \$14,000 per student. This was a great benefit of being part of the Precinct.

The MEPP program originally faced problems of non-completion, but these are being addressed by: (i) including a non-research option; (ii) providing more comprehensive and pro-active oversight of students.

Training and mentoring. As well as teaching, ANU staff also mentor and train junior university staff. They co-teach and/or guide some of the returned staff mentioned above, they engage and guide tutors, and since 2017 have conducted an annual day-long tutors/lecturers teaching workshop. (The workshop provides information on effective preparation, presentation, feedback and common concerns, and provides new staff with an opportunity to present, get feedback and provide feedback on their teaching as well as link with the other new staff at the school.) In 2018, the ANU teacher training group delivered (without charge) a two-day workshop for SBPP on teaching methods.

Local economics staff have now started to undertake student and course feedback, and work together with ANU staff on their courses to improve them. This also did not happen prior to the partnership - student feedback was only ever undertaken every few years prior to a performance review. New staff often had a difficult time teaching quantitative courses. Prior to the partnership one lecturer had to leave the course in the middle of a semester because he was unable to teach the

³ Though, with the pandemic, the number of active students fell to 22. This may happen as well in 2021.

⁴ After the first year, there would be two cohorts of 20 each in Australia in any one year.

course properly, leaving the students and UPNG to try and manage the loss ad hoc. Now, with some ANU assistance, two ANU graduates have taught two of the most difficult undergraduate quantitative courses.

Curriculum development. ANU staff have prepared course materials for the courses they have taught, and these are already available for use by others in the future. They have also helped update courses and course materials, recommended textbooks, and provided course materials for students.

SBPP library. The SBPP library had been largely inaccessible to students, so the project has funded the costs of a librarian for three years to run the new SBPP library, and make it available to students.

Teaching resources. Our staff have arranged for Excel and STATA software in SBPP's computer lab, with tuition in its use. They have also facilitated a donation (by the Lowy Institute, outside the Project) of computer terminals and flat-screen monitors for use in SBPP's computer lab.

Support for student societies. ANU staff at UPNG have supported the Economics Student Society (ESS) since 2015 and the Public Policy and Management Student Association (PPMSA) since 2019. Previously, these societies were only partly or not at all functional due to lack of institutional support and financial problems. Support is provided for student-led activities such as the school debate, guest speaker events, promotional materials, coffee chats, barbeques, study outings, and orientation nights. Support is provided to final-year students with job application preparations and organising written references for employment on request. One staff member, Dr Manoj Pandey, who has been at UPNG since 2016, has been made Patron of the ESS.

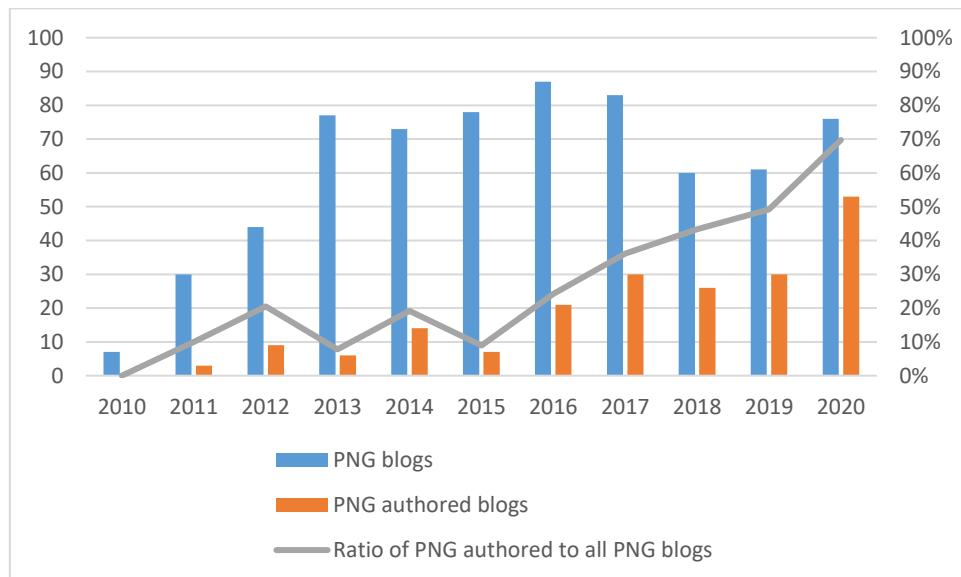
Film nights "UPNG Inspired" is the name given to the Thursday night film screenings ANU staff have organised at UPNG since 2015. The films include those nationally and internationally produced on major issues of importance to PNG. The films often have a gender focus. They are an attempt to broaden the horizons of students, and to provoke discussion. Typical attendance is about 50. Each film night includes a post-film discussion by a significant figure or expert to address key themes in the film. The program is on hold due to COVID-19.

