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Multiple objectives for scholarships and aid

This chapter focuses on a raft of scholarships that emerged from the late 1990s and across the 2000s. These awards were primarily based around what will be termed the ‘anchor’ award, the Australian Development Scholarships (ADS). The ADS was created in 1998, coming out of the Australian Development Cooperation Scholarship (ADCOS) and Australian Sponsored Training Assistance (ASTAS) schemes discussed in the previous chapter.

This chapter examines developments in Australian development scholarships over the 12 years following the introduction of the ADS, up until 2010. The period this chapter covers also marked the introduction of a new regional educational institution, the Australia Pacific Training College, announced by the Howard Government in 2006. The college, based in Fiji, was designed to deliver vocational training and qualifications to fill skills gaps in the Pacific region.

The aid bureaucracy through which these scholarships were managed also remained relatively stable across the turn of the century and into the beginning of the new millennium. This is in part due to the continuity of government across the period, with John Howard elected as prime minister in 1996, and his Coalition Government remaining in place until 2007. The Australian Aid Agency (AusAID) was for the most part an entity of its own, within the portfolio of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). In 2010 it was created as an executive agency, still within the DFAT portfolio, but with a measure of greater independence. Reforms were introduced in relation to scholarship management over a period

from 1995 to 1997, prior to the ‘creation’ of the ADS that affected the administration of scholarships, which included the introduction of contracts for educational institutions in an effort to provide a minimum level of service to the students.

While the aid bureaucracy may have been relatively calm over the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, Australia’s role in the Pacific was changing. The election of the Howard Government in 1996 ended a long period of Labor rule, and began more than a decade of Coalition Government. In 1999, after Timor-Leste voted to become independent from Indonesia, Australia led a United Nations peacekeeping force to protect the people of Timor-Leste from the departing Indonesian military and militia. This became the first of Australia’s forays into Pacific regional security under Prime Minister Howard. In 2003, unrest in the Solomon Islands, and encouragement from US President George W Bush led to Prime Minister Howard ‘signalling that he wants to be the region’s policeman, promoting Australia as a “long-term guardian” which would take a more “interventionist” role’.¹ As part of its responsibilities as ‘Deputy Sheriff in the Pacific’,² Australia led the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), which began in 2003. A coup in Fiji in 2006 heightened a sense of an unstable political environment in the South Pacific. The end of the Cold War had changed the dynamics of aid and foreign policy for nations across the Pacific. But the rise of Al Qaeda, particularly after the September 11 attacks in New York, and a focus on the threat and risk of Islamic extremism coloured aid, foreign affairs and security considerations for the Howard Government across the world, including the Pacific. Fear of the potential chaos created by political and social instability governed the behaviour of the Australian Government. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer noted in a speech in 2006 that:

since September 11, 2001 we have come to face a new challenge for national and international security ... The September 11 attacks changed the way we think about weak states and their possible effect on international security.³

1 Alex Spillius, ‘Bush Entrusts “Deputy Sheriff” Howard with Pacific Policing Role’, *The Telegraph*, 15 August 2003.

2 Spillius, ‘Bush Entrusts “Deputy Sheriff” Howard’.

3 Alexander Downer, ‘Inaugural Lecture on National and International Security: 16 May 2006, Wollongong’, 2006, webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20060601232535/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/25167/20060602-0000/www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2006/060516_national_international_security.html, accessed 28 July 2020.

He used this same speech to frame Australia's role in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste (along with Afghanistan and Iraq) as nation-building conducted by Australia, saying the RAMSI mission 'marked a new willingness of the Government to become more actively engaged in nation building in the Pacific'.⁴ This more interventionist approach played out not only in peacekeeping and policing, but also in the provision of scholarships, as is demonstrated throughout this chapter.

In this chapter it is not possible to use the archival sources that have been a feature of previous parts of this book. The timeframes involved preclude the use of government archival documentation. Nevertheless, it is possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation through other sources, including audit reports, publicly released reports, and internal documents released under a freedom of information process. A close reading of these documents, particularly with the knowledge of the schemes that preceded those addressed in this chapter, can provide significant insight.

Another useful source to understand the attitude and understanding of both the Commonwealth government, and many of those Australians working in the Pacific Island states, are two Senate inquiries. The first, an Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Papua New Guinea and other Pacific Island Countries was tabled in August 2003 and received 87 submissions from government departments, non-government organisations, unions, churches, individuals, research organisations and businesses. The second inquiry was in 2009, this time into the security and economic challenges facing Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the south-west Pacific. The range of submissions from across the community provides a useful insight into Australia's sense of itself in relation to the Pacific at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The second round of submissions also allows for a greater understanding of how much of Australia's policy had changed (or not) in the intervening six years.

This chapter investigates the ADS and what role it played in Australian foreign policy and foreign aid at the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. The program had become more rigidly focused on priority areas of study, and focused on measurable outcomes. The number of sub-awards specifically focused on certain areas was a feature of this period, and much of this chapter is shaped around those awards and the way in which they represent the priorities of the Australian Government,

4 Downer, 'Inaugural Lecture on National and International Security'.

signals of the intentions of broader aid and foreign policy. This included a growing focus on security and anti-terrorism measures, and concern about the capacity of small states to manage the risks the Australian Government saw as acute.

Over this decade the desire to measure outcomes was not restricted to the scholarship component of aid and became an intrinsic part of all aid delivery. This, along with government priorities and a focus on governance and security, had significant impact on the way the scholarship programs were implemented across the world, and in the Pacific specifically.

This period also marked an effort on behalf of the Australian and New Zealand governments to work collaboratively on scholarship implementation. Australia's support for Pacific regional scholarships continued over the period, and is examined in more detail in this chapter.

Many nations within the Pacific, and other donors, had scholarships of their own to offer during this period. An Australian and New Zealand review of scholarship provision in the Pacific (which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter) also included a 'competitor scan' of major donors offering scholarships in the Pacific.⁵ Two of the larger donors across the decade from 2000 include China and Taiwan, who used aid and scholarships as part of a long-running effort to gain recognition in global forums such as the United Nations. In 2007/08 it was estimated that China offered between nine and 20 long-term awards per country to a number of Pacific nations including Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, PNG, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji and the Cook Islands. In 2009 they also began offering a small number of regional scholarships through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.⁶ Over the same period, Taiwan offered approximately 60 awards across the Pacific, but in 2001 it established a scholarships scheme in collaboration with the Pacific Island Forum, the Forum Islands Scholarship Scheme, which offered scholarships for study in Taiwan and in regional universities.⁷ Taiwan also gave the Solomon Islands Government funding to create the Taiwan Solomon Islands Government National and Overseas

5 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review, Final Draft Report* (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Aus), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ), 2010).

