



Australian Government

AusAID

Supplementary submission to
the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Committee Inquiry
into the nature and conduct of Australia's public
diplomacy

Introduction

This submission by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee inquiry into the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy.

AusAID is part of the foreign affairs portfolio and this submission is supplementary to, and in support of, the DFAT submission, and relates specifically to the overseas aid program.

An extension for submission was sought and received from the committee secretariat.

Overview of the aid program and AusAID

Role and functions

The objective of Australia's overseas aid program is to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia's national interest.

AusAID works in 38 offices in 33 countries, with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region (see **Annex 1** for a list of AusAID post locations).

AusAID advises the government on development policy and manages the Australian Government's development cooperation program. The program focuses on the four interlinked themes of accelerating economic growth, fostering functioning and effective states, investing in people and promoting regional stability and cooperation, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. In this way AusAID contributes to and supports Australia's broader foreign policy interests. Public diplomacy plays a key role in this process.

In pursuing this role, AusAID draws upon lessons learned from five decades of official development cooperation and:

- strong relationships with other Australian government departments and agencies
- knowledge of the challenges of development in countries in the Asia-Pacific region
- expertise in how partner governments work, at both the national and sub-national level
- understanding of the vital importance of ensuring development is sustainable
- good bilateral, regional and international relationships with partner governments, other donors, multilateral organisations, civil society and the private sector in both Australia and developing countries
- understanding of the factors that contribute to aid effectiveness and sustainability, including in fragile states
- practical experience in quick and effective responses to emerging issues and humanitarian crises.

Operating context

In April 2006, Minister Downer launched the first-ever White Paper on the Australian aid program. The White Paper came nine years after the Government's first policy statement on aid, *Better Aid for a Better Future*. The intervening years have been a period of considerable change for the Australian aid program.

In 1997, aid volume stood at around \$1.7 billion. Since then, flows have increased to around \$2.9 billion and there have been substantial achievements recorded. The aid program has moved to the centre of the Government's regional engagement strategy, most notably through the \$1 billion Australia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development (AIPRD), the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and the Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) in PNG. Australia has played a key role in response to crises in the region, including the Indian Ocean tsunami and the South Asia earthquake. Australia is also a leader in the regional response to HIV/AIDS through a \$600 million commitment to 2010 and has helped to establish peace and assist post-conflict reconstruction in Bougainville and East Timor. Over 10,000 young leaders from the region have been supported through scholarships and people-to-people links have been enhanced through the establishment of the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development program.

The ways we deliver aid and the policy underpinning it have also evolved substantially in the past decade. The aid program now has a greatly enhanced emphasis on strengthening the policies and institutions of partner governments. A whole-of-government approach to aid delivery has seen the broader resources of the Australian Government, including the Treasury, Department of Finance and Administration, Australian Federal Police and Attorney General's Department, mobilised to address the development challenges of the region.

The program has adopted innovative methods of aid delivery that are better aligned to partner government systems and more responsive and flexible to local circumstances. Delivery increasingly involves working alongside and within partner governments to improve performance across sectors. AusAID itself is a far more analytical aid agency with more resources dedicated to the field and greater sectoral and thematic expertise at its disposal. AusAID staff are increasingly involved directly in program implementation, including through co-location with the national and provincial administrations of partner countries. These changes have resulted in a marked reduction in the number of 'aid projects' and a significant fall in the proportion of the program delivered through traditional Australian managing contractor arrangements.

The White Paper

It was against this background in September 2005 that the Prime Minister announced the Government's intention to double the aid budget to around \$4 billion by 2010. The announcement was subject to three critical conditions: the effectiveness of the application of additional resources, reduced corruption and improved governance in partner countries.

Following on from this announcement, the Minister launched the White Paper. *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability* provides the strategic framework to guide the direction and delivery of the program over the next 10 years. It provides a comprehensive account of how the Government will approach the doubling of the aid budget to around \$4 billion annually by 2010 as announced by the Prime Minister.

Organisation structure

AusAID is an administratively autonomous agency within the foreign affairs and trade portfolio. The Director General of AusAID reports directly to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on all aspects of aid policy and operations. The Director General is responsible to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the administration of the agency and is a member of the department's executive.

All AusAID posted officers play an important role in representing the Australian Government's interests to partner governments and supporting the implementation of Australian Government policy through the aid program. In country they are responsible to the Head of Mission.