6.2 Collaborative research and outreach

This component of the project took some time to gather momentum, but with the excellent performance of the PNG Update, the Devpolicy Blog, the joint research through two ANU-UPNG books now being compiled, the extensive PNG Project, and the new databases and portal, ended up making a very significant contribution to UPNG research capacity and culture, and policy discourse more generally.

The Devpolicy Blog: fostering a PNG policy discussion. Over the last few years, the Devpolicy Blog has emerged as the main forum for policy discussions about PNG in the country or outside of it. Port Moresby is the blog's biggest city for readership and Lae the fifth biggest. Every year (since 2013) Devpolicy.org publishes an average of 74 blogs on PNG. But what has really changed is the number of blogs with PNG authors which has gone up from none in 2010 to just 7 in 2015 to 30 in 2019 and 53 in 2020. The share of PNG blogs by PNG authors was only 8% in 2013. It reached 49% in 2019 and 70% in 2021. The key factor in this turn-around has been the help and encouragement provided especially but not only to UPNG academics and students. A K200 incentive scheme launched in 2018 has no doubt also helped. Definitely this would not have happened without the project. From this year onwards, most of the PNG blogs, especially those with PNG authors, are republished in one of PNG's national dailies. Almost half (43%) of the PNG-authored blogs have at least one female author

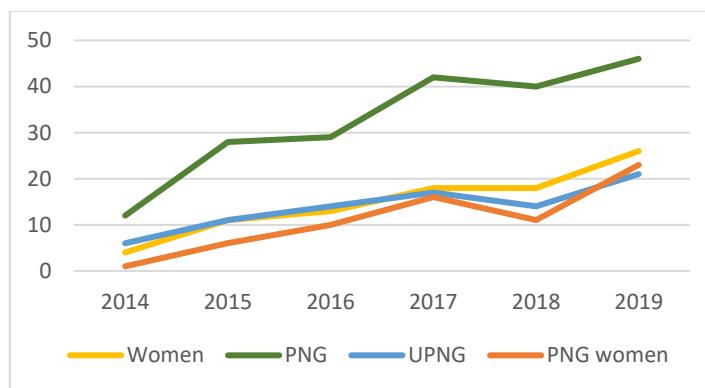
(86 out of 199). None of this would have happened without the project. This success was not something that was anticipated at the start of the project, but that emerged through experimentation.



Notes: PNG-authored means at least one of the authors is from PNG, and is by nationality.

The PNG Update: PNG's premier public policy forum. Although it was not held in 2020 on account of the pandemic, the PNG Update has become PNG's premier public policy forum. Each year, it has gotten bigger and, by general consensus, better. In 2019, it was opened and closed by the Prime Minister. The Opposition Leader was also a keynote speaker. Evaluations of participants are overwhelmingly positive. Some 400-500 participants attend each of the two days of the Update. **The increase in the number of PNG, PNG women, and UPNG presenters over the years is particularly noteworthy** (see figure below).

PNG, UPNG, PNG female, and UPNG female speakers at the PNG Update



Two ANU-UPNG books, currently under preparation. To bring together the research conducted under the project, and to ensure it has a lasting place and is useful for teaching, the ANU and UPNG teams collaborated on two books: a post-independence economic history of PNG, and a contemporary issues PNG "textbook": see the tables of contents in Annex H. Altogether some 22 authors are involved, 12 from ANU/Australia and 10 from UPNG/PNG. The second book has been accepted by the publisher, and the first is at first draft stage.