6 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review.*

7 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review.*

Training and Education Awards, which subsidised the existing Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development budget, providing scholarships for Solomon Islanders to study in regional universities.⁸

Cuba was also a large donor in the region with scholarships focused on health training. Between 2006 and 2010 the Cuban Government offered 400 Cuban Government Medicine Scholarships in the Pacific, although not all of those had been taken up by 2010.⁹ The scholarships were part of a broader aid effort by Cuba dating back to the socialist regime that took power in 1959. By the 2000s, medical training was being provided to students from a number of developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.¹⁰

There were also scholarships offered by Japan, the UK, Germany, Canada, Netherlands, France, the EU, Norway and the USA. But these scholarships were estimated to be between only 100 and 200 scholarships per year in the Pacific region.¹¹

Scholarships were also offered by the governments of the Pacific Island countries themselves. The Fijian Government had three main scholarship programs on offer (in 2008) for study in Fiji, but only one scheme, the Fijian Affairs Scholarship, for which only iTaukei Fijians were eligible, allowed for study outside of Fiji.¹² The Solomon Islands Government also had a scholarship scheme, in part funded by the Taiwanese Government.

The 12 years covered by this chapter was also a period of time wherein the focus of the global aid and development sector was trained on donor harmonisation and aid effectiveness. Via the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, signed in 2005, and the Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Cooperation in the Pacific of 2009, successive Australian governments committed to these concepts. Harmonisation between Australian and New Zealand scholarships, particularly the Regional Development Scholarships, was possible to achieve without significant issues, as is discussed later in this chapter. But cooperation with other donors, such as Cuba, China and Taiwan, was less straightforward. The role

8 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 7.

9 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*.

10 Sabine Lehr, 'Cuba's Scholarship Tradition: The Perspective from Ghana', *NORRAG News* 45 (April 2011): 89–91, www.researchgate.net/publication/256375092, accessed 24 April 2023.

11 'Submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade by the Acting Fiji High Commissioner to Australia: Mr Kamlesh Kumar Arya' (Canberra: 2008), 9.

12 'Submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade by the Acting Fiji High Commissioner to Australia: Mr Kamlesh Kumar Arya', 9.

of partner governments in the awarding and management of scholarships was linked to the concept of harmonisation. The Australian Government accepted that the partner governments would have a significant role in the 'public' category of scholarships – those awarded to public servants – but was unwilling to hand over control when it came to the 'open' category. A report published in 2010 noted that this was 'particularly important ... where there have been concerns over PG [partner government] agency resourcing or their capacity to manage merit-based and transparent pre-award processes'.¹³ The Australian Government was not prepared to transfer responsibility of scholarships to governments in the Pacific, because it felt it could not trust the processes for the awarding of these scholarships. It was couched in the terms that these governments were not 'ready' for the responsibility of scholarship ownership, but the underlying distrust remained.

The push to make universities more responsible for the support and management of all international students, and sponsored students particularly, played out in a number of ways in the late 1990s. In 1995 a series of reforms intended to make the scholarship program more efficient were introduced, although not fully implemented until 1997. As part of these reforms, a select group of universities and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges were contracted by AusAID to host scholarship students. These institutions were across the country, and covered a number of different types of institutions, not just the high-prestige Group of Eight institutions. This limited approach allowed AusAID to work closely with a smaller number of institutions, building relationships with teaching, welfare and support staff.

A review of the ADCOS program in 1995 had led to yet another scholarship scheme proposal. At that point, this was the fourth scheme (or at least the fourth name for a similar scheme) within less than a decade. This scheme, the Australian Development Scholarship Scheme (ADS) was approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, in 1996. It was expected that this 'new' scheme would 'would deliver more effective scholarship assistance and realise some cost savings'.¹⁴ Maintaining an important element of the Equity and Merit Scholarship Scheme (EMSS), the ADS scheme also required Australian involvement in the selection of awardees.

13 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 31.

14 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, Audit Report No. 15 1999–2000 (Canberra: Australian National Audit Office, 1999), 41.

The ADS was introduced formally in 1998. It replaced two schemes, the ASTAS and the ADCOS, as discussed in the previous chapter. The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) reviewed the management of the ADS scheme in 1999.¹⁵ This audit report provided a useful overview of the scholarship program administration from the very beginning of a particular iteration of ADS, with later reviews providing information about how the program was implemented over the following decade.

The 1999 audit is of note, because the scheme it addresses, the ADS, only formally commenced in the academic year of 1998. However, given the ADS was an iteration of schemes in place since the introduction of the EMSS, it was possible to audit the overall scholarship operations of AusAID. While there is some specific data available in the audit reports, the documents also provided insights into the process of scholarship implementation prior to the design of the ADS, and the process of the introduction of the ADS. It is clear from this report that the introduction of the ADS was not the result of a comprehensive and detailed 'new' scholarship design, but could be more accurately described as a rebranding exercise. For example, the 1999 ANAO report noted that in relation to the benefits paid to students (stipend and other financial support), there had 'not been an in-depth review of the benefits structure since it was implemented some years ago, before the ADS scheme came into existence'.¹⁶ This indicates that when the ADS scheme was designed, there was no expectation that the benefits to be paid to students would be changed from those already being paid to students under the scholarship scheme at the time. This further supports the contention that following the introduction of the EMSS, itself an entirely different scheme to those that existed before it, there was little wholesale redesign of the 'new' scholarships introduced, rather small iterative changes made to the scheme and the introduction of a new name.

The 1999 audit reported that there were 3,700 ADS students at the time of audit, and the program cost '\$128 million in 1997–98'.¹⁷ The summary of the report condensed the scholarship process into one dot point:

Applicants compete for ADS awards through annual selection processes conducted in their home countries. Students receive stipends and have their academic fees paid by AusAID. They are expected to complete their studies in minimum time, return home

¹⁵ *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 41.

¹⁶ *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 52.