In addition, in five countries and in Canberra AusAID has dedicated, specialist public affairs/diplomacy staff with specific responsibilities for the promotion and enhancement of the aid program in Australia and overseas. Officials, development specialists and contractors also contribute to these efforts alongside their program responsibilities. In the cases of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, our largest development cooperation programs, staff in-country are directly supported by staff in Canberra based at the relevant country desk.

A manager with responsibility for post liaison, emergencies and disaster support is based in Canberra, reporting to the Director Media and Parliamentary Services. This officer works closely with posts to support their public diplomacy and promotional efforts, assists with strategy and implementation and provides surge capacity in the event of a disaster.

Partnerships for development

Effective partnerships with key international, regional and Australian stakeholders are critical to quality development cooperation. Globally, this is reflected in the growing emphasis on harmonisation and alignment of development cooperation activities between donors and partner countries, and among donors.

Australia's development cooperation partners include recipient countries, other bilateral and multilateral donors, international and regional organisations, and civil society organisations both in Australia and overseas. Regular policy dialogue, staff exchanges, and policy and program coordination are the main channels through which Australia pursues collaboration and closer relationships with its key partners.

CASE STUDY Boosting Regional Linkages through Australian Leadership Award Fellowships

The Australian Government is working to strengthen ties with its regional neighbours and build leadership capacity within the region through the new Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships program, part of the government's \$1.4 billion Australian Scholarships initiative.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs has recently announced 39 Australian organisations will host 370 fellows from 24 countries across the Asia-Pacific region in the inaugural round of the fellowships.

The Australian Government is providing \$8 million for the ALA Fellowships Program, supporting the academic and professional development of men and women. An alumni is also being established as part of the program to support and strengthen the network of fellows and foster enduring ties to Australia.

The fellows have been granted further study and work placements across the government, private industry, research and university sectors. The range of organisations involved highlights the strong interest by a broad cross-section of the Australian community in the development of the Asia-Pacific region.

Fellows will gain education and experience in a diverse range of areas, including clean energy, international trade, regional security and pandemics. They will draw on the skills and knowledge acquired during their time in Australia to shape social and economic policy and encourage development in their own countries.

Australian government partners

The Australian Government takes a whole-of-government approach to addressing development challenges particularly in our region, with AusAID playing a central coordinating role. Other government departments and agencies have unique skills and capabilities that complement and support aid initiatives. Thus AusAID works proactively with a range of government partners, has established close strategic and operational relationships with them, and is drawing upon their skills and expertise to tackle shared objectives in a direct, practical way.

While AusAID is responsible for managing and delivering Australia's aid program, the skills and expertise of a wide range of Australian government agencies are drawn on to meet the region's development challenges. Thus there is a whole-of-government approach to the development and implementation of aid strategies reflected through high level government engagement on policy formulation, programming and implementation strategies.

The White Paper process is an important example of this engagement. The process was guided by a high level intergovernmental steering committee comprising the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Treasury. Regular formal dialogue also took place with a range of other government departments including the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Education, Science and Training and the Australian Federal Police.

Country strategies provide the overall policy and implementation framework for Australia's aid program in any given country. They translate the White Paper's overall guiding themes and strategies into programs tailored to individual country circumstances and priorities. Country strategies are developed in consultation with whole-of-government partners and agreed jointly with partner governments.

AusAID has established formal strategic partnership agreements with selected Australian government departments and agencies to ensure the effectiveness and coordination of joint initiatives.

These agreements identify the shared strategic priorities for each agency and recognise the individual skills and strengths each brings to the partnership. They formalise arrangements to ensure AusAID and its partners work together in a cohesive and practical way, at both strategic and operational levels, to maximise the effectiveness of Australia's international development efforts.

