PNG debates: advisers and the economy

Papua New Guinea has been in the headlines in Australia in recent weeks for two reasons.

First, there was the surprise announcement that PNG wanted donors to fund positions directly in the government, rather than sending advisers. Stephen Howes unpacks the history behind this position, and adds his own support to it, arguing that “aid-funded personnel would be more productive if in-line”.

Second, PNG Treasury released its Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook for 2015, writing down revenue budget projections by 20% to below 2014 levels, and projecting a 9% deficit if expenditures are not cut. You can read Paul Flanagan’s analysis of these “frightening figures” here.

SDGs and heartache

What do the Sustainable Development Goals have in common with country music? A lot apparently, if our latest blogs are anything to go by. Terence Wood warns that the SDGs are complicated, and might just break your heart. Benjamin Day looks to Kenny Rogers for advice, arguing that the key to success for the SDGs will be “knowin’ what to throw away / And knowin’ what to keep”. But Joy Kyriacou argues that just like Taylor Swift’s evolution from Nashville country to New York pop, the SDGs are the MDGs, but more grown up.

Focusing on financing

With the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa now over, its time to take stock of the outcomes.

Ewen McDonald of DFAT and Jonathan Kings of MFAT in NZ – the two most senior aid officials in their respective countries – argue that Addis will be of particular benefit to the small island developing states in the Pacific and elsewhere.

Robin Davies takes a more sceptical look at two claims commonly made in the lead-up to Addis: that there have been falls in aid to both the Least Developed Countries and to countries graduating from low income status. Both claims appear in the conference’s negotiated outcome document and in various other places. It turns out that neither is true. You can read Robin’s unfolding critique here and here, with more to come.

Registrations open for 2016 Australasian Aid Conference

Registrations for the 2016 Australasian Aid Conference, to be held on 10-11 February, are now open. The conference has been a sell-out in previous years, and early bird pricing will only be available until 10 November. Our call for papers is still open until 15 October, with more details available here.
PNG quantitative skills workshop

In the latest collaboration between ANU Crawford School of Public Policy and the University of Papua New Guinea, a two-day Quantitative Methods Workshop was held on 29-30 July in Port Moresby.

Led by Devpolicy’s Anthony Swan, 27 participants from a wide range of government institutions – UPNG, the Department of Education, the National Statistics Office, the Bank of PNG, and the National Research Institute – worked hard to master the statistical intricacies of Excel and STATA.

The workshop, supported by the Australian aid program, was designed to help increase the capacity of researchers in PNG to utilise quantitative methods in their research and policy analysis.

Out of the rubble: recovering from the Nepalese earthquake

On Thursday 27 August, World Vision Nepal’s National Director Liz Satow will share her experience of the 2015 earthquakes and how World Vision has been working with communities, the Government, and other NGOs to restore services. Register here.

Progress report

Our progress report for the first half of 2015 is now available on our website—see how the Centre has been tracking in what has already been a busy year.

Events

Out of the rubble: recovering from the Nepalese earthquake

2016 Australasian Aid Conference
10-11 February 2016. Call for papers and registrations now open. Details here.

Blog highlights

Not just a recipient: James Batley looks at PNG’s aid

Robert Bestani argues the AIIB is not worth the hype

Debunking The Australian on refugee claims

On the blog
Two dogmas of development financing: aid to the Least Developed Countries by Robin Davies

Indigenous peoples in development policy and development in indigenous affairs by Janet Hunt

Shake it off: the SDGs grew up and got out of Nashville by Joy Kyriacou

Papua New Guinea’s aid program in the region by James Batley

AllIB: much ado about very little by Robert Bestani

From Addis to the Pacific: financing for development in small island developing states by Ewen McDonald and Jonathan Kings

Two dogmas of development financing: on the aid receipts of least-developed and transition countries by Robin Davies

Shifting in-line in Papua New Guinea by Stephen Howes

PNG’s frightening fiscal figures by Paul Flanagan

The SDGs, Kenny Rogers and making choices by Benjamin Day

Why the SDGs will break your heart by Terence Wood

In brief

Weekend links: W. Arthur Lewis remembered, Worm Wars redux, don’t worry be happy, and more...

Solomon Islands Election Results Database

Pulling our weight on refugees? Nope, nope, nope

Weekend links: the Middle East, FAO debate, the private sector, and more...

PNG researchers boost quantitative skills in Moresby workshop

This is the fortnightly newsletter of the Development Policy Centre at Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University, published every second Friday.