¹⁷ *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 12.

and apply their qualifications to contribute to their country's development. Each scholarship costs about \$100 000 over the award period.¹⁸

The ANAO concluded that the ADS scheme was administratively, 'a substantial improvement on those that existed for previous scholarship schemes',¹⁹ with better arrangements with educational institutions and partner governments. The report also called for the ADS to be even more aligned with the needs of partner governments, representing a decisive shift from the 'open to all' approach of the EMSS.

As had been mooted in almost every review of the various scholarship schemes over previous decades, the ADS scheme was intended to be more closely connected with the bilateral aid program, aligning with the needs of partner governments more than previous scholarship schemes. The ADS design stipulated 'high Australian involvement in student selection'.²⁰ In these ways, the scheme was adopting elements of the EMSS and its subsequent schemes to best fit the needs of the Australian Government at the time. An understanding of the difficulties experienced by the Australian Government after the implementation of the EMSS can be seen in the way in which the ADS was formed, and what elements of the scheme were considered important.

From the ANAO report it is possible to see the issues that the designers of the scholarship programs were attempting to address. While a large proportion of students completed their studies and returned home, '10 per cent of students assisted under scholarship schemes from 1987–88 to 1996–97 discontinued their studies and another two per cent did not return home'.²¹ This was a significant issue for students coming from South Pacific nations. In the 1996–97 period assessed by the audit report, nearly 30 per cent of Tongan students discontinued their studies or failed to return home after their scholarship concluded. Western Samoa and Vanuatu were both over 25 per cent, and PNG, Fiji and the Solomon Islands were all well over the scholarship program average of 12 per cent.²² While these statistics clearly indicated issues with a number of the country program scholarship schemes, they were not at the rate of the domestic student population,

18 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 12.

19 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 13.

20 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 14.

21 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 17.

22 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 59.

where a dropout rate of 40 per cent was estimated. AusAID believed that stricter selection processes would work to reduce the number of students who did not complete their course of study, or failed to return home after their award. AusAID also introduced other policies in an attempt to compel students to complete and return home. Students began incurring a debt to the Commonwealth if they failed to return home (or leave Australia) after the completion of their scholarship.

As an external review of the scholarship program, rather than an internal or AusAID commissioned review as most previous reviews had been, the ANAO report had a different lens. It hinted at the unspoken element of scholarships, the desired outcomes outside of those 'development' outcomes expected and the way in which the scheme was being manipulated by various stakeholders. It noted that there was not sufficient evidence to support the allocations between open and public sector awards in many countries. It also noted that in one country, 'almost 80 per cent of students were studying for undergraduate degrees' despite the human resource development plan of that nation not reflecting a need for undergraduate training.²³

The outsider view, however, was not always helpful, as some elements of the review failed to comprehend the complexity that multiple country programs presented. Each country program had its own version of the selection process, which was criticised by the ANAO but reflective of the needs expressed in the design of the EMSS and subsequent schemes where flexibility to meet individual country needs was considered important.

Understanding the scale of the scholarship program, in a financial context, was analysed as an overall figure (\$128 million as noted above) but also as a proportion of each bilateral program. Because of the shift, over the course of the 1990s, to a scholarship scheme more integrated into country programs, this figure demonstrated how much of the bilateral aid relationship was committed to scholarships. In 1997–98, the scholarship program only represented 6 per cent of the funding committed to PNG, whereas it was 35 per cent of the commitment to Fiji.²⁴

In student numbers, the first year of the ADS (1998) represented a diverse cohort of students from across 50 countries. There were 403 students from PNG, representing 11 per cent of the total cohort and 188 from

23 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 19.

24 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 34.

Fiji (5 per cent). The largest single cohort was from Indonesia, with 666 students.²⁵ The gender balance of that 1998 cohort, 43 per cent female and 57 per cent male, was far more even than the balance of the 1980s, although still not equal.

One other key change to scholarship management implemented over the course of the 1990s reflected a shift that had taken place over the aid program across the previous decades. Two of the major scholarship programs, Indonesia and PNG, were both partially outsourced to managing contractors. This outsourcing moved much of the responsibility for selection and placement of the students to a third party. With the concurrent move of student support to educational institutions, AusAID was divesting itself of the day-to-day management of the scholarship program, ostensibly to focus on the strategic direction of the program.

The AusAID response to the 1999 ANAO report was broadly positive. AusAID responded that the ‘benefits students derive from studying in Australia under the scheme are difficult to quantify’²⁶ but claimed that it was accepted by AusAID, and the World Bank, that the ‘scheme makes a substantial contribution to domestic governance in partner countries as many of these individuals take up positions in central government agencies, civil society and businesses’.²⁷ This ‘acceptance’ of impact, without quantitative or qualitative evidence was considered acceptable to both the Australian Government and many other scholarship administrators during this period. As subsequent reviews demonstrate, as the ADS continued and the quest to justify all and any taxpayer funding became more intense, the Australian Government was required to seek more concrete answers to the questions of ‘impact’ that scholarship schemes raised.

While the ANAO audit report went into great detail about the scholarship scheme in its first year, it also offered an outsider view of the implementation of scholarships. It was clear from the report that the scholarship was not being implemented according to the design in a number of different recipient countries. Certain country programs were able to implement elements of the ADS scholarship in different ways, and there was much that went unspoken and undocumented when it came to both the development impact and effectiveness, and the ‘needs’ of the partner governments. It was difficult

25 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 37.

26 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 13.

27 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 13.

to ensure that a scheme as large as this (across 50 countries) was applied uniformly and it is clear that politics played a part in decision-making. It was also not in the best interests of each of the bilateral relationships that it was implemented uniformly.

It is perhaps this quest for specificity and relevance that led to a proliferation of scholarship schemes over the 2000s – each specifically shaped around a foreign or domestic policy concern of the Australian Government. Discussion of these schemes and their varied (but similar) natures takes up much space in an internal review commissioned by AusAID in 2008. The review was conducted by Margaret Gosling, who had significant experience managing AusAID scholarship programs both in Australia and overseas. She was a long-time Team Leader in the ADS East Timor program.