In addition to the close partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, AusAID also works closely with:

- the Treasury, Department of Finance and Administration, Australian Defence Force, Australian Federal Police and Attorney General's Department on

- developing and implementing policy on Australia's engagement with the Pacific, particularly Solomon Islands, Nauru and Vanuatu
- the Attorney General's Department, Australian Federal Police, Treasury and Department of Finance and Administration on developing and implementing policy designed to combat corruption in the region
- the Treasury, Department of Finance and Administration, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Federal Police and Australian Customs Service on the Papua New Guinea Development Cooperation Strategy. These parties are also members of a steering group which meets to coordinate Australia's broader engagement with Papua New Guinea
- the Treasury on the public expenditure review and rationalisation process in Papua New Guinea
- the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Federal Police, Treasury, Department of Finance and Administration, Attorney General's Department, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Defence Force in coordinating Australia's engagement in Solomon Islands
- Australian government departments ranging from the Department of Transport and Regional Services through to the Treasury and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to implement the aid program in Indonesia. This includes the implementation of the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development. The whole-of-government approach has been particularly prominent in the Government Partnership Fund, the Legal Development Facility and various counter-terrorism initiatives
- the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Department of Health and Ageing to provide regular coordination on proposals and reports relating to avian influenza. These departments also implemented AusAID funded avian influenza related programs overseas
- the Department of Health and Ageing on the new International Health Policy and joint participation in World Health Organization World Health Assembly.

The Australian Government established the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) in 2006 to monitor the quality and evaluate the impact of the Australian aid program. The ODE conducts evaluations or reviews of major country programs when a new strategy is to be developed. It also manages a program of flagship thematic evaluations, usually led by senior, internationally recognised figures. ODE's evaluation program is based on the following criteria:

- relevance to policy or budget priorities
- whole of government interest
- cross program relevance
- tripling of new evaluation methodologies.

The ODE will publish an Annual Review of Development Effectiveness drawing on the breadth of its work, including quality process reviews, evaluations and on the experiences of all Australian agencies delivering official development assistance. The annual review

will be integrated into the government's budget cycle and provides a practical link between expanding allocations and increased aid effectiveness.

The first Annual Review of Development Effectiveness will be released in late 2007. It will complement the annual reports of AusAID and other aid-delivering Australian government agencies.

CASE STUDY Improving governance in Indonesia through the Government Partnerships Fund

Economic and financial reform and good governance are essential to reducing poverty and promoting broad-based sustainable growth. AusAID has formed alliances with 12 key Australian government agencies to help improve Indonesia's economic governance under the Government Partnerships Fund.

Agencies such as the Reserve Bank, the Treasury and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission are working directly with their Indonesian counterparts to design and implement long-term programs that focus on tax administration, debt management, financial sector regulation and supervision, and international trade policy.

The Australian National Audit Office, for example, is helping the Indonesian government track expenditure and monitor the performance of its economic and social programs more effectively.

The program has provided training, internships and secondments to 120 Indonesians and has brought together over 200 Australian and Indonesian officials to exchange knowledge on budget modelling and forecasting, cash management and debt retirement, risk-based approaches to financial regulation, free trade negotiation skills and central bank operations.

Partner governments

The Australian aid program is guided by the needs and priorities of our partner countries. This ensures AusAID programs align with partner government systems, planning frameworks and specific development plans.

Successfully developing these relationships requires:

- developing country and regional program strategies in consultation with partner governments
- ensuring all new aid projects are supported by formal agreements with partner governments
- ensuring AusAID staff located overseas maintain a dialogue with our partners on a day-to-day basis

- undertaking project monitoring visits and project evaluations jointly with partner government representatives.

Working through partner government systems to implement aid programs is a highly effective form of engagement and provides strategic benefits in aid delivery by strengthening those systems, building capacity of our counterparts and engendering shared ownership of projects. This is a major initiative of the White Paper and is reflected in major new infrastructure projects such as the national roads improvement program and basic education program in Indonesia, both of which are being delivered through Indonesian national and provincial government systems.

Partnerships with other donors

Following the release of the White Paper, partnerships with other bilateral and multilateral donors are increasingly important in the aid program. More effective donor harmonisation reduces burdens placed on partner governments and allows donors to share best practice to achieve better development outcomes for the world's poor. In 2005-06, AusAID strengthened these relationships by:

- engaging with the OECD-Development Assistance Committee Joint Venture on Monitoring the Paris Declaration, which will monitor progress towards meeting Paris Declaration commitments
- promoting aid reform measures through the Development Assistance Committee in areas such as capacity development, trade related technical assistance, provision of comparative aid data and the provision of aid to fragile states
- promoting interagency exchanges, secondments and placing representatives in a range of other donor organisations including the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank
- improving coordination by undertaking aid consultations with New Zealand, Japan, France, the United Kingdom, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank
- developing aid diplomacy strategies to facilitate more effective aid coordination across the aid program.