Research: the PNG Project. The various ANU staff, both those in Canberra and those overseas, have been active researchers over the life of the project. Their outputs are summarised in Annex I. Highlights include: annual surveys of the PNG economy, the most recent one of which was published, undertaken every year by a combined ANU-UPNG team. Focus areas for collaborative research include: education, decentralisation, gender-based violence, and elections. Most though not all projects included collaboration of PNG co-authors. The trend towards collaboration is definitely positive, as shown by the two books, which are very much a joint effort. Technical areas of work such as macroeconomic policy were less collaborative, though this should change going forward with more UPNG economics lecturers in place.

Two new databases, and a research portal. The project has produced not only research outputs, but also important databases that are available to, and used by, other PNG researchers.

- The [PNG Election Database](#) contains detailed election results from all national general elections in PNG between independence and 2017. The Election Database is the result of an exhaustive and extensive data gathering exercise, and is the only place these data are held. It is made publicly available through an interactive, dedicated website, that has already been extensively used.
- The [PNG Budget Database](#) is an Excel spreadsheet that compiles information from PNG national government budgets from 1989 to 2021. The database is updated twice yearly, after the annual budget and when the FBO (Final Budget Outcome) is released. The budget has been used by PNG commentators, the private sector and multilaterals.
- [PNG Pacific Research Portal](#): All PNG universities have limited access to academic journals. The PNG Pacific research portal was created to remedy this by providing a customised search that searches over 1000 websites that in total house millions of academic quality articles as well as useful databases on PNG and the Pacific – all of them open access. As of 19 June 2020 the site has been accessed by 1482 unique users, and has received 3178 search queries, amounting to around 106 queries per month since its launch in 2017.

Workshops. The full list of 34 workshops conducted and/or facilitated by ANU staff over the life of the project is provided in Annex J. These ranged from one hour to two or three days, and involved a mixture of UPNG staff and students, public servants, and other stakeholders. The workshops were convened by ANU staff, but also involved a range of experts from organisations such as IFPRI and the UN. Some workshops were highly technical (statistical training), others more accessible (blog writing, discussion of research results). Various attempts were made to start a regular SBPP seminar series. These were finally successful in 2020 with the project-supported SBPP monthly “Academic Seminar Series.” Unfortunately, this was cut short by the pandemic.

Research through the MEPP: We have moved away from requiring all MEPP students to undertake a research project as that was not feasible. But still about half do, and that is a major injection of research into SBPP, with ten major research projects each year.

Impact on PNG research culture: The project has transformed the research culture at SBPP.

- Research was not on the agenda of SBPP staff prior to the partnership. This is because it didn't appear that there was much payoff to spending valuable time on research activity. Now, staff show a great deal of interest in writing, especially for the blog, which gives academics a way to voice their opinion with authority, as well as build a public profile. The blog was always an option for PNG researchers, but building the profile of the blog and getting more PNG researchers to write for it has meant that more people know and value

writing for it. The massive growth in blogs by PNG authors is a major success of the project (p. 10)

- ANU staff have mentored junior staff by including them as co-authors, by editing and guiding their work, and in some cases utilising them as research assistants.
- Local economics division staff are now asked for their opinion for local and international news articles and on radio. This did not happen prior to the partnership.
- The rejuvenation and regular holding of the PNG Update (the only regular conference at UPNG) has had a broader impact on the UPNG research culture as keen be seen by the growing numbers of UPNG presenters. The large number of smaller workshops (see p. 10) has also helped.
- ANU staff's participation as examiners for various Master and PhD thesis across schools at the UPNG has helped relieve a critical bottleneck.
- The research done through the MEPP (point above) has also had a very positive impact
- Over time, collaboration has increased. The final projects under this phase of the project – the two joint books (Annex H) – are fully collaborative, and involve the two teams working together closely.

Working with the PNG government. The project has worked closely with the PNG government in a range of ways:

- Two project staff (one part time, one former) were asked by Treasury to conduct a review of exchange rate policy.
- One project staff provided extensive hands-on assistance to the PNG Treasurer in the course of the 2019 budget, for which he was singled out for thanks by the Treasurer.
- We also have provided support over the years to the National Statistical Office.
- The PNG Update provides an excellent forum for interaction for policy makers and academics. As a result of one presentation by an ANU academic on labour mobility, the then Shadow Treasurer, now Treasurer became a champion of labour mobility. He has established a central unit, and PNG, which has lagged behind in terms of labour mobility participation, is expected to grow its labour mobility numbers greatly post-pandemic.
- The annual economics session at the PNG Update provides the only opportunity for government-academic interaction, and many of the ideas we have promoted there on fiscal reform are now being pursued by the government.
- We have provided support and advice to the Internal Revenue Commission on issues of tax nudging to lift compliance.