Part One of the Scholarship Effectiveness Review by Gosling notes that in 2007/08 there were 27 scholarship schemes being administered by AusAID,²⁸ over a total of 36 countries, including 10 in the Pacific. By 2008 a large majority of students were undertaking Masters-level study. Students were still required, as was recommended in the Fraser Government in the 1970s, to return home for two years following completion of their study program. While the spirit of the scholarship program was to encourage students to return home and contribute to development, in fact the Australian Government could only prevent students from returning to Australia for those two years, thus there was no restriction on students working or living in a third country. In practice, this occurred more often in smaller nations in the Pacific where there were fewer job opportunities.

An Annex to the Scholarship Review lists the major scholarship programs as being the ADS, Australian Leadership Awards (ALAs), Allison Sudradjat Awards, Australian Regional Development Scholarships (ARDS), Carnegie Mellon University Awards,²⁹ Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention Scholarships, Australia–IMF Scholarship Program for Asia, ACIAR John Allwright Scholarships and Australian Pacific Technical College Scholarships.³⁰ This list of scholarships demonstrates the use (arguably

28 *Management of the Australian Development Scholarships Scheme*, 13.

29 The description of the Carnegie Mellon Awards is revealing, demonstrating another example of the scholarship program being used for political aims. The program was introduced by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, and guaranteed 20 ADS scholars to the newly opened Australian campus of the US Carnegie Mellon University, over a period of four years. This represents a considerable investment by the Commonwealth Government in the activities of a foreign university opening in Australia. No students from the Pacific were part of the scheme.

30 'Annexe Two: Outline of Major Programs by Scheme' (Canberra: AusAID, 2008).

overuse) of scholarships for similar aims. The ALAs were introduced to add a level of prestige to the standard ADS program, and the Allison Sudradjat Awards were part of the ADS Indonesia program, and were selected from those already awarded an ALA scholarship, in memory of an AusAID staff member who had been killed in a plane crash in Indonesia. A significant program not included in this extensive list is the Australian Partnership Scholarship program, which was a scholarship for Indonesian students and was funded as part of a massive tranche of aid promised by Prime Minister Howard after the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004.³¹ The proliferation of subcategories, and other very specific scholarships with very small numbers created more administrative difficulties than it solved. Nevertheless, by this proliferation it is possible to gain insights into the thinking of AusAID and the Howard and Rudd governments at the time.

The 2003 Senate Inquiry into Australia's relationship with PNG and Pacific Island countries had simple terms of references. The inquiry sought to understand these relationships in political, economic and development terms, and what implications they had for Australia.³²

The inquiry was convened before Australia committed to the RAMSI mission,³³ which is discussed in more detail shortly, and Australia's relationship with the South Pacific was largely focused on aid and development. Nevertheless, the title of the committee's report provides an interesting insight into the committee's understanding of the status of the relationships between Australia and Pacific Island countries: *A Pacific Engaged* allows the reader to decide if that title is indicative of Australia's future, current or historical relationship with the South Pacific. The committee's report noted that the one common understanding that came from their own investigation, and the submissions received, was that 'Australia has an obligation to assist the Pacific states to protect their security and stimulate their economies'.³⁴ This obligation came not only from colonial ties, but also from a growing sense that the security situation of the South Pacific was deteriorating. In a speech to the Menzies Research Centre in February 2003, Australian journalist and author Graeme Dobell, said that while 'the

31 Rizal Sukma, 'Indonesia and the Tsunami: Responses and Foreign Policy Implications', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 2 (June 2006): 213–28, doi.org/10.1080/10357710600696142.

32 Defence and Trade Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, ed., *A Pacific Engaged: Australia's Relations with Papua New Guinea and the Island States of the Southwest Pacific* (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2003), 1.

33 Which led to a strong security focus on Australia's political relationships in the Pacific.

34 Defence and Trade Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A Pacific Engaged*, 8.

“arc of instability” started off as a polite way to refer to Indonesia ... it is the Pacific part of the arc that has really been living up to the name’.³⁵ Dobell pointed to two Pacific Island countries as failed states, the Solomon Islands and Nauru, and many other nations and territories in difficulties: East Timor, West Papua, PNG, Vanuatu and Fiji. And while the ‘arc’ may have been particularly unstable in the early 2000s, the concept of an arc of instability in the region goes back much further. Dobell himself points to the Second World War, and the fall of Singapore, as the point that the concept became part of Australia’s understanding of the Pacific region.³⁶

This developing sense of instability, and the growing number of failing or ‘failed’ states in the Pacific influenced Australia’s aid delivery and scholarship design in the Pacific. The interventions in Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands were part of a move to a greater focus on security and ‘governance’³⁷ as areas of focus in aid and scholarships. This can be seen by the development of these topics within priority areas of study in the Pacific ADS programs.

The report of the 2003 Senate Committee also helped to highlight a debate within the aid community about aid to the Pacific. The AusAID submission to the committee argued that the region faced ‘considerable development challenges including rural poverty, political instability and government structures that were inherited from colonial powers which are no longer affordable’.³⁸ Their solution was economic and governance reform, including a focus on police forces, financial management and civil society participation, among other efforts. However, a prominent submission that is extensively quoted in the committee’s report, made by Professor Helen Hughes, claimed that aid had failed the Pacific.³⁹ Her argument was that aid was ‘not the solution to Pacific development, but a major part of the problem’.⁴⁰ Hughes wrote that she believed that Australian aid to the Pacific should be suspended. She recognised that this was unlikely, and thus advised

35 Graeme Dobell, ‘The South Pacific: Policy Taboos, Popular Amnesia and Political Failure (Speech)’, part of the Menzies Research Centre Lecture Series: Australian Security in the 21st Century (Canberra: The Menzies Centre, 2003).

36 Graeme Dobell, ‘The “Arc of Instability”: The History of an Idea,’ in *History as Policy: Framing the Debate on the Future of Australia’s Defence Policy*, ed. Ron Huisken and Meredith Thatcher, 85–104 (Canberra: ANU Press, 2007), doi.org/10.22459/HP.12.2007.06.

37 Dobell, ‘The “Arc of Instability”’.

38 Defence and Trade Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A Pacific Engaged*, 82.

39 Helen Hughes, ‘Aid Has Failed in the Pacific’, Submission to the Inquiry into Australia’s Relationship with Papua New Guinea and Other Pacific Island Countries, submission no. 61, 2002, www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Completed_inquiries/2002-04/png/submissions/sublist, accessed 28 March 2023.

