

Education Links

Introduction

- 4.1 Education services is now Australia's second highest export earner after mining. With this in mind, the Committee considered the contribution of the higher education sector to Australia's ties with Africa. To do this it investigated links between Australian and African universities, and scholarships and student exchanges between the two continents.
- 4.2 This is followed by an examination of a proposal to establish a new dedicated facility in Australia for research in African studies.

University links

Background

- 4.3 The Committee considered the nature and scale of links between Australian and African universities, investigating both research cooperation and provisions for staff exchange. Universities Australia told the Committee that there were 45 agreements between Australian and African universities. These were bilateral agreements between 'individual

Australian and African universities', of which 'almost half' were with universities in South Africa.¹

- 4.4 The agreements provided for 'collaboration between individual academics, or in some instances faculties or schools, to allow for research collaboration and staff exchange'. They also provided a framework for student exchange and study-abroad programs.²
- 4.5 In addition, Australian universities had formed partnership agreements with African universities and other institutions to underpin collaboration on particular research projects.³ Of these, Universities Australia told the Committee, the most important was an agreement between Australia and South Africa to collaborate on the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project and other space-telescope projects.⁴
- 4.6 DFAT provided details of Australian universities involved in Africa, advising the Committee of initiatives by Monash University; the universities of Sydney and Brisbane; and Griffith and Edith Cowan Universities. These ranged from the on-shore provision of higher education at Monash South Africa and the Australian Studies Institute in Kenya; and memoranda of understanding and agreements with universities in South Africa, Kenya, and Libya.⁵
- 4.7 As well, the Committee has received information directly from Murdoch University on its activities in Africa.⁶
- 4.8 The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) advised the Committee of government-sponsored initiatives on education between Australia and African countries. In the absence of formal government-to-government links, these consisted of visits to

1 Ms Angela Magarry, *Transcript*, 27 April 2010, p. 2.

2 Ms Angela Magarry, *Transcript*, 27 April 2010, p. 2. The agreements included arrangements with: 'the University of Botswana and the University of Zimbabwe ... the Lesotho College of Education and with the University of the Western Cape, the University of Pretoria, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, the University of Stellenbosch, the University of Zululand, the Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Cape Town, the University of Johannesburg, the University of Pretoria and the University of Witwatersrand, in South Africa ... In Tanzania we have an agreement with the University of Dar es Salaam; in Mozambique, with the Eduardo Mondlane University; and in Namibia, with the Polytechnic. There are also agreements with the University of Zambia, the University of Ghana, the University of Mines and Technology in Ghana and the Eduardo Mondlane University in Madagascar'.

3 Ms Angela Magarry, *Transcript* 27 April 2010, pp. 3-4.

4 Ms Angela Magarry, *Transcript* 27 April 2010, p. 4.

5 DFAT, *Submission No. 46*, p. 494.

6 See *Transcript* 10 March 2011, pp. 1-12.

Australia by departmental delegations from African countries, and visits to African countries by area representatives of Australian Education International (AEI), the government-sponsored representative of Australian education service-providers.⁷

4.9 In general, relations between Australian and African universities have been driven by the research interests of individual academics.⁸ The Committee has, however, received detailed information of more formal African centred activities of two universities:

- Monash University; and
- University of Sydney.

Monash University

4.10 Universities Australia told the Committee that Monash University had the greatest involvement in Africa of any Australian university.⁹ This was supported by a number of other contributions to the inquiry, which gave prominence to its activities in Africa, including those by DEEWR and DFAT.¹⁰ Monash University described its activities in similar terms, describing a range of ties with African universities.¹¹

4.11 Monash University is the only Australian university with a campus in Africa. DEEWR advised the Committee that student numbers at the campus had risen from '100 students when it first opened' to 'over 2,200 in 2008'.¹²

4.12 Professor Simon Adams, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, International Engagement, told the Committee that Monash South Africa (MSA) was established in 2001 as 'the first foreign university in South Africa'. This was part of a

7 DEEWR, *Submission No. 38*, pp. 333–4. The submission notes that visits and delegations with African countries included those with South Africa; Botswana; Ethiopia; Mauritius; Egypt and Libya.

8 Prof. Craig McGarty, *Transcript 10 March 2011*, p. 3; Assoc. Prof. Helen Vella Bonavita, *Transcript 10 March 2011*, p. 22.

9 Ms Angela Magarry, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p.9.

10 DEEWR, *Submission No. 38*, pp. 333–4; DFAT, *Submission No. 46*, pp. 494.

11 See for example Monash University, *Submission No. 13*, pp. 111–2. In the submission Monash University advised the Committee that it held Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and partnership agreements with a variety of African universities, including: the University of Botswana; University of South Africa; University of Johannesburg; Universidade Eduardo Mondlane; Vaal University of Technology; Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa; and the South African Medical Research Council.

12 DEEWR, *Submission No. 38*, p. 333.

broader expansion of the University's activities, which has also included establishing facilities in India, Italy, and Malaysia.¹³

- 4.13 Monash University had established MSA because it saw Africa as 'an area of growing importance to Australia and to the world':

... the university believes, very strongly that, if we look at the major issues facing our country and the world in the 21st century, the front line of many of these issues is Africa more generally and South Africa specifically. I am talking here about issues of public health, climate change, food security, sustainability and so forth ...¹⁴

- 4.14 Professor Adams told the Committee that Monash University had never seen MSA as 'being a solely South African concern'. It was a highly-diverse campus with students from '43 African countries', and was a base for 'an Africa-wide view'. Monash University saw MSA 'not as an end in and of itself or as an isolated base' but 'really as a node through which we can connect up with the rest of the African continent', and as 'an essential part of an interaction between the developed world and the developing world around issues of global concern'.¹⁵

- 4.15 The Committee Delegation visited the Monash South Africa campus and was impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of its staff. The Delegation was told that students applying for a place had to meet the same academic standard as pertaining to Monash University in Australia and, if necessary, students attended a foundation year to bring them up to this standard. Some 40 per cent of graduates came through this foundation year program. Significantly international students attending MSA returned to their home country because of their personal commitment to return.