CASE STUDY

Road rehabilitation in Solomon Islands

In 2005-06, AusAID entered into a partnership with the government of Solomon Islands, New Zealand and the Asian Development Bank to rehabilitate rural roads and support rural livelihoods across the two major islands of Guadalcanal and Malaita.

AusAID's contribution to the roads partnership is \$2.6 million in grant funding to the Asian Development Bank's Post Conflict Emergency Rehabilitation Project. This funding is supplemented by road projects implemented through AusAID's own Community Sector Program.

So far, 42 kilometres of road between Atori in East Malaita and the capital Auki have been rehabilitated through the Community Sector Program roads project.

The transformation of an overgrown walking track into a fully operational road has increased opportunities for Solomon Islanders in isolated rural communities. The road has provided greater access to markets for local produce thereby increasing rural incomes and strengthening rural livelihoods for both men and women. It has provided a focus for local economic activity and encouraged the establishment of small markets for the sale of local produce. It has also eased access to essential services including schools and health clinics, and encouraged greater contact between communities and with communities by local and national government representatives.

Australian and international industry partners

Australian industry contributes to the aid program by providing expertise and services through contracting. All tender opportunities are advertised on the business and tender pages of the AusAID website.

The untying of Australia's aid program as of 26 April 2006 has provided opportunities to strengthen and improve efficiency of the aid program through international contracts. It also potentially provides the Australian development industry with access to procurement opportunities within the European Union's aid program on the basis of reciprocity. The share of this market potentially accessible on a reciprocal basis (consisting of the EU budgetised development assistance but excluding the European Development Fund which is restricted to EU, African, Caribbean and Pacific nationals) is valued at around \$10.5 billion annually. This represents substantial opportunities for the Australian development industry.

As providers of expertise in identifying, designing and implementing aid activities, AusAID values Australian and international industry highly. The agency communicates regularly with industry via the ConsultNet email bulletin system and AusAID's business website, and incorporates industry feedback in its continual improvement of tender and contract procedures and documentation. It also holds forums on tendering and contract management issues with industry representatives and regularly briefs relevant stakeholders on major tendering opportunities in Australia and in relevant partner

countries. Following the announcement to untie aid, AusAID now advertises tendering opportunities on the OECD-Development Assistance Committee website and is developing strategies to attract international industry partners.

Where industry and government have shared interests and complementary skills and strengths, other opportunities for engagement are also being developed. An example of this approach is the Asia-Pacific Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS developed by AusAID and the Lowy Institute and launched by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and President Bill Clinton in 2006.

CASE STUDY Asia-Pacific Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS

This initiative, which has evolved out of a partnership between the Australian Government and the Lowy Institute for International Policy, recognises the long-term threat that HIV/AIDS poses for Australian and regional business.

The need for business involvement in tackling HIV is underscored by the fact that this disease targets the most productive segment of a society, its workers. Business has the wherewithal to influence its employees, its partners and its customers. It has expertise in selling products, spreading knowledge and in shaping attitudes and behaviour. Together business and government can create a formidable opposition to HIV/AIDS.

Margaret Jackson AC, the chair of Qantas, is the Chair of the coalition and Lachlan Murdoch is the Deputy Chair. The coalition involves a number of leading Australian companies with significant business interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Companies such as Qantas, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, News Ltd, BHP Billiton, Deacons and many others have committed time and resources to the project.

The coalition is also encouraging and supporting the development of other national coalitions to intensify the effort of governments and business to challenges the HIV/AIDS issue. In February 2007 Ms Jackson and Mr Murdoch traveled to PNG to launch the PNG Business Coalition, and in December 2006 the coalition also formed an alliance with the Thailand Business Coalition.

The Australian Government continues to support the coalition and is represented on its board by a senior AusAID official.

People to people links

Australian volunteers are very active in the aid program and play a vital role in the fight against poverty.

The Australian Government has provided support to Australian volunteers overseas since the 1960s. Since then, over 11,400 volunteers have been placed overseas with government funding.

These programs match Australians with organisations in developing countries needing support in particular areas of expertise. Placements are made with public and private sector, non-government and civil society organisations and educational institutions, in priority areas identified by partner countries and AusAID country program strategies.

One of the Australian Government's most popular initiatives is the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development volunteer program for young Australians aged 18-30.