40 Defence and Trade Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A Pacific Engaged*, 94.

that the government 'empower AusAID to impose real aid conditionality under the principle of mutual obligation'.⁴¹ This approach could easily have been interpreted as paternalistic and was, not surprisingly, rejected by AusAID and not supported by the committee. They did, however, agree with Professor Hughes' contention that 'the fundamental problems of Pacific societies can only be tackled in the Pacific'.⁴² By increasing the participation of the governments of the Pacific Island countries in aid decision-making and implementation, change was expected by AusAID and the committee. But as will be explained later in this chapter, that control over decision-making in the realm of scholarships was difficult to cede. Scholarship administrators did not feel able to hand decision-making on scholarships to governments when they could not be sure that the processes of selection and awarding scholarships would be free of corruption.

The social and political situation in the Solomon Islands had been fraught for a number of years, Sinclair Dinnen described it as a 'debilitating internal conflict between 1998 and 2003'.⁴³ Clive Moore wrote in 2007 that, 'although the disturbance did not affect the rural majority, Honiara was tense, and law and order was out of control'.⁴⁴ Requests had been made to Australia for intervention over the period of the conflict, but the Howard Government rejected these requests, Howard himself wrote that 'each time we firmly but politely declined'.⁴⁵ In April 2003, the Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, Sir Allan Kemakeza again requested urgent assistance from Australia. By this time Howard and Foreign Minister Downer had 'formed the view that the internal conflict in the Solomon Islands had become so serious that it posed a risk to Australia's interests'.⁴⁶ Whether this change in policy truly came from a realisation of the risk to Australia posed by a failed state in the Solomon Islands, or the need to demonstrate to the USA that Australia could keep the peace in the Pacific, is still an

41 Hughes, 'Aid Has Failed in the Pacific', 3.

42 Hughes, 'Aid Has Failed in the Pacific', 2.

43 Sinclair Dinnen, 'RAMSI Ten Years On: From Post-Conflict Stabilisation to Development in Solomon Islands?', *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 18, Issue 3–4 (2014): 195, doi.org/10.1163/18754112-1804005.

44 Clive Moore, 'Helpem Fren: The Solomon Islands, 2003–2007', *The Journal of Pacific History* 42, no. 2 (2007): 141, doi.org/10.1080/00223340701461601.

45 John Howard, 'John Howard: RAMSI Ends with its Mission Accomplished for Solomon Islands', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 June 2007.

46 John Howard, 'John Howard: RAMSI Ends with its Mission Accomplished'.

area of debate between scholars, politicians and others.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, in July 2003, the month before the Senate Committee reported, the Solomon Islands Parliament unanimously supported legislation to authorise the incoming Regional Assistance Mission in Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The RAMSI mission was sponsored by the Pacific Islands Forum, with a lesser relationship to the United Nations. The operational personnel were overwhelmingly Australian and New Zealanders.⁴⁸

The RAMSI intervention marked the second significant regional intervention of the Howard Government, after the INTERFET intervention in Timor-Leste in 1999. Australia was also involved in military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan over this period.⁴⁹ This security lens came to guide many areas of scholarship design. In many ways this focus on security and defence (against ‘terrorists’ rather than state actors) shows the Australian Government taking a more active role in determining the security and military ground rules in the Pacific – rather than waiting for the USA to make its own moves. While this demonstrates a level of independence from the USA in relation to questions of security and militarisation in the Pacific, the agenda was still being set by the USA as highlighted by the ‘Deputy Sheriff’ nickname assigned to Prime Minister John Howard.⁵⁰

It was in this security-focused environment that Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer launched the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention Scholarships (CTCPS). The CTCPS scheme was announced by the Minister Downer in 2005 with a discrete award for 15–20 students from South and South-East Asia to study at the University of Wollongong Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention. The scheme was expanded to become a broader AusAID-funded program in 2006. The program differed from the rest of the ADS cohort, in that students were recruited in consultation with the educational institute (the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention), with Foreign Minister Downer saying in a speech to the University of Wollongong that ‘places will be directed to priority countries and agencies in our region in consultation with the Centre’.⁵¹ Only two students from

47 The debate is succinctly outlined by Graeme Dobell in an article on the Australian Strategic Policy Institute blog, *The Strategist*: Graeme Dobell, ‘Australia, Solomon Islands and RAMSI’, *The Strategist*, 13 October 2017, www.aspistrategist.org.au/australia-solomon-islands-and-ramsi/, accessed 26 July 2020.

48 Moore, ‘Helpem Fren’, 141.

49 Scholarships were also offered to students from Afghanistan in a small program that was difficult to manage due to the complex security situation.

50 Spillius, ‘Bush Entrusts “Deputy Sheriff” Howard’.

51 Downer, ‘Inaugural Lecture on National and International Security’.

the Pacific, one from Fiji and one from PNG, were awarded scholarships under this scheme,⁵² but the message sent by the focused scholarship was clear; security and crime prevention in the region were of fundamental importance to the Australian Government.

Only six years later, long after RAMSI was well entrenched, another Senate inquiry was commenced in June 2008 during the first year of the Rudd Government. Adding to the instability narrative, there had been a coup in Fiji in 2006. This inquiry into the major economic and security challenges facing PNG and the island states of the south-west Pacific was conducted by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee. The title alone – *Inquiry into the Economic and Security Challenges Facing Papua New Guinea and the Island States of the Southwest Pacific* – demonstrates a pivot towards security. Again, submissions came from a wide variety of sources, including the Fijian Government, unions, think tanks and government departments. The committee wrote two reports, one volume focused on the economic challenges facing PNG and the south-west Pacific, and the other focused on the security challenges. Again, the committee wrote that they had ‘identified a range of impediments to economic growth in Pacific island Countries’.⁵³ The Executive Summary is remarkably similar to the committee report from 2003, although it hints at the fact that a focus on governance in aid is not having the expected impact:

although over 50 per cent of Australia’s bilateral ODA [Overseas Development Assistance] to the region goes to governance, one of the main weaknesses remains the inability of bureaucracies in Pacific Island countries to deliver essential services on the ground – whether it relates to resource management, education or economic infrastructure.⁵⁴

The report noted that the Rudd Government had recently taken a new approach to aid relationships with the Pacific region, signing a series of Pacific Partnerships for Development over the course of 2008.