- 4.16 The Delegation also met with the student organising committee for the MSA volunteer program. The submission from Monash University describes their activities:

... most activities related to improving the educational facilities and opportunities of the local community. MSA staff and students volunteer their time and expertise towards a variety of projects in local schools. The volunteer program has been active in other ways, running support programs for young children and

13 Professor Simon Adams, *Transcript 5 May 2010*, p. 21.

14 Professor Simon Adams, *Transcript 5 May 2010*, p. 21.

15 Professor Simon Adams, *Transcript 5 May 2010*, p. 21.

'maintenance days' to improve local community facilities, such as schools.¹⁶

University of Sydney

- 4.17 Professor John Hearn, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, International, told the Committee that the University of Sydney also had an extensive commitment to Africa. This included 'over 20 senior academics and researchers with expertise and programs in Africa', and a close relationship with AusAID and the Australia Council for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) amongst others. There was also a 'university wide Australia Africa Network', through which the university was 'building teams with the private sector, government and NGOs and indeed with other Australian universities'.
- 4.18 In addition, Professor Hearn told the Committee that the university had '100 African students from 17 countries'; ran 'leadership training courses' for African clients; sent 'regular' delegations to East and South Africa; and had recently hosted an 'Africa forum with a number of African speakers'.¹⁷
- 4.19 Professor Hearn told the Committee, however, that this was a 'drop in the bucket when the task [was] examined'. He emphasised the need for the University to 'focus' and stated that, as a result, the University was very selective with choosing its partners and in developing funding models.
- 4.20 The University concentrated on activities in East Africa, 'particularly in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa':
- We focus on contracts and agreements with the universities of Nairobi, Makerere and Cape Town, and we focus around our major expertise relevant to Africa and the Australian government programs in food security, including agricultural biotech; public health, including non-communicable disease; extractive industries; and public sector reform.¹⁸
- 4.21 Professor Hearn told the Committee that the University hoped to organise a 'broader Australia-Africa conference', to which would be invited Australian stakeholders, such as 'the universities of Western Australia, Newcastle, Monash, Sydney and others, along with NGOs and government agencies'. He told the Committee that:

16 Monash University, *Submission No. 13*, p. 113.

17 Prof. John Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 32.

18 Prof. John Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 33.

We feel that if we can do this and come up with some real areas where we can make a difference that we would achieve better reach, depth and impact, and we do need to define specific Australian expertise and advantages.¹⁹

- 4.22 This reflected a broader concern with levels of coordination amongst academic researchers into Africa. Professor Hearn added that Australian universities needed 'to invent a network' with 'the leading partners who really have demonstrated commitment and can work in this new re-engagement with Africa'. Part of the work of such a network would be to 'map the assets' of Australian universities working on Africa which, he suggested, were 'often very good at working together offshore while competing like cats onshore'. As a result, Australian universities needed to work to achieve better coordination and divisions of labour.²⁰

Scholarships and exchanges

Background

- 4.23 Scholarships and exchanges form an important part of educational links with Africa and constitute a significant foundation for persistent person-to-person ties, and good will, between Australia and African countries.
- 4.24 A submission from Universities Australia noted that Australian universities currently have 9,701 higher education African students enrolled, of whom 6,582 were engaged in study in Australia and 3,119 overseas.²¹
- 4.25 The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) advised the Committee that 'in the 2008-2009 program year, 7947 Student visas were granted to people from African nations' and, at 30 June 2009, '13,012 persons from a range of African [countries] were present in Australia on a Student visa', spread across the 'Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sectors'.²²
- 4.26 The submission from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) noted that 'African students comprise less

19 Prof. John Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 33.

20 Prof. John Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 36.

21 Universities Australia, *Submission No. 59*, pp. 670-1.

22 DIAC, *Submission No. 42*, p. 429.

than 2.2 per cent of international student numbers' in Australia. They come from a variety of countries of origin. Many African countries have 20 or less higher education students in Australia. Countries with greater numbers include: 'Malawi (94 students); Ghana (125); Seychelles (126); Tanzania (181); Nigeria (293); Zambia (868); South Africa (872); Kenya (2,044); Zimbabwe (2,205); Mauritius (4,883); Libya (331) and Egypt (2,080)'.²³

- 4.27 Universities Australia advised the Committee that the most popular fields of study were 'management and commerce and the broad collection of studies relating to science and culture'.²⁴

Scholarships

- 4.28 Scholarships are provided to African (and other) students by AusAID and by individual Australian universities. AusAID advised the Committee that under current policy, announced early in 2009, there would be 'ten-fold' increase in AusAID scholarships for African students. This would see scholarships rise to '1,000 long- and short-term awards by 2012- 13'. Australia had provided 'more than 3,600' scholarships to African students since 1960.²⁵
- 4.29 AusAID advised the Committee that this 'expansion' was 'well underway, with over 250 scholarships offered in 2010'. This compared to the 2009 intake which was 109. In addition, the topics of the scholarships program was 'shifting to align with the Australian Government's African focus on agriculture, natural resource management and public policy'. This included mining fellowships, of which a total of 24 had been offered in 2010, compared with 14 in 2008.²⁶
- 4.30 The picture is less clear for the overall number of scholarships offered by individual Australian universities. Submissions by Universities Australia and DEEWR did not provide overall figures, and DEEWR advised the Committee that:

Australian universities are autonomous and make their own decisions regarding the allocation of scholarships. DEEWR does not collect information on these programs and is not in a position

23 DEEWR, *Submission No. 38*, p. 333.

24 Ms Angela Magarry, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 2.

25 AusAID, *Submission No. 47*, p. 578.

26 AusAID, *Submission No. 47*, p. 578.

to be able to provide information on the proportion provided to Africa.²⁷

- 4.31 Specific information was provided by Monash University, however, which advised the Committee that it had provided 51 scholarships and 38 bursaries at Monash South Africa in 2009.
- 4.32 Monash University also advised the Committee that the creation of the Monash University Fund for Education in South Africa (MUFESA), which had 'sought and received contributions from business and industry in South Africa and Australia', would lead to an expansion in financial support of this kind for African higher education students.²⁸

Exchanges

- 4.33 Universities Australia advised the Committee that out of the 43 agreements, detailed in its submission, which Australian universities hold with African universities, 19 make provision for student exchange, and 30 for staff exchange.²⁹ However, with a single exception (staff exchanges between Macquarie and Rhodes universities),³⁰ Monash was the only Australian university to provide the Committee with information in detail about its student and staff exchange programs.
- 4.34 With respect to student exchanges, Monash University advised the Committee that due to its South Africa and other overseas campuses, the University had the ability to achieve these exchanges 'internally' within its own organisation. The University provided specific funding assistance to its students so that they can undertake exchange programs in Australia, Malaysia or South Africa, depending on their campus of origin.³¹
- 4.35 Typically these take the form of 'exchange semesters', where students enrolled at one campus spend a semester at one of the other overseas sites. There are also shorter 'study tours', particularly in the discipline areas of geography and environmental science and 'victimology': the study of genocide.³²

27 DEEWR, *Submission No. 73*, p. 782.

28 Monash University, *Submission No. 13*, p. 110.

29 Universities Australia, *Submission No. 59*, pp. 651-2.

30 Prof. Geoffrey Hawker, *Submission No. 35*, p. 258. The submission also referred to planned future student exchanges between the two universities.