Developing the next generation of Australian PNG researchers. As noted earlier, one objective of the project was to strengthen ANU's research capacity, and more generally PNG research capacity in Australia, which had been running thin. Notable project alumni include: Jonathan Pryke, now heading up Lowy's Pacific Research Program, and probably Australia's most well-known media commentator on the Pacific; Dr Lhwang Ugyel, now at UNSW and still researching PNG public policy; Dr Amanda Watson, now back at ANU, working on PNG; Dr Marcel Schroder, now at the ADB and active on PNG; Dr Bao Nguyen, now teaching at University of Tasmania; and Dr Matthew Dornan, now with the World Bank, working on PNG and the Pacific.

6.3 Staff and student exchange

This component of the project had the key role of promoting sustainability by delivering new lecturers to UPNG. The summer school was one of the most innovative features of the project.

A pipeline of new lecturers. By the end of the project, five economics lecturers will have been trained at ANU (four male, one female). Four have already returned. (Many PNG students struggle at ANU, so it is a credit to all involved that all so far have been able to graduate comfortably.) Tragically, one died. Three are now lecturing at UPNG in economics. One is still at ANU. All have committed to teaching for at least five years at UPNG. They are collectively the best hope for the restoration of economics at UPNG. Already, the first of these lecturers to return has started publishing, commenting for the media, and working as an economic consultant. Rejuvenation of the public policy division got off to a slower start, but is now being pursued at lower cost through the MEPP: the project is sponsoring two public policy tutors to undertake the MEPP.

Three summer schools. The ANU-UPNG Summer School program takes the top 5 economics and top 5 public policy students to Australia to complete 6 weeks of academic coursework at the Crawford School and many extracurricular activities. The Summer School has run in three years, 2018, 2019 and 2020. (The School was delayed for a year due to the 2016 student protests, and could not be held in 2021 due to COVID.) In addition to coursework, the Devpol team organised dinner gatherings, trips around Canberra and the ANU, guest lectures and travel to the South Coast/Sydney. There were also meetings organised with high profile members of PNG and Australian Government, multilaterals and think tanks, and the Summer School culminated in attendance at the Australasian Aid Conference. The summer school always receives outstanding evaluations, and is improving over time. While one attraction of the summer school is the chance for these students to meet with other students also at Crawford for summer courses, this year greater emphasis was put on one-on-one time with lecturers, smaller classes and content specifically designed to be useful to foster critical thinking and policy skills. In 2020, students were helped to write blogs. Six did and they were all published not only on the Devpolicy Blog but in PNG national papers. In summary, the Summer School gives the students a chance to network with students from around the globe (many also on scholarship from developing countries), gain confidence by meeting and talking with top level public servants and politicians from PNG and Australia, and benefit from access to world-class learning facilities and teaching at the ANU. It is also inexpensive, with non-staff costs only around \$100,000 for the entire event.

Staff exchanges. The project sponsored a number of visits of UPNG staff to attend conferences at ANU and USP. A number of ANU staff, not funded by the project, likewise visited UPNG for conferences and research. The number of UPNG visits was less than originally expected, but the attendance for conferences worked well, and it made sense for ANU staff to visit UPNG more often, given the geographical focus of the research.

6.4 Relationships and management

This was a complex project, but one that was well managed throughout.

ANU-SBPP relationship. The relationship remained strong throughout, supported by regular meetings and visits. It helped that the relationship preceded the project, but doubtless the project strengthened the relationship. Support at the VC level on both sides was useful, and the visit by CAP Dean to UPNG for the 2017 PNG Update was also a strong statement of support. A photographic exhibition to celebrate the ANU-UPNG partnership was prepared at ANU's expense, and displayed at

UPNG. The continuity provided by the two leadership positions of Dean, SBPP and Director, Development Policy Centre being unchanged over the project period no doubt helped.