Two chapters in the first volume focused on education and training: the first, an overview of the education and training situation in Pacific Island countries; the second focused on Australia’s assistance in that area. The report noted a number of impediments to expanding the standard of

52 ‘Annexe Two: Outline of Major Programs by Scheme’.

53 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, ed., *Economic Challenges Facing Papua New Guinea and the Island States of the Southwest Pacific* (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2009), xvii.

54 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*, xviii.

education (from basic education all the way through to higher education) in the Pacific; these included affordability, physical access, facilities, the training and supply of teachers, curriculum and standards.⁵⁵ A number of submissions to the committee, and World Bank reports, raised concerns that education targets in the Pacific would be difficult to achieve given that a disproportionate amount of education budgets across the nations of the Pacific were spent on tertiary education.⁵⁶ Despite this, the levels and standards of higher education were not adequate.

In outlining Australia's assistance in education, the committee noted that a number of submissions were keen to see the scholarship scheme expanded. The Lowy Institute recommended post-study work placements and Qantas wanted the scheme expanded to the aviation industry.⁵⁷ The committee noted there were reports that the Rudd Government was intending to expand the scholarship scheme to approximately 19,000 awards within the next five years. This would have represented an extraordinary expansion of the scheme as it stood at the time.

The committee came down in support of 'the Australian Government's extensive scholarship program and draws attention to the various suggestions on how Australia could enhance this program', while recognising that the OECD had recommended the scholarships be more targeted and connected to the aid program.⁵⁸ This piece of advice was, as previous reviews had demonstrated, not new, nor was it the last time in the decade that this advice was received by the Australian Government.

This focus on governance and leadership was intrinsic to the development of another key 'subcategory' scholarship implemented in the 2000s: the Australian Leadership Award Scheme (ALAS). The ALAS selection scheme was similar to the ADS selection process, but the ALAS aimed to be an 'academically prestigious award'.⁵⁹ Prestigious in comparison to what is not

55 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*, 166.

56 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*, 167. This was not a new problem. An AusAID report reviewing aid to PNG between 1975 and 2000 noted that in 1993 only 2 per cent of students attended university but 37 per cent of public funding for education was focused on the tertiary sector. *The Contribution of Australian Aid to Papua New Guinea's Development 1975–2000*, Evaluation and Review Series No. 34 (Canberra: AusAID, June 2003).

57 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*, 182.

58 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*, 183.

59 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*, 6.

clear, but efforts to create a 'prestigious' award with name recognition similar to the Fulbright had formed a part of Australian Government scholarship design over decades.

An ALAS award included the standard scholarship, fees and a stipend, but also involved a leadership program which AusAID noted was worth an additional \$17,000 per award.⁶⁰ The program was open to candidates across the Indo-Pacific region. Many students from the Pacific were involved in the program, including students from Tuvalu (one award in 2008), Tonga (awards in 2007 and 2008), Samoa (awards in 2007 and 2008), 11 Solomon Islanders over 2007 and 2008, PNG (27 awards in 2007 and 2008), Kiribati (three awards in 2007 and 2008) and 12 Fijian students over 2007 and 2008.⁶¹

The ALAS, in contrast to most of the ADS country programs, had no input from partner/recipient governments. This, along with the CTCPS, distinguished it from the ADS program. Students selected as part of this award were encouraged to study in areas considered important to the development of their home country or region, and aimed to 'develop a cadre of leaders advancing regional reform, development and governance'.⁶² However, they were not limited by their own country's human resource development plan.

The focus on 'governance' was both encouraged by Senate inquiry and a key plank of the RAMSI intervention in the Solomon Islands. The ALA Scholarships were another effort to signal Australia's clear policy focus when it came to the Pacific. While the Howard Government had rejected the proposal by Professor Hughes that Australian aid to the Pacific should be tied to mutual obligation expectations, it was clear it was improvements in leadership and governance that the Australian Government sought in the region.

As mentioned previously, Margaret Gosling was very experienced in the implementation of scholarship programs and was working at AusAID in the late 2000s. The Gosling Review and attachments she wrote were internal documents, written with the expectation that they would remain within AusAID. Because of this they were more candid and straightforward

60 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*, 6.

61 'Annexe Three: Scholarship Programs by Region/Country (Draft)', (Canberra: AusAID, 2008). One Palauan student was also awarded an ALAS, but discontinued their study after a short time.

62 'Annexe Two: Outline of Major Programs by Scheme', 6.

than the documents prepared for a public audience, such as the ANAO report. The report was able to articulate some of the 'unspoken' elements of scholarship programs – for example clearly explaining why scholarships remain popular:

Partner governments tend to be keen on scholarships, perhaps because they give the impression of building capacity of public institutions and, in some places, may provide 'rewards' that can be granted to chosen candidates. Travelling politicians also find scholarships handy 'announcables' and there is a general feeling that they help to build linkages between Australia and partner countries at the 'people-to-people' level.⁶³

The review and its annexes revealed tensions between the Australian Government and its bilateral government partners. Redactions in an annexe to the review, released as part of a freedom of information request, highlighted lingering tensions between Australia and Fiji, following the coup in 2006. Allowed past the censor is a line that demonstrates the tension: 'whilst there are constraints in the current political climate, GOF [Government of Fiji] participate jointly with Australia in the final selection process'.⁶⁴ A candid assessment of the Government of PNG is also documented, noting that public service departments were hesitant to nominate 'their best ... employees, as to do so would mean they would have to make do without a productive member of their team for a year at the least'.⁶⁵ The document repeatedly referred to disconnection between the scholarship schemes and the human resource development needs of the recipient nations, particularly in the small island states of the Pacific. These were the same issues that were raised by the nations of the South Pacific after the introduction of the EMSS program in the late 1980s and in the ANAO report in 1999. It is clear that 20 years of scholarship provision had failed to fully address the problems.

The review report noted several times that one of the aims of the scholarship program is to promote 'friendships and linkages'⁶⁶ throughout the region as part of both the ADS and ARDS. This effort to develop people-to-people linkages was common across many of the scholarship schemes, but the term 'friendships' was less common. In the French Pacific territories,

63 Margaret Gosling, 'Scholarship Effectiveness Review Part 1', ed. AusAID (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2008), 16.

64 'Annexe Three: Scholarship Programs by Region/Country (Draft)', 19.

65 'Annexe Three: Scholarship Programs by Region/Country (Draft)', 24.