31 Monash University, *Submission No. 13*, p. 111.

32 Monash University, *Submission No. 13*, p. 111.

- 4.36 Generically, these are termed 'mobility programs'. Monash University advised the Committee that together they had resulted in 'a small but steady flow of Australian and African students between each continent':

Since 2006, 35 Australian students have studied at MSA on exchange or short term study programs, while in the same time period, 29 African students from the MSA campus have undertaken a semester exchange at one of the University's Australian campuses.³³

- 4.37 Universities Australia told the Committee, regarding Monash University's student exchange program, that while numbers were 'relatively low', it has 'been a business development plan for Monash University since 2001, with about a 20-year investment', and it was expected 'to grow over time'.³⁴

- 4.38 With respect to staff exchanges, Monash University told the Committee that these were conducted in two ways. First, through a process in which senior academic or administrative staff are seconded from one campus to another. Second, through a 'staff mobility' policy, in which:

... we actually encourage and financially support our staff to move within the Monash system, from Australia, Malaysia and Africa and in both directions, to have the opportunity to go to and work for a little while on one of the other campuses to learn how it operates and to hopefully share ideas with their colleagues and counterparts.³⁵

Getting value

- 4.39 The Committee considered ways in which Australia could achieve the best possible value from scholarships and exchanges.

Offshore or onshore provision?

- 4.40 In connection with the discussion on scholarships, the Committee considered the question of whether there were greater benefits from educating African students 'on the ground' in Africa or in Australia.
- 4.41 Witnesses offered a number of opinions. The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Africa Working Group told the

33 Monash University, *Submission No. 13*, p. 111.

34 Ms Angela Magarry, *Transcript 7 April 2010*, p. 3.

35 Professor Simon Adams, *Transcript 5 May 2010*, p. 25.

Committee that under the expanded Australian scholarship program, a proportion of scholarships should be for students to study 'within the region'. In this model, 'the best and brightest' would study on Australian scholarships in 'key universities within the region' – in addition to African scholarship students studying in Australia. This would be a way 'to invest and help build education systems within Africa', helping to 'build sustainability over time'.³⁶

4.42 However, other witnesses told the Committee that there was more value in bringing scholarship students to Australia. Professor Ware told the Committee that African students in Australia had access to a training 'that they would not get at the same level at home'. Moreover, they were exposed to a range of Australian institutions and experiences, from 'watching the Australian parliament on the television' to 'seeing how a local council works'.³⁷

4.43 In addition, Professor Ware told the Committee, supporting African students in Australia was uniquely something that Australian funding could achieve, that 'African countries, however cash strapped, can sponsor their own students at home', but they 'cannot, unless they are diamond-rich Botswana, afford to sponsor their students to come to Australia'.

4.44 Moreover, Professor Ware told the Committee, 'taking the expertise in that direction' was important, particularly 'for long-term university scholarships at the postgraduate level'. Australia had 'unique things to offer, in terms of training and in terms of the broader social contacts with learning how democracies work' and this was something to which 'we should expose people'.³⁸

Benefits for Australia

4.45 This way of delivering education also brought greater benefits for Australia. A number of witnesses told the Committee that when African students study in Australia, rather than offshore, this forges persistent links and ties. Dr Lucas told the Committee that African students studying in university campuses in Africa were unlikely to 'feel any great attachment to Australia'. He also raised concerns about class sizes and quality of teaching in some instances.³⁹

36 Mr Marc Purcell, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 36.

37 Prof. Helen Ware, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, pp. 22-3.

38 Prof. Helen Ware, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, p. 23.

39 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 23.

- 4.46 In contrast, Dr Lucas told the Committee that where students had studied in Australia, there were persistent ties. These links could be particularly influential where graduates have risen to positions of prominence.⁴⁰
- 4.47 Dr Lucas also noted that in a recent speech, the Foreign Minister Mr Smith had stated that he wanted African students to become ‘ambassadors’ for Australia. Dr Lucas told the Committee that he did not ‘see how they are going to do that if they are being trained at, for example, Fort Hare University’.⁴¹
- 4.48 Other witnesses also attested to the durability of such ties. Dr Brian Keating, Director, Sustainable Agriculture Flagship, CSIRO, told the Committee that the ‘human links’ that result from this process ‘are strong’, that ‘[you] can run into an African student who has spent time in Australia 20 years later in Africa’ and they will ‘still embrace you and say what a fantastic experience it was’.⁴²

Return on completion of study

- 4.49 Dr Lucas told the Committee that it was important that African students, having completed their studies in Australia, return so that the benefits of their training are retained in Africa. He told the Committee that immigration arrangements had been ‘relaxed’ since the 1970s when students ‘had to go home’, resulting in a greater proportion of graduates remaining in Australia.⁴³ Professor Ware spoke to the Committee in similar terms, suggesting that this might be more readily achieved in the context of ‘a really targeted program’ where there were firmer arrangements for graduates to return to their country of origin.⁴⁴
- 4.50 Such views were also supported by the Nigerian High Commissioner who said:

We have said to immigration that when they bring Nigerians here on scholarship and they train here for three or four years, it is important that they should go back home. If they want to come back here later, then they could apply and then come in as skilled migrant labour. We are working very hard on that now. ...

40 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 23.

41 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 18.

42 Hon. Kerry Sibraa, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, p. 3; Dr Brian Keating, *Transcript 5 May 2010*, p. 37.

43 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 18.

44 Prof. Helen Ware, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, p. 23.

When they go back home, they then help to strengthen relations between Australia and Nigeria. ...

Some say, 'If they train here and they stay here, the negative effect on Nigeria is not bad,' and I personally do not buy that.⁴⁵

- 4.51 The Committee notes the earlier discussion of the ALPA program in this context.

Links with alumni

- 4.52 A third component of value-for-money for scholarships and exchanges related to maintaining relationships with alumni. Professor Ware told the Committee that Australia 'should also do more to maintain links with former students from Africa', and that Australian universities were 'generally poor in maintaining alumni links' compared with U.S. universities. This could, she suggested, be improved with a 'modest investment of time and resources' in African countries where Australia has diplomatic representation.⁴⁶

- 4.53 Professor Hearn also told the Committee that if Australia could do more to maintain relationships with alumni this would do much to enhance the value generated through periods of study in Australia:

... some of our alumni, including the director of public health in Kenya, say that the opportunity they had to do a masters or a visit to Australia transformed their life, the way they think and their approach. So I think that ... we need to structure our approach to support such leaders and such people and not just have a visit which is over and from which we walk away.⁴⁷

- 4.54 Dr Asumadu also highlighted the importance of alumni and suggested that organising formal associations of alumni in home countries was likely to lead to further productive relationships, not only in academia and government, but also in business.⁴⁸

Challenges

- 4.55 Some witnesses to the inquiry indicated to the Committee a number of areas in which there were challenges with educational links.