Each year around 400 young people travel to developing countries in our region to work for up to a year on programs designed to tackle poverty through the transfer of Australian expertise and strengthen people to people links.

The program places skilled young Australians on short-term assignments of between 3-12 months, in developing countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Since 1998 nearly 2000 youth ambassadors have been sent overseas to 20 partner countries. In the latest round (February 2007), 136 Youth Ambassadors have been accepted in 17 countries including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Kiribati, Mongolia, Philippines, PNG, Samoa, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

Emergency, humanitarian and refugee programs

Public diplomacy plays a key role in AusAID's humanitarian and emergency relief activities, where coordination of government and donor efforts are vital to appropriate and timely aid delivery without duplication of effort.

To ensure effective responses to conflict and disasters, AusAID works in cooperation with international and Australian partners to improve disaster preparedness and risk reduction strategies.

In the past five years, at the request of other governments, AusAID has responded to over 60 emergencies in the region. The most significant of these has included the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami and the 2005 Pakistan earthquake. In addition, the agency has responded to humanitarian crises, most recently in East Timor.

These efforts are supported by specialist public affairs staff who manage media interest in the event or activity, ensure accurate and timely reporting back to Australia, coordinate communication efforts and liaise with other donors.

In recent years, public affairs officers, many of whom have been trained in rapid emergency response, have been deployed in the initial aftermath of a disaster, for example following the 2004 tsunami, the 2005 Nias earthquake, the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake and the 2006 conflict in East Timor.

Activities have included:

- Pre-departure briefings for rapid response teams and media opportunities on departure and arrival
- Producing information products such as media releases, background briefs and progress reports
- Providing opportunities for media to cover the story in-country e.g. through access to aid workers and AusAID funded projects
- Vision feeds to TV stations of Australian emergency relief and assessment efforts
- Arranging Ministerial and other special visits to disaster sites and later to inspect reconstruction activities
- Media visits.

Public diplomacy has also been a significant focus in strengthening engagement in international and multilateral fora to facilitate advocacy of regional issues, research and development of guidelines regarding protection of vulnerable populations in humanitarian situations, and identifying and integrating lessons learned from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami into enhanced humanitarian response mechanisms.

For example, Australia has hosted senior delegations from France and New Zealand at the annual France, Australia and New Zealand Joint Statement on Disaster Relief Cooperation in the South Pacific (FRANZ). The FRANZ partnership is a critical information sharing and collaboration mechanism for Australia in the event of a natural disaster in the Pacific region. The meeting successfully strengthened the trilateral relationships, and partners discussed and endorsed a set of guidelines for the operational aspects of the partnership.

CASE STUDY Relief in sight

Relief in Sight is AusAID's photographic exhibition documenting the role played by Australia in the aftermath of emergencies throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Starting in February 2007 the exhibition will tour Australia for around two years raising awareness and understanding of Australia's humanitarian efforts.

The display also offers an insight into Australia's domestic and international partnerships which help ensure well targeted and appropriate levels of response in emergency situations. The images in the exhibition have been contributed by Australian government departments and agencies, non-government organisations and private individuals and photographers.

Communication, education and information

AusAID is deepening and broadening its engagement with the Australian community and with stakeholders in recipient countries, harnessing their capacities and interests where these align with the aid program's strategic objectives. Preparation of the White Paper involved extensive consultation with specialists and the general public including through town hall meetings, and with the development community and partner countries overseas.

Prior to the release of the White Paper, opportunities for individuals and groups to engage with the aid program were primarily limited to issue-specific advisory bodies; one-off-mobilisation of skilled volunteers; funding of pre-approved non-government professional aid organisations; and contracts to implement AusAID programs following a tender process. While these mechanisms still have an important role, AusAID is exploring new opportunities for engagement, less through a funding relationship and more on the basis of collaboration where we have shared development interests.

Promoting the aid program

Communicating with the public in Australia and in partner countries, is a priority for the agency. AusAID's public affairs program plays an important role in promoting the overseas aid program and enhancing its reputation in Australia and in recipient countries, particularly with government and aid partners.

Public affairs supports the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary, and provides strategic and program advice on communication issues. The program is underpinned by a public affairs strategy that directs activities towards:

1. supporting implementation of the White Paper and AusAID's role in a whole of government context

2. helping to demonstrate aid effectiveness and strengthen public support for the Australian aid program
3. strengthening relationships and partnerships and developing new initiatives in order to enhance our reputation and our effectiveness
4. providing sound, strategic advice and identifying emerging opportunities and issues.