66 'Annexe Three: Scholarship Programs by Region/Country (Draft)', 19.

the friendships were to be part of an effort to 'enhance the integration of French Pacific territories (New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna) into the predominantly Anglophone South Pacific region'.⁶⁷ But Annexe Three to the report repeatedly noted that there had been no proper evaluation of the impact of the scholarships. This was in part because the scholarship programs were comparatively small. The evidence of 'success' or 'failure' is largely anecdotal, with the fact that alumni of the scholarship program were in senior positions counted as success.

The report does demonstrate that over the period since the 1999 ANAO report, many measures had been introduced when it came to administering the scholarship programs. Institutions were required to meet key performance measures, and databases that were used across posts (Australian diplomatic missions endowed with the decision-making authority to grant scholarships), AusAID Canberra and educational institutions allowed for more coordinated student management.

Some of the recommendations made in the Scholarship Effectiveness Review were strikingly similar to those made by most of the reviews of scholarships and international education over previous decades. Gosling recommended that scholarships should be better integrated into country programs of aid,⁶⁸ a recommendation made by Jackson more than 24 years before, in 1984. Gosling also recommended that more attention should be paid to developing capacity at local institutions,⁶⁹ in addition to the scholarships taking students away from those institutions. Gosling wrote these recommendations with the expectation that the Australian Government scholarship scheme was going to grow, with an understanding the program would be at 19,000 scholarships within five years.⁷⁰ It was with this in mind that AusAID was working to develop a clearer blueprint for what form scholarships would take under the Rudd Government. The proliferation of scholarships only made the program more complex to run, and it was this consideration that Gosling recommended that the design of 'future scholarships should be guided by a set of common principles'.⁷¹ The creation of 'new' scholarship schemes, by Foreign Minister Downer in particular, to support specific elements of Australia's foreign policy was not consistent with the outcomes sought by AusAID or the Australian Government.

67 'Annexe Three: Scholarship Programs by Region/Country (Draft)', 20.

68 Gosling, 'Scholarship Effectiveness Review Part 1', 7.

69 Gosling, 'Scholarship Effectiveness Review Part 1', 7.

70 Defence and Trade References Committee Foreign Affairs, *Economic Challenges*.

71 Gosling, 'Scholarship Effectiveness Review Part 1', 8.

The Gosling Review also addressed a specific Pacific scholarship, the Australian Regional Development Scholarship (ARDS) program, which provided:

scholarships to students from Pacific countries to study in several regional institutions, including the University of the South Pacific (USP), the Fiji School of Medicine, Fiji Institute of Technology, Fiji School of Nursing, National University of Samoa and three institutions in PNG.⁷²

Because of the third country nature of the ARDS program, it was often not considered in reviews or overviews of the scholarship program, as demonstrated in the 1999 ANAO report. Thus, the detail in the Gosling Effectiveness Review and Annexes offered a rare insight into the program.

According to Gosling, in 2008 there was an intake of 190 students in the ARDS scheme, taking the total number of students on award in the middle of the year to 490. The number of graduates in 2007 was 133. The largest cohort on award in 2008 was from Vanuatu, with 109 students. The smallest was Niue and Tokelau with 20 students.⁷³ The program was primarily focused on undergraduate study, with an expectation that the ADS would be used for postgraduate study. The program had an added, explicit, goal and that was to support regional institutions.

This support was twofold, according to Gosling. Firstly, the ARDS provided these institutions with a consistent flow of students. Secondly, the scholarship program required a level of student support not necessarily common in those institutions, thus the scholarships required 'levels of student services and administrative accountability that might otherwise not be achieved'.⁷⁴

The scholarships therefore provided funding to universities of the South Pacific, albeit in an indirect way. There was also an argument that by placing students who have achieved the standards required to gain a scholarship in the higher education system, the system itself is improved. Where this argument became less sustainable was in the realm of postgraduate

72 'Annexe Two: Outline of Major Programs by Scheme'.

73 'Annexe Two: Outline of Major Programs by Scheme'.

74 Gosling, 'Scholarship Effectiveness Review Part 1', 20.

scholarships. By directing high-calibre students out of a regional university, towards postgraduate study in Australia, the efforts of the ARDS were undermined.

The growth in regional scholarships was not universally accepted by recipient governments. In a submission to the 2009 Senate Inquiry into the security and economic needs of PNG and the countries of the South-West Pacific, the Fijian Government wrote that one of its key concerns with Australia's aid to the region was the increase in the number of in-Fiji scholarships provided by the Australian Government. It also sought an increase in the number of in-Australia awards as part of its submission.⁷⁵ This was despite a concern expressed by the Fijian Government in its submission that:

a good number of Fijian citizens who studied under Australian Government sponsorship either did not return to Fiji, or came back to Australia after having served their bond obligations in Fiji.⁷⁶

This is explained, in part, by a recognition that the Fijian diaspora, including those in Australia, were a key 'partner in development' of Fiji through remittances, and concerns around employment in Fiji. The submission proposed two options to address the issue that local institutions did not offer the courses required to meet the manpower needs of Fiji that the Fijian Government considered pressing. Option one was to refrain from sponsoring students to study in Fiji and increase the number of in-Australia awards and option two was to spend the funds to increase investment in local institutions, such as the University of the South Pacific (USP).⁷⁷ This bolsters the argument, stated above, that by diverting funds and students to Australia, the Australian Government was undermining its own aid spending.

Other issues about regional scholarships were raised during this period, including concerns around personal safety and political security. Given that a large cohort of the ARDS scholars was based at USP, the 2006 Fijian coup created significant issues for the scheme. Scholars were evacuated, only returning to their studies in the following year.⁷⁸ A review of Australian

75 'Submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade by the Acting Fiji High Commissioner to Australia: Mr Kamlesh Kumar Arya'.

76 'Submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade by the Acting Fiji High Commissioner to Australia: Mr Kamlesh Kumar Arya'.

77 'Submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade by the Acting Fiji High Commissioner to Australia: Mr Kamlesh Kumar Arya'.

78 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 24.

and New Zealand Pacific Scholarships noted in 2010 that PNG was also of concern to administrators of the regional scholarships. Not only were there issues of personal security, but ‘instability has also on occasion flowed over to PNG educational institutions, affecting the continued delivery and quality of education provided to awardees’.⁷⁹ This situation would have only fed into the instability narrative that was driving much of the Coalition Government’s policy approach at the time.