45 HE Prof. Sunday Agbi, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, pp. 58-9.

46 Prof. Helen Ware, *Submission No. 45*, p. 449.

47 Prof. Simon Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, pp. 35-6.

48 Dr Asumadu, *Transcript 6 May 2010*, p. 5.

Financial difficulties

- 4.56 First, DEEWR and DIAC, in their submissions to the inquiry, both advised the Committee of financial difficulties for some African students in the face of economic problems in their country of origin.
- 4.57 DEEWR advised the Committee that 6 Australian universities had enrolled 'a significant number' of Zimbabwean students affected by unrest in their own country. These students – amounting to 500-600 in Australia – were in significant 'financial, academic and emotional difficulties'. These were 'escalating rapidly', and it was estimated at the time (2008) that 'potential bad debt from unpaid fees from this group could total close to \$2.4 million'.⁴⁹
- 4.58 DIAC advised the Committee that it had received reports 'that some students from African countries have been unable to pay tuition fees due to the difficulty with [transferring] funds to Australia'. However, the department advised the Committee that educational providers were supportive of these students, and that non-payment did not result in revocation of visas by DIAC: rather they were 'given adequate opportunity to find an alternative education provider or apply for another visa category'.⁵⁰

International English Language Testing System

- 4.59 A second area of concern lay with the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) English-language tests for prospective students from Africa. The Kenyan High Commission advised the Committee that Kenyan students studying in other Commonwealth countries did not have to pass this language test. Removing this criterion for students wishing to enter Australia, it was suggested, would 'boost the numbers of students seeking admission in Australian institutions' and 'relieve a great burden' from Kenyan students and their parents.⁵¹
- 4.60 In discussion with DIAC, the Committee noted that the Kenyan High Commission had been 'quite critical of the way in which the test is applied'.⁵² DIAC responded that it employed a flexible approach to English-language testing. Different IELTS levels were required depending on the 'education sector' students apply for and assessment levels determined for the country of origin.

49 DEEWR, *Submission No. 38*, p. 334.

50 DIAC, *Submission No. 42*, p. 429.

51 Kenya High Commission, *Submission No. 25*, pp. 186-7.

52 *Transcript 21 April 2010*, p. 34.

4.61 DIAC also told the Committee that there were options to use other tests, such as the Occupational English Test (OET) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 'in some African countries'. In addition, DIAC was considering 'introducing more competition' among test providers to increase confidence and effectiveness in English-language testing.⁵³

4.62 In its submission to the inquiry, DIAC advised the Committee that:

All applicants for a Student visa, regardless of nationality, are required to meet certain objective and transparent criteria to be eligible for grant [that is, of a student visa]. These criteria are used to assess whether an applicant has a genuine intention to study in Australia and will abide by the conditions of their visa.⁵⁴

4.63 Requirements were calibrated according to levels of 'risk' calculated by DIAC for each country of origin, and included tests of financial capability and educational achievement, along with skill-levels derived from English-language tests.⁵⁵

Relative scale of resources

4.64 Some witnesses to the inquiry highlighted the relatively modest scale of what Australia had to offer African countries. Speaking in general terms, Professor Hearn told the Committee that China's level of investment was 'enormous' and that a number of European countries also had 'long-term interests' in Africa.⁵⁶ The scale of these interventions, and the fact that some had 'failed', highlighted both the competition and risk entailed in investments.

4.65 In view of this, Professor Hearn told the Committee, Australian universities needed 'a realistic view of where we are and what we can achieve, while being ambitious and optimistic'. They could do this by identifying 'a few people ... leaders who are in the political, academic or business fields who are making a difference', and working with them in 'target countries'. Professor Hearn told the Committee that by taking this approach Australian universities could 'make a huge difference' in African countries.⁵⁷

53 Mr Kukoc, *Transcript 21 April 2010*, p. 34.

54 DIAC, *Submission No. 42*, p. 429.

55 DIAC, *Submission No. 42*, p. 429.

56 Prof. Simon Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 35.

57 Prof. Simon Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 35.

- 4.66 Professor Hearn told the Committee that his own institution, the University of Sydney, had followed this more targeted approach by focusing on selected countries in East and South Africa, in particular, and identifying areas of capacity with distinct relevance to Africa, including 'agricultural biotech; public health, including non-communicable disease; extractive industries; and public sector reform'.⁵⁸
- 4.67 Mr Sibraa spoke in similar terms, telling the Committee that Australia had recognised strengths in areas relevant to Africa – in particular dry-land farming – and that
- ... we should stick to areas like that that we know well. We are never going to be a huge aid donor. I think we could suffer if we try to spread a small amount too widely, because it will just disappear.⁵⁹

Gaps in education links

- 4.68 The Committee considered gaps in education links with African countries arrangements that were highlighted by witnesses.
- 4.69 This included some lack of representation in certain parts of Africa. Universities Australia told the Committee that it was not aware of any links between Australian universities and those of West Africa. The Committee noted that Australia had no links with the universities of Nigeria, despite it being the single most populous country in Africa.⁶⁰
- 4.70 DEEWR also noted gaps, advising the Committee that AEI is entirely without representation in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- 4.71 Further, there were no government-to-government educational MOUs between Australia and African countries: all existing relationships were between Australian and African universities alone.⁶¹

Committee comment

- 4.72 The higher education sector is now a significant contributor to Australia's export earnings. The sector has a growing reputation for building links with academic institutions in developing countries particularly in Asia and the Gulf. Therefore it is in Australia's interest to further develop

58 Prof. Simon Hearn, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 33.

59 Hon. Kerry Sibraa, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, p. 9.

60 Ms Magarry, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 5.

61 DEEWR, *Submission No. 38*, p. 333.

valuable ties and similar relationships in research and higher education in Africa.

- 4.73 The evidence provided to the Committee reveals a picture of Australia as a small partner in specialised cooperative research, and a small but important provider of scholarships and student exchanges with African universities.
- 4.74 In the Committee's view, it is clear that Australia cannot compete in absolute terms with other countries, such as China, which are employing educational links as a way to establish closer ties with Africa. However, it makes good sense for the message that Australia, armed with a realistic appraisal of its capabilities and strengths in research and higher education, can create valuable ties in Africa – and, indeed, already has an established record of doing so.
- 4.75 It is critical, in the Committee's view, that Australia develops a greater capacity to coordinate its activities in this regard. First, it needs to pursue the accurate targeting of research effort and scholarships. Second, it needs to do the follow-up – with alumni and others engaged by these programs – in order to generate maximum benefit: both for African staff and students, and for Australia and its universities.
- 4.76 The Committee recognises that there needs to be a balance with respect to the provision of scholarships to Africans. On the one hand Africa will benefit through the transfer of skills if African students return to their country of origin after completion of their studies. (The Committee is mindful of the experience of MSA where international students return to their home country.) Australia also benefits because the African alumni will act as 'ambassadors from Australia'.
- 4.77 On the other hand, the immediate benefit to Australia occurs when African students remain in Australia because their skills alleviate Australia's skills shortage. Such a brain drain is of concern not only to African countries but also to other countries providing talented students to study in Australia.

Recommendation 9

- 4.78 **AusAID's scholarships program should include providing scholarships to African students to undertake tertiary education in Africa. This could involve study at African universities and at Australian universities with links with Africa such as Monash South Africa**

A centre to focus on African issues

- 4.79 The 'gaps' in coverage and representation identified in previous sections point to wider issues of coordination. The difficulty in gauging the number of scholarships offered to African overseas students by Australian universities is an instance where the higher education sector is let down by an absence of mechanisms to collect and collate data. Such information would be useful for strategic planning.
- 4.80 Many witnesses have called for the creation of a centre for African studies as a means to enhance Australia's engagement with Africa through a focus on teaching and research on Africa.
- 4.81 Reflecting on this issue, the Committee discusses the reasons why Australia should increase its research capacity in relation to Africa; the current levels of research in Australia; and the various proposals for a centre to foster an increased effort in African studies.
- 4.82 Many submissions and witnesses proposed that Australia should consider increasing its research capacity. Their reasons centred on Australia's involvement in mining in Africa; interest in working cooperatively with African countries on the world stage; and person-to-person links between Australia and Africa.