Specific activities include:

- a series of policy launches in the first half of 2007
- a range of print and electronic publications on the aid program including policy documents and strategies, corporate reform, development education and the agency's flagship *Focus* magazine
- an extensive stakeholder engagement program and event series to raise awareness of Australian aid and development, with a particular focus on the White Paper and Australia's contribution in the region, and
- new media products such as documentaries and travelling exhibitions to deliver aid messages in new and innovative ways.

AusAID works closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and with other Australian government agencies at our overseas posts in implementing many of these programs. For example, in the countries in which we operate the Head of Mission is an important advocate for the aid program, representing our interests to our partner governments, at events and also promoting our activities to the media.

In programmatic work our partnerships with other government agencies are important to the achievement of outcomes. For example, collaboration with the Department of Education, Science and Training is important to the promotion of the \$1.4 billion Australian Scholarships program, our support for a campaign to curb illegal fishing in Eastern Indonesia is being implemented with DFAT and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and our law and order programs in the Pacific are delivered in conjunction with the Australian Federal Police.

Australia's aid program enjoys a high degree of awareness and support within the Australian community. Quantitative research conducted by Newspoll in 2005 into community attitudes and opinions about overseas aid found:

- Since 2001, total approval of aid has grown from 85 per cent to 91 per cent
- The proportion of Australians who approve "a lot" of giving aid to poor countries increased from 58 per cent in 2001 to 70 per cent in 2005
- Community belief in the effectiveness of both Australian Government and non-government aid has also grown measurably: 71 per cent (compared 53 per cent in 2001) believe Australian government aid is effective; 76 per cent (compared with 63 per cent in 2001) believe non-government aid is effective.

In recipient countries, awareness of the Australian Government's assistance is also high amongst our key stakeholders. However, this is not necessarily reflected in awareness levels amongst the broader population.

An example is the Solomon Islands where 1085 people across four provinces participated in the first People's Survey Pilot in 2006. An important finding was the high value men and woman of all ages placed on the opportunity to freely discuss and answer questions on issues of central importance to their lives.

The results in areas such as basic security, health and education showed the partnership between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI is making real progress.

Key findings included 92 per cent of people had seen a RAMSI officer in the past three months; and 65 per cent thought violent conflict would return to Solomon Islands if RAMSI left in the near future.

Media

AusAID supports the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs in communicating aid program initiatives to the Australian community and overseas. Public statements on major policy issues, funding commitments and achievements of the aid program are important to the transparency and accountability of the aid program, and to inform our stakeholders.

To this end, over the 2005-06 AusAID issued 109 media releases in Australia and 422 media releases overseas. The Minister and Parliamentary Secretary delivered 26 speeches on the aid program, and a further 236 speeches on the aid program were delivered in recipient countries. AusAID also produced two television documentaries which screened in Australia and in Asia to a combined audience of over one million people. Numerous policy and program reports, transcripts and other documents were released to media and all public statements are published and available on the AusAID website.

Examples of AusAID's media activities in the past year include:

- the launch of major policy statements including the Australian Government's White Paper on the overseas aid program, *Australian aid: promoting growth and stability*, the AusAID-Clinton Foundation partnership on HIV/AIDS and the *Pacific 2020* report on challenges and opportunities for growth
- the Prime Minister's XIII rugby league team headed by Mal Meninga which played the Kumuls in Papua New Guinea to raise awareness about HIV and respectful behaviour towards women
- emergency responses to the Yogyakarta earthquake, Philippines landslides and humanitarian assistance to East Timor

- A series of announcements and progress reports on Australia's aid to Indonesia after the tsunami.
- An Indonesian media visit to Australia, hosted by AusAID.

CASE STUDY 'Tingim Laip' - innovative strategies for HIV prevention in PNG

Successful HIV prevention requires support for communities and individuals to change behaviours that may put them at risk of infection. However, behaviour change is a difficult and lengthy process, and international experience shows it cannot be achieved through centralised, 'top-down' approaches alone. This lesson underlies an innovative approach in AusAID's support for HIV prevention in PNG, the high risk settings strategy, or '*Tingim Laip*' (think of life).

