Budget: fourth aid cut in a row

Another year, another cut to the aid budget. Stephen Howes writes that this year’s budget gave aid its fourth real cut in a row, with a reduction of 7.5% after inflation. The reduction over four years is 30%. As a result, Australia’s generosity index (aid/GNI) will hit a record low of 0.23% in 2016-17. There have also been big changes in sectoral allocations in recent years, with large cuts to health and education funding.

Matthew Dornan examines country allocations, noting that they bear no relation to the performance of aid in those countries, with funding instead distributed in a way that is reminiscent of the period before the aid scale-up. Tony Swan gives us the macro picture, highlighting the lack of budget repair, and the implications for aid. Paul Flanagan writes that we are down to giving only two-thirds of a cup of coffee a week in our support for the world’s poor. And Robin Davies points to the shift away from country programming.

Our analysis has also popped up in a few other places – listen to Stephen Howes chat to Fran Kelly or Pacific Beat, or read Robin Davies on our sinking rankings on The Conversation.

Again we had strong interest in our annual aid budget breakfast event with around 130 people joining us here in Canberra, and a further 200 on the livestream. You can catch up on the event here.

And our Australian Aid Tracker is all up to date with the new numbers from this year’s budget – check it out and share.

PNG Update program now available

The draft program for the PNG Update is now available here. The Update will be on 16-17 June, and will feature more than 50 presentations over some 18 panel and keynote sessions. With topics from the macroeconomy to urban spaces, gender equality to the drought, and public-private partnerships to development strategies, don’t miss out on PNG’s premier forum for contemporary economic and policy analysis.

Event: New approaches to tackling gender-based violence in Papua New Guinea

While much is said about the levels of violence in PNG, less is heard about important work being done to
address this pervasive issue. At an event on Thursday 19 May (12.30pm, Barton Theatre), a panel of exceptional Papua New Guinean leaders from government, civil society and the private sector will discuss new approaches. The event, co-hosted with the Lowy Institute, will include Anna Solomon, Secretary of the Department of Community Development; Denga Ilave, Operations Manager for Femili PNG; and Kymberly Kepore, CEO of Oil Search Foundation. Register here for what promises to be a fascinating discussion.

**Speakers from Unitech in Canberra on PNG tax and tertiary reforms**

On Wednesday 18 May we feature two eminent Papua New Guinean speakers. First, from 3-4pm the head of the recent Independent Tax Review of PNG, Sir Nagora Bogan (also the Chancellor of Unitech) will speak on tax reform and the challenge of economic diversification in PNG. Then, after a tea break, from 4.15pm to 5.15pm the Unitech Vice-Chancellor Dr Albert Schram will speak on Unitech’s experience and tertiary reform in PNG. You need to register for both events separately: here and here.

**Pacific labour mobility research workshop**

A workshop on Thursday 2 June will present a range of new policy-relevant research on Pacific labour mobility for review and discussion. Research will cover topics such as skill profiles and employment outcomes of Pacific migrants to Australia and NZ, opportunities in aged or disability care, a comparison of seasonal worker programs, the experience of Timor-Leste in sending unskilled labour to South Korea, Kiribati and Tuvalu migration scenarios and the need for national skill strategies in the Pacific. The draft program is available here. Places are limited. If you are interested in attending, please send an expression of interest to Richard Curtain on richard.curtain@anu.edu.au by 20 May.

**Upcoming events**

*Economic diversification and tax reform in Papua New Guinea*
Wednesday 18 May, 3pm, Brindabella Theatre. Register here.

*University reform in Papua New Guinea: the Unitech experience*
Wednesday 18 May, 4.15pm, Brindabella Theatre. Register here.

*New approaches to tackling gender-based violence in Papua New Guinea*
Thursday 19 May, 12pm, Barton Theatre. Register here.

*2016 PNG Update*
16-17 June, University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby. Details here.

*2016 Pacific Update*
18-19 July, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. Details here.

**Blog highlights**

PNG’s family and sexual violence units ‘ghettoised’ within police

On PNG’s court ruling against Manus detention centre

Vanuatu runway update

Diabetes: a global and Pacific problem

On the blog

Jackson’s last gasp: bilateral aid in Australia’s 2016 budget by Robin Davies
The budget repair that wasn’t: implications for the aid budget by Anthony Swan

Scaled down. The last of the aid cuts? By Stephen Howes

Continuity with change: country allocations in the 2016-17 budget by Matthew Dornan

Health and education bear the brunt of the last budget’s aid cuts; governance spared by Stephen Howes

The importance of developing new and improved vaccines by Mark Rice

Linking up buyers and sellers in urban spaces: a 2016 Hult Prize challenge proposal by Arjuna Mohottala

PNG Supreme Court ruling on Manus island detention centre by Bal Kama

Diabetes and development: the numbers, the costs and the response by Ian Anderson

Are PNG’s family and sexual violence police units working? By Ashlee Betteridge

In brief

Fortnightly links: future of aid, ethical fashion, incentives, Nepal aftermath, and water ATMs

The way we were: mean and meaner still

ANU-UPNG partnership update: commencement of 3-year training program and other highlights

Pacific islanders in PNG’s construction industry: PAILS Forum 2016

An update on Vanuatu’s runway

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