Mining

- 4.83 A number of witnesses drew attention to the significance of Australia's involvement with mining in Africa, and argued that it was critical that, in view of this involvement, Australia develop a basis for expertise and research on Africa.
- 4.84 Associate Professor Geoffrey Hawker, from Macquarie University but appearing in a private capacity, advised the Committee that 'Australian engagement with Africa is driven by business opportunities now opening up on an unprecedented scale'. In particular he noted rapid expansions in investment and operations in 'extractive industries' as being of special importance.⁶²
- 4.85 Dr David Dorward, a retired Associate Professor from Latrobe University, commented that increasingly close ties between Africa and China, in terms of natural resources, added a sense of urgency to Australia's involvement with mining in Africa. He noted that the 'export economy of Australia, the

62 Assoc. Prof. Hawker, *Submission No. 35*, p. 259.

strength of the dollar and our capacity to borrow overseas are all linked to the strength of the mining sector'. While currently Australia's 'leading customer is China', there was potential for Africa 'to undermine Australia's economic position as a leading supplier to China', because:

- 'Africa offers a clear alternative source of supply for mainland China's mineral requirements';
- the 'scale and variety of known mineral reserves in Africa far outstrip those of Australia'; and
- 'China is already a major player in the African mining sector'.

4.86 A suitable response was for Australia to 'cultivate a higher profile in Africa [and to] facilitate but also inform its corporate sector'. This would help place Australia in a better competitive position in relation to the African resources sector, thus mitigating negative effects, on Australia, of this alternative source of supply.⁶³

Cooperative engagements

4.87 A number of contributors to the inquiry advised the Committee that Australia needed to improve its understanding of Africa if it were to improve its relationships with African countries and pursue foreign policy objectives through bilateral and multilateral engagements.

4.88 The Commonwealth Round Table in Australia advised the Committee that on 'a continental and global level, Australia increasingly views itself as a 'middle power' building consensus on global issues' and that 'African support is crucial to agreement and action on global concerns'.⁶⁴

4.89 Mr Matthew Neuhaus, former Head of Mission to five African countries and current Ambassador to Zimbabwe, suggested that this was important because African nations represented 'one quarter' of the world's nations, in addition to Australia's significant commercial and person to person links with Africa. He advised the Committee that as 'important players in international forums, Africa nations can ... help us achieve our global goals'. Conversely, Australia 'will certainly fail to build global coalitions for these goals without engaging them'.⁶⁵

4.90 However Australia's level of awareness of Africa fell short of what it needed to achieve these objectives. Australia needed an increased

63 Dr David Dorward, *Submission No. 6*, p. 47.

64 Commonwealth Round Table in Australia, *Submission No. 11*, p. 98.

65 Mr Matthew Neuhaus, *Submission No. 19*, pp. 149-50.

awareness of Africa, and a policy 'sophisticated enough to engage Africa not just as a continent but on a nation by nation basis'.⁶⁶

Person-to-person links

- 4.91 A number of contributors to the inquiry suggested that further research capacity is needed to understand the high degree of cultural diversity in Africa. Dr Elizabeth Dimock, Executive Committee Member of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP), commented that this diversity was generated by Africa's 'diverse geographies and cultures'; a population 'of more than a billion people'; and a history of 'internal conflicts'. In the absence of an understanding of these conditions, Australia would struggle to deal with African migrants effectively. As a result, she wrote, if 'the current Federal Government is serious about engaging more closely with African countries, consideration should be given to increasing levels of expertise in Australia'.⁶⁷
- 4.92 The Committee also considered the involvement of Australians in Africa. Mr Neuhaus advised the Committee that 'Australians' had 'a long history with Africa', and that from the 'end of the First World War till well after independence it was Australian missionaries who provided the bulk of the health and education services in this vast region of East Africa'.⁶⁸
- 4.93 In spite of this, Australia had 'never sought to capitalise on this investment of decades of goodwill or support with official aid the very real assistance provided by Australians'.⁶⁹ This again suggested a gap in knowledge and awareness, which unless addressed could inhibit Australia from realising its present-day aspirations in Africa.

Committee comment

- 4.94 In the Committee's view, the evidence points to a need for further capacity within Australia to provide a higher education, teaching and research focus on Africa. Contributors to the inquiry have consistently highlighted the practical advantages of this approach. The Committee believes that proposals to create further research capacity in this area warrant serious attention.

66 Mr Matthew Neuhaus, *Submission No. 19*, p. 150.

67 Dr Elizabeth Dimock, *Submission No. 28*, p. 214.

68 Mr Matthew Neuhaus, *Submission No. 19*, p. 149.

69 Mr Matthew Neuhaus, *Submission No. 19*, p. 150.

Current capacity

- 4.95 To establish the extent of the requirement to expand teaching and research on Africa the Committee sought to establish Australia's contemporary levels of such activity.
- 4.96 Dr Lucas told the Committee that under current conditions it was difficult to ascertain levels of expertise, or effort currently expended on research into Africa, and that this offered an insight into the present state of African Studies in Australia.
- 4.97 Dr Lucas commented that Australian universities did not specifically identify scholars engaged with Africa, or highlight courses or projects in this area. Indeed, they appeared to be less than fully aware of such work being done within their own establishments. This was exacerbated by continual restructuring in Australian universities which had, it appeared, affected even fairly recent plans by Monash University to establish a formal centre, in Australia, for African Studies.⁷⁰
- 4.98 Dr Lucas also told the Committee that an 'inventory' of work being done in the area in Australian universities should be created to make up this shortfall. In the meantime those who wished to identify this work had to rely on searches on the open web and other unstructured approaches, and that this was a less-than-satisfactory state of affairs.⁷¹ This was a contrast with arrangements in Britain, where a central register of doctoral dissertations provided a point of access to materials produced in universities on specific subjects.⁷²
- 4.99 In response, the Committee noted that in Australia there appeared to be 'no central point' for 'people who are interested' in African-Australian relations.⁷³ This led to discussion of the current scope and role of the AFSAAP, a professional association for "Africanists".

The African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific

- 4.100 In its submission to the inquiry, the AFSAAP advised the Committee of its current functions and aims, including to:
- 'maintain a network of Africanist scholars';
 - 'facilitate communication between members';

70 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 23.

71 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, pp. 16, 21.

72 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 20.

73 *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 20.

