

REVIEW OF THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Review of the Papua New Guinea University System is to provide the Government of PNG with recommendations on ways to strengthen the capacity of the country's University System to produce quality graduates who will contribute to the PNG's economic and social development.

INTRODUCTION

Prime Minister Somare and Prime Minister Rudd agreed at the Pacific Islanders Forum Leaders Meeting in January 2009 that Australia would work with PNG in the review of the PNG university sector.

The PNG-Australia Partnership for Development signed by Prime Ministers Somare and Rudd earlier in August 2008 identified strengthened Tertiary and Technical/Vocational Education systems as a priority outcome for inclusion in the Partnership following agreement to implementation schedules for the five initial priority outcomes (transport infrastructure, basic education, health, public service and statistics). Ministers endorsed the development of a higher education (universities and technical education) schedule at the 2009 bilateral Ministerial Forum on 10 June 2009.

The outcomes of the review of the PNG University system will inform the Prime Ministers of Papua New Guinea and Australia on issues in university education in Papua New Guinea, and on the university component of the higher education schedule and the PNG Australia Human Resource Development Program.

BACKGROUND

The two Prime Ministers have noted the crucial importance of university education to good governance. In addition, economic development within Papua New Guinea continues to be constrained by a shortage of skilled, qualified people across key sectors of the workforce. This shortage of skills relates to the capacity of basic and post-secondary education systems to produce graduates of sufficient quality and numbers to meet demand and is cited by PNG employers as an urgent and growing concern, especially in those industries that will drive the PNG economy into the future.

PNG's University system comprises six accredited universities¹, plus the Commission for Higher Education and the Office of Higher Education, supervised by the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology. The system plays a key role in educating PNG's future professional workforce and leaders. The nation's future economic, social, and political development depends in a large measure on the quality of PNG's Universities. These institutions are increasingly being asked to address workforce development needs as well as performing other roles such as

¹ Public universities include the PNG University of Technology (UNITECH), University of Goroka, University of Papua New Guinea, University of Vudal; and private universities include the Pacific Adventist University and Divine Word University.

knowledge-making, nation-building and regional development. They can also foster the innovation and creative thinking needed for an internationally competitive economy.

PNG's Higher Education sector has made important gains in recent years including the introduction of national guidelines for institutional accreditation, improvements to the Tertiary Education Scholarship Assistance Scheme, increasing gender balance of students, and diversification of academic programs offered.

However, PNG Higher Education institutions face many challenges, including:

- constraints to public funding; poor physical facilities;
- inadequate information technology, libraries, equipment and teaching resources;
- outdated curriculum; poor student services and amenities;
- problems with recruitment and retention of teaching staff;
- problems with preparation of students for entry to university;
- safety issues and other barriers for female students;
- administrative and management weaknesses; and
- limited research capacity.

Until the quality and relevance of educational programs and applied research is improved, many PNG graduates will be unable to satisfy the development needs of the nation or to compete internationally.

The PNG Government funds the four public universities' salaries, entitlements and some infrastructure. The two private universities receive government scholarships and Divine Word University receives some additional funding. The Government encourages universities to raise revenue from student fees, research and consultancies. PNG's National Plan for Higher Education II foreshadows the Government's intention to see universities self-funded. Government budgetary support for universities has deteriorated in real value since the 1980s, with allocations declining even more relative to population.

PNG is currently developing a range of national strategic plans that will inform and guide the future direction of the sector. These include the National Strategic Plan, new medium and long term development strategies, and sectoral plans such as the National Higher Education Plan (2010-30). There is a willingness by the Government, the private sector and development partners to enter into productive partnerships that produce graduates better able to contribute to social and economic development.

If PNG is to take maximum advantage of the large-scale development opportunities available, Papua New Guineans will need to fill as many skilled positions as possible.