Project management. Overall, the project was well managed. A junior lecturer in Moresby also took the role of Project Coordinator. The longest-serving academic on the team, Dr Manoj Pandey, was appointed Team Leader, and played a representational and leadership role. Initially two staff managed the project back in Canberra, but that was reduced to one, due to budget cuts and because the project had reached maturity. There was, however, certainly a lot to manage. There was no other similar project at the ANU (or any other Australian university) to draw on. Over the years, extensive guidelines and policies were developed in a range of areas from child protection to workload. Terms and conditions required extensive development. The high-risk environment that Port Moresby can represent certainly posed challenges that were far from academic, and risk management was a constant priority. The stresses and strains of family separation were another issue; equitable staff treatment a recurring concern. Financial management, from reporting in Canberra to setting up a petty cash system in Port Moresby, was another learning experience.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

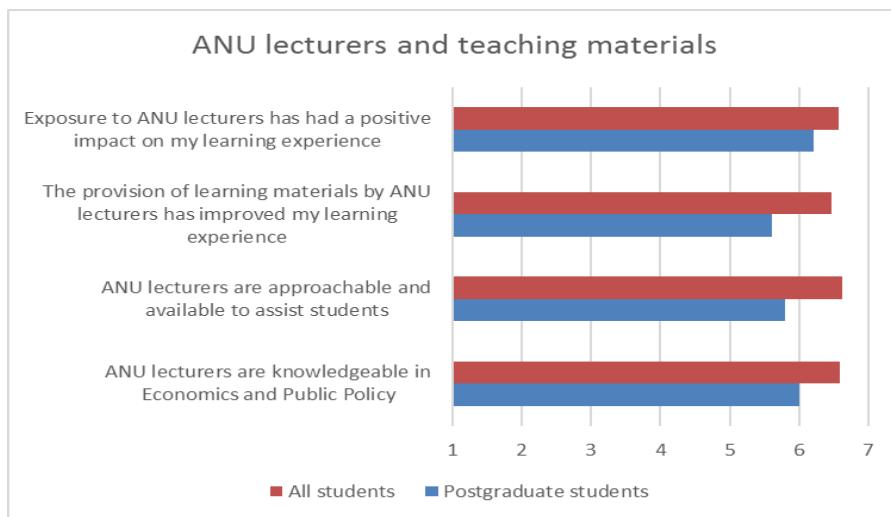
From the start, the project had built into it a number of M&E tools: staff and student surveys; evaluations of all courses and major events; the economics exam; and six-monthly performance reports and indicators.

Staff survey. A staff survey was conducted in late 2017 to assess views of UPNG staff towards the project (Annex D). 21 SBPP staff responded. On average, staff rated the overall effectiveness of the partnership at 4.3 out of 5. Strengthening teaching was rated as the greatest strength of the program, with a score of 4.4 out of 5, with strengthening research rated 4.1 out of 5, and strengthening outreach 4.0 out of 5. Examples of the positive feedback received are:

“Partnership has helped a lot to bring the economic division to a new level”

“There is a strong and healthy partnership arrangements in place with positive outcomes”

Student survey. Likewise, a student survey was also carried out in the second half of 2017 to capture the views of students (Annex E). Some 264 students responded, nearly all in a very positive way. Average scores on ANU lecturers and teaching materials are illustrated below.



Note: Scores out of a maximum of seven.

Typical comments included:

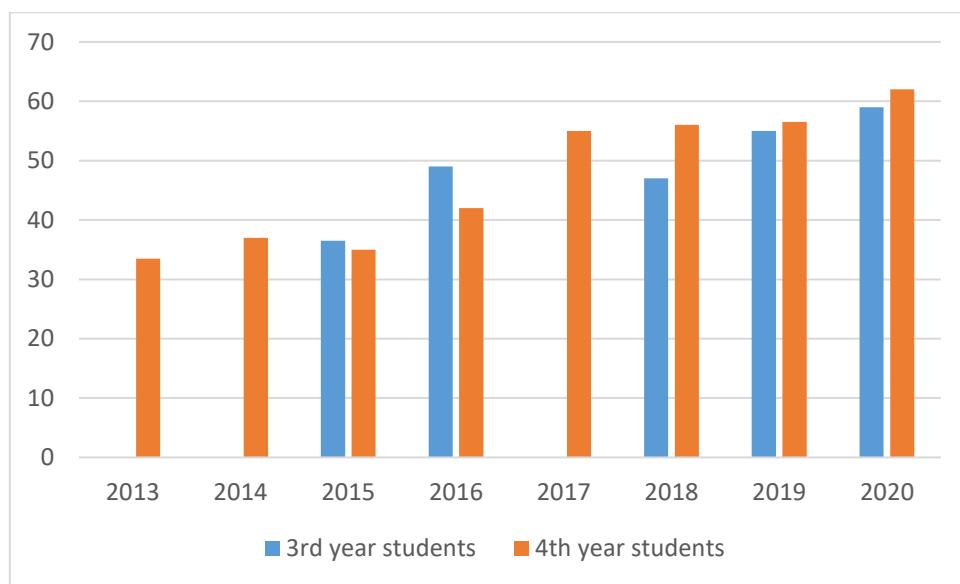
"When I first started in 2014, the Economics Division of the then SBA was understaffed and lacked adequate materials and resources. After the ANU-UPNG Partnership, I have been inspired to learn and excel in my studies. The courses taught and the materials and resources are quality and I have learnt a lot so far."

"More lecturers to teach at UPNG, not just at SBPP."

"The ANU-UPNG Partnership has really inspired me to appreciate public policy as a field of study, and most importantly the ANU lecturers are very knowledgeable about economic and public policy practices around the world and especially in Papua New Guinea. I am privileged to be taught by the ANU lecturers and would like to see the partnership continue."

Economics exam. Since 2013, ANU staff have conducted an economics exam for third and fourth year students. The standard of the exam has been kept constant over time. The latest exam report is attached as Annex F. In 2013, the typical student failed – badly. From 2017, the average student has passed, and the average continues to rise, albeit more slowly now after the initial rapid improvement.

Third and fourth year student median grade out of 100: 2013-2020



We are not aware of any other effort to measure improvements in learning outcomes from an aid-funded training or education program in PNG.

Course and other evaluations. All courses are evaluated by the students who take them. The results are excellent (see the next section and Annex G). Participant evaluations are also sought for all major workshops, conferences and the summer school. Detailed reports are available on request, but universally show outstanding results.

Reporting and monitoring. Reports were sent to DFAT every six months and published on the web for transparency with minimal alteration: see <https://devpolicy.crawford.anu.edu.au/png-project/anu-upng-partnership>. Progress reports use a traffic light system to indicate progress against annual targets.

Precinct evaluation. An external “strategic review” of the Precinct was undertaken in late 2018. It did not cover the ANU-UPNG partnership in detail but overall was positive about it, listing “High-quality learning; SBPP-UPNG-ANU partnership” as a strength of the Precinct. The entire evaluation is [available](#) on the DFAT website. The one criticism the evaluation made of ANU was the perceived need to move “from ANU ‘capacity substitution’ to greater ‘capacity development’.” Unfortunately, the ANU team was not provided with the opportunity to provide comments to the evaluators, so the error implicit in this advice remained uncorrected. This report has already noted that UPNG had tried and failed (more than once) to recruit locally. Since there was no existing capacity, it was impossible for the ANU lecturers to be capacity substituting.⁵ Moreover, the solution proposed by the evaluation “to increase the number of PNG lecturers at SBPP” is precisely the one embedded in the project from the start. Economics lecturer numbers have already increased by two thanks to the project and should have increased by up to four by the year after next.

Employer feedback. Positive feedback has been received from Treasury, BPNG and Nasfund on the improved quality of graduates as a result of the project.

Independent evaluation. An independent evaluation of the project was undertaken by a former senior Australian Treasury official, John Eyers, and a former World Bank Vice President, Jim Adams. It was finalised in September 2020, and [published](#) on the web. The evaluation is very positive about the project, finding that “[a]t 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.”

The evaluators were asked to assess the Project against the standard evaluative criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:

- **Relevance:** “In short, since this Project provides support of a kind which is vital for PNG’s future, it could not be more relevant.”
- **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.”

⁵ In this regard, it worked well that all lecturers were in visiting positions, meaning that they did not take up any slots that could be occupied by PNG lecturers.

Other findings and recommendations included the following

- "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 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."
- "[C]ontinuation of funding for the Project should be agreed as soon as possible so that its component activities can continue with a minimum of disruption."