- publish the *Australasian Review of African Studies*;
 - organise an annual conference; and
 - 'encourage advocacy and cooperation amongst interested parties'.⁷⁴
- 4.101 Dr Cherry Gertzel, Adjunct Professor, Curtin University, advised the Committee that scholarly interest in research into Africa in Australia increased in the 'late 1960s', and this persisted through the 1970s and 80s.⁷⁵ Dr Dimock noted that this expansion had led to the creation of the AFSAAP as a means of coordinating research in the area.^{76,77}
- 4.102 A paper provided by Dr Dimock and Dr Tanya Lyons, Flinders University, but contributing in a private capacity, gave the reasons for this interest, including:
- interest in liberation struggles and newly-independent African states;
 - an emphasis on area studies as a function of Cold War geo-politics;
 - 'waves' of 'migrants from Southern Africa ... fleeing white racist regimes'; and,
 - the collapse of apartheid and interest in nation-building in the new South Africa.⁷⁸
- 4.103 Interest in Africa began to decrease in the early 1990s.⁷⁹ Dr Lucas advised the Committee that, following the mid-1990s, research into Africa in Australia experienced a number of contractions. A reduction in academics working in the area progressed to the point where there were reckoned to be, as of 2003, as little as 10 'teaching topics related to Africa' in the whole of Australia.⁸⁰
- 4.104 A key factor was a system of institutional incentives for studies in the Asia-Pacific region, consistent with priorities laid-down by Australian

74 AFSAAP, *Submission No. 60*, pp. 673-4.

75 Prof. Cherry Gertzel, *Submission No. 41*, pp. 419-20; Dr Elizabeth Dimock and Dr Tanya Lyons, *Exhibit No. 10, The State of African Studies in Australia*, in Paul Zeleza (ed.), *The Study of Africa Volume 2: Global and Transnational Engagements*, CODESRIA, 2007), pp. 316-17.

76 Dr Elizabeth Dimock, *Submission No. 28*, p. 213.

77 The foundation meeting of the ASFAAP was in 1978. See <<http://www.afaap.org.au/Conferences/Conferences.htm>>, Accessed June 2010.

78 *Exhibit No. 10*, pp. 316-17.

79 Prof. Cherry Gertzel, *Submission No. 41*, pp. 419-20; *Exhibit No. 10*, pp. 316-17.

80 Dr David Lucas, *Submission No. 22*, p. 164, quoting *Exhibit No. 10*.

governments since the mid-nineteen-nineties.⁸¹ Reflecting this down-turn, La Trobe University closed its African Research Institute in 2006.⁸²

- 4.105 Dr Lucas told the Committee that the AFSAAP had been affected by these developments. The association's members now numbered between 100 and 200, and were in decline. Moreover, the AFSAAP had insufficient influence to achieve its objectives because it had not attracted members at Vice-Chancellor or similar levels of seniority.⁸³
- 4.106 Dr Dimock advised the Committee that it had 'always been the case' that Africanists had been 'spread across many disciplines' Australia-wide, and that this had been the reason for creating the AFSAAP and La Trobe University's African Research Institute.⁸⁴ However, Dr Dorward advised the Committee, the overall contraction in participation in African Studies in Australia had led to the AFSAAP being unable to perform, effectively, the coordinating function for which it was first intended.⁸⁵

African Studies in Australian universities

- 4.107 The Committee considered the effect of this trend on scholarship on Africa in Australian universities. A number of witnesses advised the Committee that there had been a significant down-turn in the area.
- 4.108 Dr Dorward advised the Committee that within Australian academia 'the pool of African expertise had collapsed dramatically in the past decade with retirements and as university administrations shift toward fee-paying courses', and a 'once significant pool of localised expertise on Africa within academia ... has all but disappeared'. This correlated with a similar trend in the NGO sector.⁸⁶
- 4.109 The paper provided to the Committee by Dr Dimock and Dr Lyons supplied further evidence for this trend. It presented survey-based information on the state of research and teaching in African topic-areas in Australian universities as at 2003. At that time the survey showed that of 38 public universities in Australia 'only fourteen Australian ... appear to have any African Studies in their teaching programmes'. Of a 'total of 49 topics that ... mention Africa ... on offer at undergraduate and

81 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 22.

82 Dr David Lucas, *Submission No. 22*, p. 164.

83 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 21.

84 Dr Elizabeth Dimock, *Submission No. 28*, p. 213.

85 Dr David Dorward, *Submission No. 6*, p. 53.

86 Dr David Dorward, *Submission No. 6*, p. 52.

postgraduate levels in these universities, only sixteen' were 'specific to Africa, while another 33 included Africa within a comparative context'.⁸⁷

- 4.110 Dr Lyons advised the Committee that the survey 'demonstrates the lack of an Africa specific focus in topics available to tertiary students', and 'clearly shows that Australian universities are not able to provide [in-depth] opportunities within tertiary education to study Africa'.⁸⁸
- 4.111 Dr Lyons also advised the Committee that other features of African scholarship in Australia also demonstrated a lack of capacity, in particular:
- an absence of dedicated academic appointments in the area;
 - the closure of the only dedicated African Research Institute; and
 - an absence of jobs for African experts in Australia, whether in universities or in government.⁸⁹
- 4.112 When Dr Lyons appeared before the Committee, she was asked if the state of academic study of Africa in Australia reflected similar trends overseas. Dr Lyons responded that this was not the case: there were substantial, long-term commitments to African Studies in the United States of America, Britain, France and Canada. The American African Studies Association, in particular, was 'huge'.⁹⁰ In her submission, Dr Lyons also advised the Committee that China had 'addressed this issue by promoting African studies', in line with its other interests in Africa.⁹¹
- 4.113 Dr Lyons told the Committee that in Australian universities, by contrast, African scholarship had a low profile. To her knowledge no African languages were taught and, she advised the Committee, she was 'one of the few academics in Australia to teach dedicated topics on African studies to students in international relations'.⁹²
- 4.114 While Dr Lyons advised the Committee that there were 'a significant number of postgraduates conducting research into Africa and African issues' there was 'no research to date that tracks this research or its outcomes'. She observed that, 'anecdotally it would appear that many

87 *Exhibit No. 10*, p. 319.

88 Dr Tanya Lyons, *Submission No. 29*, pp. 216.

89 Dr Tanya Lyons, *Submission No. 29*, p. 217.

90 Dr Tanya Lyons, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, pp. 48-9.

91 Dr Tanya Lyons, *Submission No. 29*, p. 217.

92 Dr Tanya Lyons, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, p. 44, and *Submission No. 29*, p. 216.

researchers are unaware of each other and [as a result] each continues to reinvent the research wheel'.⁹³

Committee comment

- 4.115 On the basis of evidence to the inquiry, it appears that Australia's capacity to research and teach African studies, and coordinate this work, is declining compared to other nations.
- 4.116 The Committee also notes with concern the present state of the AFSAAP, in which it appears less able to perform the coordinating role for which it was created. The Committee notes the absence of sufficient coordinating activities in Australia, which reduces Australia's capacity to produce good work in the area.
- 4.117 The Committee is also concerned over the low prevalence of academic courses and appointments in African Studies; and the reported loss of expertise in other sectors such as NGOs.
- 4.118 In the Committee's view, it would seem that if Australia wishes to place a priority on Africa, in view of its emergent interests, it should take deliberate steps to expand its expertise and capacity to engage by establishing a centre specialising in African studies. This will provide a point of focus; a coordinating function; and a direct injection of resources into an area that has clearly declined since the mid-19 90s.