METHODOLOGY

The review team will be jointly led by Sir Rabbie Namaliu and Professor Ross Garnaut. AusAID and the Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM) will provide secretariat support. Background information and analysis will be provided by the secretariat. Some suggested reading is at [Appendix 1](#).

The review will provide an overview of the current situation and issues facing PNG's University system. It will identify:

- options for PNG to address the key issues facing the system and to enhance the universities' responsiveness to national development priorities;
- opportunities for PNG to work with other partners – Australia and other donors as well as international foundations – to support improvements in the PNG university system; and
- opportunities for PNG to contribute to higher education efforts in the neighbouring region.

Recommendations coming out of the review will focus on three main areas:

- Governance arrangements for PNG's tertiary institutions including implementation of the higher education legislative framework, and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of government and policy bodies;
- Financing arrangements, sources and predictability; and
- Personnel policies particularly relevant to staff retention, relevance and quality.

TIMING

The review mission will be undertaken in November 2009. It will involve an in-country visit to undertake consultations with key stakeholders and followed by a period in December and January to write up findings.

The Secretariat will organise a program for the review mission to include discussions key government agencies in Port Moresby, including the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council, Department of National Planning and Monitoring, the Department of Personnel Management, the Office of Higher Education, the Commission for Higher Education, the National Training Council and Treasury.

Arrangements will be made to visit and meet with Vice Chancellors and university executives. The Review team will aim to visit each university and will also endeavour to visit other tertiary institutions if the in-country schedule permits.

Consultation on the Review Team's findings will take the form of two in-country sessions. The first, to take place in late January 2010, will be a meeting with the key PNG stakeholders to discuss the preliminary findings and draft report. The second session, in February 2010, will be a seminar-style presentation to stakeholders and other interested and informed participants.

The review team will submit a final report by March 2010.

The review's report will be published to inform public discussion of university education in Papua New Guinea development.

BACKGROUND READING

Aid policy documents

- PNG Commitment on Aid Effectiveness
- Partnership for Development

GoPNG documents

- PNG National Strategic Plan (DRAFT, from Government of PNG)
- Latest available drafts of Medium and Long Terms Development Strategies
- Draft National Higher Education Plan III (NHEP)
- White Paper on Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology: *Enterprise and Education*, Volume 1, September 2000
- National Higher Education Plan II, 2000-2004, Volume II, March 2000
- Commission for Higher Education paper: *Rehabilitation and expansion of the secondary and higher education sectors – 2010 to 2050 and other important related matters*
- Department of Education, Technical Vocational Education and Training Division, *Information paper for TVET support under the Partnership for Development agreement between the Government of Australia and Government of Papua New Guinea*
- Draft PNG Labour Market Assessment, George Bopi
- OHE Tertiary Education Study Assistance Scheme policy document

AusAID documents

- PNG Higher Education for Development design (draft)
- Review of the National Research Institute (NRI) Support Program 2005-2010, September 2008
- AusAID gender policy
- AusAID gender stocktake for PNG program
- Pacific Higher Education System: Outline of Steps for Providing Immediate Assistance and Long Term Assistance, Valerie Haugen 2008
- Rapid assessment of universities, March 2008

Reference material

- Research Capacity Assessments (by Evelyn King) for the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), UPNG Medical Institute, NRI, the University of Goroka, PNG Institute of Medical Research, Divine Word University and the Pacific Adventist University.
- PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, *Position Paper on PNG Tertiary Education Specific to the Mining and Petroleum Industry*, August 2008
- Campus Review – Time for Australian Universities to Reach out to Papua New Guinea's Ailing Universities, Allan Patience
- Rethinking Higher Education – Centre for Global Development Feb 2008
- World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation

- Lessons Learned by Donors, Swedish Experiences of University Support and National Research Development in Developing Countries by Tomas Kjellqvist, Head of Division for University Support and National Research Development Department for Research Cooperation, SIDA
- DFID Development Partnerships in Higher Education Program overview
- PNG universities' Strategic Plans, annual reports etc, as available