The full evaluation [is available on the Devpolicy website.](#)

8. Project costs

Project costs up to the end of 2020 under the Palladium-Abt contract are summarised below. The original project was funded at \$9.034 million for three years (2016-2018, with a small amount of spending in 2015⁶). Due to significant cost savings, the original budget lasted to about mid 2020, and an additional \$1.02 million was provided to push the project out (at reduced size) to just over five years (to February 2022) increasing the total budget to \$10.054 million. Of this amount, \$9.840 million was spent (all figures excluding GST). Expenditure increased to 2017, when the project stabilised. Spending was reduced in 2020 in part due to a downsizing, and partly due to COVID-19.

⁶ Project costs were more substantial in 2015, but were covered separately (either by Palladium directly, or by the volunteer program).

Project costs (\$A)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL
Component 1 - Faculty Strengthening	8,283	460,550	869,597	867,288	887,120	925,188	139,535	4,157,561
Salary related	-	326,368	732,995	777,409	789,927	791,754	129,691	3,548,143
Travel related	1,466	51,962	30,677	26,606	49,857	33,735	-	194,302
Research and exchange costs	-	6,557	39,936	29,128	25,285	31,147	3,783	135,836
Other	6,817	75,663	65,989	34,142	22,051	68,552	6,061	279,275
Component 2 - Research and outreach	44,239	481,454	580,394	525,785	510,668	273,800	47,929	2,464,269
Salary related	42,930	297,549	334,013	358,278	352,515	263,166	47,712	1,696,164
Travel related	-	104,197	175,481	107,879	87,970	5,070	-	480,597
Research and exchange costs	1,308	76,367	144,241	58,834	70,099	5,536	126	356,511
Other	-	3,322	8,400	792	84	28	91	12,716
Component 3 - Student and faculty exchange	10,523	164,282	191,017	319,365	267,049	321,079	21,554	1,294,869
Salary related	5,590	124,671	-	-	-	-	-	130,260
Travel related	4,746	35,859	28,036	68,847	76,025	45,279	226	259,017
Research and exchange costs	-	3,753	162,981	248,103	190,766	276,103	21,328	903,034
Other	-	-	-	2,416	257	303	-	2,370
Component 4 - Partnership management	12,284	210,358	274,994	224,377	188,432	102,041	14,281	1,026,767
Salary related	12,211	191,257	260,307	209,264	178,921	105,420	14,281	971,660
Travel related	-	9,445	11,815	7,347	8,970	1,166	-	36,412
Research and exchange costs	-	6,755	2,802	120	364	1	-	10,042
Other	73	2,900	71	7,645	177	2,213	-	8,653
Overheads (10%)	-	246,636	84,702	222,490	195,413	147,717	-	896,958
Total	75,329	1,563,280	2,000,704	2,159,305	2,048,682	1,769,825	223,299	9,840,424

The biggest single cost component is the Moresby-based staff. They make up 42% of the project. 25% of the costs are taken up by research and outreach, and 13% by student and faculty exchange. The final 10% covers management costs, and overheads are 9%. As discussed under challenges, it should be noted that these costs exclude the extensive indirect costs of accommodation, transport and security for Moresby staff. They were covered by Abt, and Abt's estimate for the life of the project is \$2.162 million (this excludes Palladium support in the initial year of the project). Based on this the total project cost increases from \$9.6 million to \$12.0 million.

Finally, and importantly, the project excludes the contribution of the project directors (Professors Howes and Pillai), and the many other academics at both ANU and UPNG who gave their services for free. This leveraging is a critical if unquantifiable part of the project's success, and claim to represent value-for-money.

9. Project risks and challenges

Certainly, the project has faced various risks and challenges over the years.

Lack of university reform. Many of the constraints to SBPP performance are beyond the control of the School to address, and need university-wide change. [Hopes were high in 2013](#) that the university would undertake far-reaching reform, but, while some progress has been made in a few areas, overall it has been disappointing. UPNG is the only university in PNG to teach economics (and only one of two to teach public policy). It is too important to abandon, but it is also important to be realistic. The project was designed to and did make gains despite a lack of university reform, but there is no doubt much more could be achieved with broader reform.

High level of risk. The high level of risk implicit in a project like this became explicit with the university shutdown and protests of 2016, and the staff strike of 2019, not to mention the pandemic of 2020. The adaptive, flexible approach taken from the start was the best way to respond.