Creation of a centre to focus on African studies

- 4.119 The Committee considered a number of models for a facility to answer the need for Australia to foster greater expertise and a greater research capacity in relation to Africa. These included:
- a new centre under the ARC Centre of Excellence program;⁹⁴
 - a new centre under the Government's Cooperative Research Centres program;⁹⁵
 - an 'Australia-Africa Research Institute',⁹⁶ potentially based on a consortium model,⁹⁷ or that of the Lowy Institute;⁹⁸ and

93 Dr Tanya Lyons, *Submission No. 29*, p. 217.

94 *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 24; Dr David Lucas, *Submission No. 22*, p. 163.

95 *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 24.

96 *Transcript 28 April, 2010*, p. 43.

97 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 19.

98 Dr Tanya Lyons, *Transcript 28 April 2010*, p. 43.

- direct funding of an academic unit or faculty in an Australian university.⁹⁹

Centre of Excellence

- 4.120 In Australia, the term 'Centre of Excellence' refers to a centre created under a formal program of the Australian Research Council (ARC) as part of the National Competitive Grants Program.¹⁰⁰
- 4.121 The ARC website shows that many of the Centres of Excellence funded under the program deal with relatively specific areas of study often, although not exclusively, within the physical sciences. In the 2005, for example, 11 Centres of Excellence were funded under the program, out of which one could be construed as being outside of the physical sciences. This was the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation.¹⁰¹
- 4.122 However there are other ways of setting a focus for research under the program. It is open to government to set priority areas for research funded by the ARC, which then attract applications in particular areas of study. These are known as 'Special Research Initiatives'.¹⁰²
- 4.123 An example of this was the priority set on *Policing and Security* in the 2006 ARC grants round, for funding commencing in 2007.¹⁰³ This also shows that under this arrangement priorities can be set outside of the physical sciences. Outcomes for this round show, for this Special Research Initiative, that all five of the successful applications were from Humanities and Creative Arts. However, it also shows that such initiatives do not create a physical centre: successful applications were from a range of other units and institutions, which pursued separate projects, only related by the funding arrangement.¹⁰⁴
- 4.124 This provides some basis to suggest that this may be an avenue through which government could set a priority on research into African Studies, for which precedents and funding arrangements already exist. Support for this approach came from Murdoch University which suggested that proposals should be assessed against ARC criteria.¹⁰⁵

99 Mr Wakholi, *Submission No. 32*, p. 239.

100 <http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/ce/ce_default.htm>, Accessed June 2010.

101 <http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/ce/2005_coe_funding.htm>, Accessed June 2010.

102 <http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/sri/sri_default.htm>, Accessed June 2010.

103 <http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/ce/ce_outcomes.htm>, Accessed June 2010.

104 <http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/ce/ceps_selectionreport.htm>, Accessed June 2010.

105 Prof. Craig McGarty, *Transcript 10 March 2011*, p. 3.

Committee comment

- 4.125 The ARC Centres of Excellence program offers one avenue through which Australia could increase its research capacity in African Studies. While many of the projects which are currently funded lie within the physical sciences, the Special Research Initiatives sub-program provides a tool through which government could invite and fund applications from researchers with proposals pertinent to Africa.
- 4.126 However, there are two disadvantages in adopting this approach. First, it would not create a physical 'centre' for African Studies in Australia, because it would fund a suite of separate projects. Second, there are questions over the longevity of such an initiative. In the Committee's view, a persistent physical centre for African Studies is required if Australia is to regenerate its capacity in this area.

Cooperative Research Centre

- 4.127 A second proposal considered by the Committee was for a Cooperative Research Centre for African Studies.
- 4.128 The Cooperative Research Centres program is administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR). The DIISR web-page for Cooperative Research Centres states that the program's objective is to:
- ... deliver significant economic, environmental and social benefits to Australia by supporting end-user driven research partnerships between publicly funded researchers and end-users to address clearly articulated, major challenges that require medium to long term collaborative efforts.¹⁰⁶
- 4.129 The web-page states that to date 'there have been a total of 168 CRCs', and there are currently:
- 48 CRCs operating in 6 sectors: environment (10), agriculture and rural-based manufacturing (14), information and communication technology (5), mining and energy (4), medical science and technology (8) and manufacturing technology (7).¹⁰⁷

106 <https://www.crc.gov.au/Information/ShowInformation.aspx?Doc=about_programme&key=bulletin-board-programme&Heading=The%20Program>, Accessed 2/06/2010.

107 <https://www.crc.gov.au/Information/ShowInformation.aspx?Doc=about_programme&key=bulletin-board-programme&Heading=The%20Program>, Accessed June 2010.

- 4.130 CRCs are funded for 'up to 10 years', but this is contingent, however, upon 'the outcomes of rigorous reviews' made by an 'independent panel of experts' in the fourth and eighth years.¹⁰⁸

Committee comment

- 4.131 The Committee notes that, as for the ARC *Centres of Excellence* program, a bias is evident in DIISR's CRCs program in favour of physical sciences and technology.¹⁰⁹
- 4.132 Nevertheless, the CRCs provide a number of functions which the Committee has identified as being desirable for regenerating capacity in African Studies in Australia. In particular, the Committee notes the ability of CRCs to combine to increase research capacity in an area, and foster long-term research interests in particular areas.
- 4.133 On the other hand, CRCs have a tightly focused research interest which does not encompass undergraduate teaching. A CRC needs a source of graduates with a specialist knowledge if it is to develop a research capacity. As well, CRCs have a limited life which could be as short as four years. This is in conflict with the Committee's view that it is necessary to achieve a long-term increase in Australia's expertise in African Studies if Australia is to pursue its interests and good global citizenship effectively.

Africa-Australia Institute

- 4.134 The Committee considered the role of the former African Research Institute (ARI), which operated at La Trobe University from 1985 to 2006, and whether a successor to the ARI would answer the needs identified for the revival of African Studies in Australia.¹¹⁰
- 4.135 The paper provided to the Committee by Dr Dimock and Dr Lyons noted that the ARI maintained 'ties with the Africa-Australia Business Council, the South Africa Business Council and a broad spectrum of African community and special interest groups'. They also noted linkages with the Australian Government – members of the 'Australian diplomatic corps [had] visited the Institute before departure to postings in Africa and provided briefings upon their return to Australia'.

108 <https://www.crc.gov.au/HTMLDocuments/Documents/PDF/CRC%20Program%20Guidelines_Feb%202010.pdf>, Accessed May 2011.

109 <https://www.crc.gov.au/Information/ShowInformation.aspx?Doc=12th_Selection_rounds&key=bulletin-board-selection-rounds_12&Heading=Selection%20Round#12th SuccessfulCRCs>, Accessed June 2010.