New Zealand, as another major donor in the region and a close Australian ally, was an ideal partner for the Australian Government when it came to increasing the ‘efficiency’ of the scholarship program, particularly in the very small Pacific Island states. Its scholarship program was similarly oriented, with the majority of scholarships in the New Zealand Regional Development Scholarships (NZRDS) of over 300 awards, and less than 90 New Zealand Development Scholarships (NZDS) for study in New Zealand.⁸⁰ The biggest difference was quantity: Australia offered more than 1,500 awards to the region in an average year at the time, 1,200 as ARDS and 300 as ADS.

Both scholarships had similar broad aims: ‘capacity development, interpersonal linkages, and regional institutional strengthening to support long-term social and economic development’.⁸¹ As such, a report commissioned by both AusAID and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) reviewing the scholarships, the Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review (JPSR), reported in early 2010 that it recommended the nations collaborate to create a single Pacific Regional Development Scholarship Scheme.⁸²

Australia and New Zealand agreed on other aspects of scholarship design, both being concerned with equity of access to the scholarships. The JPSR report noted that in some Pacific states this was a difficult element of the implementation:

While there is gender balance of award offers in PNG, anecdotal evidence suggests that the initial screening by PNG agencies, with male-dominated management structures, is prohibiting the advancement of many female applications.⁸³

79 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 24.

80 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*.

81 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, ii.

82 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*.

83 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 11.

A lack of policies to target disadvantaged communities within the scholarships provided by Australia or New Zealand was also of concern to the JPSR team. The JPSR team, through their review, also acknowledged the difficulties faced by women not only in gaining a scholarship, but also in their return to their home country. The report noted that ‘the culture shock of returning to a more restrictive society can be greater for women than for men’.⁸⁴

Perceptions of unfair selection processes dogged both national scholarship schemes. It was noted by the JPSR that ‘public perceptions that selection is merit-based, fair and equitable are a crucial aspect to the integrity of the schemes and in demonstrating good governance and accountability’.⁸⁵ The JPSR noted that this was possible to demonstrate in the case of New Zealand and Australian schemes, but less obvious in the Pacific Island government schemes, where ‘agencies face considerable difficulties in undertaking merit-based ranking without clear methodologies’, among other problems.⁸⁶ The JPSR reported on the difficulty of conducting interviews of prospective scholarship candidates, indicating that interviews were not commonly used at the time. Including interviews in the selection of candidates had been recommended by a 2008 Tracer Study of Tongan AusAID scholarship alumni.⁸⁷

Where the Australian and New Zealand schemes differed was intrinsically connected to their separate colonial histories in the Pacific. It was an obligation, under the Australian schemes, that students were required to return home on completion of their scholarship. In practice, this could only be enforced by not allowing the alumni to return to Australia for two years, or by bonding requirements put in place by home country governments. New Zealand, on the other hand, allowed for dual citizens from the Cook Islands, Samoa, Niue and Tokelau to apply for the NZDS scheme. Following completion of their scholarships, these students were able to remain in New Zealand.⁸⁸ The deep historical and cultural connections between New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, deeper than those between Australia and the Pacific Island countries, are pronounced in this policy setting. New Zealand is unable to divorce itself from the Pacific Islands, whereas Australia’s policy

84 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 17.

85 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 13.

86 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 13.

87 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*.

88 *Joint Australia/New Zealand Pacific Scholarships Review*, 16.

was that dual citizens could not even apply for an ADS, let alone stay in Australia following completion. Dobell made this argument in his 2003 speech to the Menzies Centre:

Australia still sends out the same message to the Pacific, we do not want them. And much of the time we don't even realise the way the negative signals are interpreted.⁸⁹

Australia's scholarship policy settings merely reinforced a perception that Australia was only prepared to partner with Pacific Island countries to a point, but not further.

This chapter has shown that the 2000s marked a time of review and consolidation for Australian Government development scholarships. With the introduction of the ADS in 1998, the scholarship program had a new name and by 1999 had already been audited by the ANAO. Reviews continued, with a comprehensive internal review of all the AusAID scholarships undertaken in 2008, and a review of both Australian and New Zealand scholarships to the Pacific drafted in early 2010. These, along with other country program specific reviews, added to the increasing load of monitoring and evaluation that scholarship schemes were being subjected to, as part of a broader aid effectiveness push across the world.

There was also a proliferation of Australian Government scholarships over this period, in part because of an increasing focus by the Australian Government on demonstrating its position as the guardian of security, stability and nation-building in the South Pacific. These 'new' scholarships, the CTCPS and the ALAS among others, were focused on developing a cadre of security specialists and leaders across the region, and were not only focused on the Pacific. However, the fact that they were outside the normal ADS selection processes placed them even more firmly outside of the ADS realm. Their distinctiveness and difference allowed them to be viewed as clearer signposts to the Australian Government's foreign policy objectives and policies during the 2000s. These scholarships also indicated to those within AusAID that the Howard Government supported scholarships as a mode of aid. However, while it was clear that the Pacific loomed large in the minds of both politicians and policymakers, evidenced by two Senate inquiries into Australia's relationship with PNG and the Pacific, this was only translated into scholarship design through the ARDS. None of the

⁸⁹ Dobell, 'The South Pacific', 16.

other proliferating scholarship schemes of the time was designed or imagined with a Pacific applicant pool in mind. This is despite the fact that the aid and development focus for the government was security (or insecurity), a quest for 'good governance' and leadership in Australia's interests, all issues intimately linked to the status of Pacific Island nations in the 2000s.

The election of the Rudd Labor Government in 2007 did not diminish the feeling within AusAID that scholarships were 'in vogue' with politicians. In the Gosling Scholarship Effectiveness Review, it was noted that AusAID needed to 'respond to the new government's trend to scaling up of scholarship programs'.⁹⁰ It was this final part of the Gosling Review that recommended to the government the rebadging of all the proliferating scholarships under a new single umbrella, Australian Development Awards. By 2010 part of this recommendation was being introduced, with the creation of the Australia Award brand. This is discussed in the next chapter.

90 Margaret Gosling, 'Scholarship Effectiveness Review Part 3', ed. AusAID (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2009), 1.

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