Costs. The project's ability to leverage resources so that many people are working on it without payment contributes to its value-for-money. Academics also get paid a lot less than advisers, and no additional top-up premia were provided to Port Moresby staff. At the same time, Port Moresby is not a cheap place to base expatriates. Major costs borne by Palladium/Abt rather than the project itself are the provision of accommodation, transport and security for staff. The recent successful experience with remote teaching during the pandemic suggests that the project could be continued with more staff based in Canberra and fewer in Port Moresby. The personal contact is still vital. Some staff would need to be permanently based in POM, and others would need to visit. But major cost savings would be possible.

Gender imbalance. Despite considerable effort, recruiting females to work in Port Moresby has not been easy, and only for one year have two female staff been based in Port Moresby; mainly it has been one. The student composition has also been skewed towards males. Responses to these challenges have included in the following: (i) enforcing gender equity wherever possible (with gender quotas for the summer school and MEPP scholarships); (ii) encouraging female students to [speak out](#); (iii) making gender a research and PNG Update focus; (iv) sponsoring a high-level lecture by Rosie Batty, a prominent campaigner against domestic-violence; and (v) mainstreaming gender issues into lectures and research. Good progress has been made (see the graph on p.10 showing the increase in female speakers at the PNG Update), but more needs to be done.

Staff turnover. The project philosophy stressed the importance of staff continuity to achieve results. 10 staff have filled the (roughly) five UPNG lecturer positions over a six-year period, a reasonable outcome. The fact that one of the Moresby staff has been in position for the full 2016 to 2020 project period has certainly helped with continuity and relationships. Things working against staff continuity included: staff concerns about the project ending, and consequent desire to find a job, and family difficulties in relation to living in Port Moresby. Canberra-based staff provided a lot of continuity, with only one Canberra-based researcher leaving over the entire period. A number of project staff – Rohan Fox, Manoj Pandey, Michelle Rooney, Grant Walton, Terence Wood, Ashlee Betteridge – all joined the Centre in 2015 or earlier and are still there today. At the leadership level, continuity was ensured by the partnership directors, Professors Howes and Pillai, being in position throughout.

Sustainability. Sustainability was an objective of the project from the start, and the strategy is now showing results with two new economics lecturers in place at UPNG. That said, the project was always designed and presented as a multi-decadal one and there is no doubt that, if there is not a second phase, project sustainability will be at risk. While the partnership itself would continue, termination of funding would mean the Masters of Economic and Public Policy would probably collapse, that there would be no more summer schools, and that the future of the PNG Update would be in doubt. It would also be premature to hand over to a very young and inexperienced economics faculty at this stage. All are highly employable elsewhere, and, as earlier experience shows, would easily find jobs elsewhere. Without the support of ANU staff for a few more years, they might well leave for less stressful and better paid jobs.

10. Lessons learnt and conclusion

Given the near monopoly UPNG holds in the area of economics and public policy, and the importance of these two disciplines for supporting policy reform, the Australian government's decision to scale up the pre-existing ANU-UPNG partnership in the areas of economics and public policy was certainly well-founded. It has also delivered overwhelmingly positive results.

The ANU-UPNG partnership has been highly successful between 2015 and 2020. Its successes range from excellent teaching of undergraduates and postgraduates, to faculty rejuvenation, to the promotion of policy discussion and advice, to extensive research and outreach. Collaboration between UPNG and ANU with funding from the Australian government has succeeded in lifting not only the quality of teaching in economics and public policy in PNG, but also the quality of public discourse.

A number of general lessons can be learnt from the experience of the project

- In a high risk environment, an adaptive approach is required.
- Projects should seek to diversify a mix of tangible outputs (e.g. teaching) and intangible outputs (e.g. mentoring).
- Aid works best when project build on underlying relationships and pre-existing initiatives. Aid implementors should be required to have skin in the game. Specifically, not all costs should be paid for by the donor.
- Even when a project builds in sustainability from the start, a long-term (multi-decade) approach is needed.

With a second phase of the project now to run to at least 2023 and perhaps 2025, the sustainability of project achievements is now more likely. We look forward to an exciting and productive second phase of this ANU-UPNG partnership.