110 Dr Elizabeth Dimock, *Submission No. 28*, p. 213; Dr Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 15.

- 4.136 In this sense, the exhibit suggested, the ARI together with the AFSAAP had, before its closure, performed a range of functions that had fostered, and provided a focus and a point of coordination for Australian research on Africa.¹¹¹ In view of this, the Committee considered whether such an institute should again be created in Australia, to perform similar functions.
- 4.137 Witnesses to the inquiry told the Committee of two models which might be considered. Dr Lucas referred to a research centre on Africa that had been created at the London School of Economics (LSE), the 'LSE African Initiative', as a consortium between the LSE and Oxford University, with additional funding from elsewhere.¹¹²
- 4.138 Dr Lyons told the Committee that the Lowy Institute for International Policy was a suitable model for a future African research institute. The Lowy Institute is described as an 'independent international policy think tank'. It is a privately-endowed organisation, based in Sydney, which publishes papers on foreign policy; hosts conferences; and provides fellowships for researchers on foreign policy.¹¹³ It currently maintains a staff of 42, of which 23 are either fellows, visiting fellows or non-resident fellows.¹¹⁴

Committee comment

- 4.139 The Committee considers that these are interesting models for an Australian research centre or institute on Africa, and that they hold out the prospect of a flexible and inclusive model for such a centre.
- 4.140 In this inquiry the Committee is bound to consider, among other things, what may be done by government to foster African Studies in Australia. Neither the LSE African Initiative nor the Lowy Institute were initiated by government – the first created as an initiative between universities, the second by private endowment.¹¹⁵

111 *Exhibit No.10*, p. 329.

112 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 19. See *LSE African Initiative*, <<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/supportingLSE/currentProjects/LSEAFRICANINITIATIVE.aspx>>, Accessed July 2010.

113 <<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/AboutUs.asp>>, Accessed February 2010.

114 <<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/Staff.asp>>, Accessed February 2010.

115 <<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/supportingLSE/currentProjects/LSEAFRICANINITIATIVE.aspx>>, Accessed July 2010.

- 4.141 In addition, an institute, such as that based on the Lowy Institute, for example, would not contain an education element at either student or postgraduate level.
- 4.142 An alternative would be creating a specialised academic unit or faculty for African Studies within an existing university,¹¹⁶ partially or fully funded by the Government.

Where to locate a centre

- 4.143 The Committee has considered a number of alternative models for locating a studies centre.
- 4.144 Dr Lucas told the Committee that difficulties arose in choosing a university as a site for such a unit or faculty, as the main elements of Australian academic expertise in African Studies were distributed, on the whole, between two universities: Monash University and the University of Sydney.¹¹⁷ WA's Murdoch University has also argued for a centre, but one based on a hub and spokes model with 'important elements of the network' based on Australia's western coast. Perth was suggested because Western Australia has a higher density of Africans living in the state when compared to the East Coast states.¹¹⁸ Also it is closer to Africa,¹¹⁹ and is the location of the head offices of many Australian mining companies with interests in Africa.
- 4.145 The fact that Monash and Sydney Universities display significant strengths with respect to Africa raises the question of where a research facility should be established.
- 4.146 Dr Dimock told the Committee that while Monash and Sydney universities both had acknowledged strengths in the area, there were other factors that favoured Monash University. These, she suggested, were linkages on Africa with other universities in Melbourne; existing research projects and African-Australian staff in universities in Melbourne; and networks between universities and the 'very large African communities in Melbourne and in Victoria'.¹²⁰ Universities Australia also advised the Committee that, in its view, Monash University was the 'most active' Australian university in Africa.¹²¹

116 See Monash University, *Submission No. 70*, p. 2; Mr Wakholi, *Submission No. 32*, p. 2.

117 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 19.

118 Prof. Craig McGarty, *Transcript 10 March 2011*, pp. 3, 4.

119 Prof. Michael Broderick, *Transcript 10 March 2011*, p. 4.

120 Dr Elizabeth Dimock, *Transcript 5 May 2010*, p. 15.

121 Universities Australia, *Submission No. 24*, p. 180.

4.147 The AFSAAP favoured a distributed model, where a centre would be established in a university, but would extend its reach via online facilities. The AFSAAP advised the Committee that the Centre could:

... consist of a model whereby a central node is located in a university led by a Professor, whilst a number of spokes could be located virtually (or physically) in various parts of Australia. In this way, Africanist scholars resident outside of the major centres could participate as equals in various academic and administrative aspects of the Centre. Many of the newer educational technologies, including podcasts, could be deployed to foster greater inclusion of individuals and greater regional representation in an African Studies Centre.¹²²

4.148 Edith Cowan University provided support for a virtual centre:

... something into which all universities can contribute and which perhaps even moves between universities at a given period of time, rather than placing the onus on anyone University, or organisation for that matter, to keep it alive and functioning.¹²³

4.149 The Committee considered a model, in which the two main networks currently in operation – centred on Monash and Sydney universities – would be brought together under one title. Dr Lucas told the Committee that;

In many ways if AFSAAP could cooperate with Monash, which has its own network, and Sydney, which might have one, and we could all interact, we would save an awful lot of effort and advance the cause of Africa.¹²⁴

4.150 The Committee also considered the model proposed by Dr Dorward where government would provide funding for research materials, open to a competitive process, under the condition that the universities bidding for grants would undertake to establish a Chair of African Studies. Dr Dorward advised the Committee that the Australian Government, in allocating ‘resources carefully and with a clear focus’, should also ‘consider how it can build a long-term foundation for’ Australia’s relationship with the countries of Africa.¹²⁵

122 AFSAAP, *Submission No. 60*, p. 675.

123 Prof. Helen Vella Bonavita, *Transcript 10 March 2011*, p. 24.

124 Dr David Lucas, *Transcript 27 April 2010*, p. 21.

125 Dr David Dorward, *Submission No. 6*, p. 53.

Committee comment

- 4.151 This inquiry has highlighted the existence, within Australia, of a substantial body of expertise on African issues. The Committee believes that it is important to promote its coordination and further development.
- 4.152 Therefore the Committee proposes that a Centre for African Studies should be established, preferably, within a university in Australia.
- 4.153 This will facilitate a coordinated approach to education and training both at undergraduate and graduate level. Further, it will establish a focal point for coordinating expertise on African issues.
- 4.154 The Committee has not come to a view as to where such a centre should be located. Rather it supports aspects of the model proposed by Dr Dorward which would involve a competitive process. Such a process for establishing a centre will reveal the level of commitment of universities wishing to become the location of a Centre for African Studies. Ultimately such a centre could encompass a consortium of universities.

Recommendation 10

- 4.155 **The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations should:**
- **establish a Centre for African Studies;**
 - **invite competitive tenders from Australian universities for the establishment of the Centre;**
 - **engage stake-holders and potential partners for the Centre;**
 - **provide sufficient funding so that the Centre can:**
 - ⇒ **undertake research, education and training functions;**
 - ⇒ **engage with industry;**
 - ⇒ **raise the profile of African Studies in Australia; and**
 - ⇒ **provide value to both government and non-government end-users.**