A part of this innovative approach has been the rugby league matches between the Australian PM's XIII and the PNG Kumuls. The games and associated community visits and events promote important health and development messages directly and through branding and community awareness campaigns. These have included messages on keeping fit and healthy, and playing by the rules by stopping violence against women, supporting initiatives to combat HIV/AIDS through behaviour change and supporting electoral education.

Stakeholder and community engagement

AusAID's stakeholder engagement activities are increasingly internationally focused, including support in-country for AusAID's international programs and engagement of international stakeholders in Australia. Examples of this include coordination of the East-ASEAN Initiative workshops in the Philippines and Indonesia in March 2007 and the Pacific 2020 conference in Sydney in 2006, which brought together leaders from the region to discuss opportunities and challenges.

Over the previous financial year AusAID public affairs function engaged in public diplomacy with the Australian community and stakeholders through 20 activities with a combined audience of 2.37 million people across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Other major activities included support to 17 International Women's Day events around Australia reaching more than 4 000 women, participation in the Burnet Institute World AIDS Day concert held in Federation Square in Melbourne and representation at the 7th ICAAP conference in Kobe, Japan.

Through the Certificate of Appreciation Program, AusAID has assisted 141 members of parliament present certificates to 850 volunteers in recognition of their overseas development work in 2005-06.

Global education

AusAID's global education program enables the government to directly target tomorrow's leaders and create aid advocates among Australia's teachers who will promote the activities of the aid program and an awareness of global issues year after year. Global education resources are also re-cast for regional use. For example, a special supplement produced in Australia on the Indian Ocean tsunami was revised, translated and used as teaching materials in Indonesia.

Schools often have access to limited teaching resources so the well-researched programs developed by AusAID are well received and highly regarded in schools and universities. Since January 2000 the program has worked with over 80,000 teachers who in turn reach up to 1.5 million students each year.

In 2005-06, AusAID helped train more than 18 000 primary, secondary and student teachers across Australia in development education. New curriculum materials were developed and more than 23 000 curriculum documents were distributed. The global education website was also popular with 195 000 visits during the year. Thirty-eight electronic publications were added to the website.

Publishing

The AusAID website plays an integral role in promoting Australia's aid activities as well as providing a resource point for a range of interest parties including people seeking scholarships and organisations looking to tender for contracts. In 2005-06 the site attracted around two million visitors.

AusAID responded to more than 4000 public requests for information through the website, while around 100 000 downloads of publications were recorded each month.

AusAID also supports posts to provide content linked to the AusAID website in other languages. Currently information is available in Vietnamese and Chinese languages linked from the AusAID main site.

AusAID also publishes a range of print publications each year including country strategies, policy documents and other publications which are distributed domestically as well as internationally to stakeholders.

AusAID's flagship publication, *Focus*, is a pictorial, large-format magazine designed to raise community awareness and understanding of the Australian Government's overseas aid program.

Focus is produced three times a year and is distributed through free subscription to individuals, organisations and businesses. *Focus* is also distributed through Qantas lounges and AusAID community engagement activities such as seminars. Around 10 percent of distribution goes overseas through AusAID offices and by direct mail.

Demand for *Focus* has risen steadily over a number of years with a current circulation of 50 000. The publication can also be viewed on the AusAID website. In 2005-06 over 12 500 visits lasting over a minute were recorded.

Branding

It is crucial to the success of the aid program that branding be clear and effective. In recent years, branding strategies for the aid program have aimed to convey the breadth of Australian Government involvement and emphasise the partnership with recipient governments. Examples of this approach include the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), the Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) in Papua New Guinea and the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development (AIPRD) – the \$1 billion aid package to Indonesia announced after the tsunami.

Communications budget

Public affairs and some posts have specific budgets for communications/diplomacy activities. In addition, many public diplomacy activities are undertaken as a component of individual country programs and aid projects. For example, AusAID contracts include a communications component.

Total direct expenditure on public affairs totals approximately \$4.6 million per annum, or approximately 0.15 per cent of the total aid budget.

The future

The release last year of the Government's white paper on aid will see a doubling of the aid budget by 2010. As a consequence AusAID will have a greater, more complex overseas presence engaged directly in both policy dialogue with host governments and donors, and in active aid program implementation.

Within the context of the White Paper, AusAID's operating state will be driven by two factors:

- the need for a strong centre that sets the strategic directions for the program and agency, supports the delivery function and manages the risks posed by a predominantly offshore operating state; and
- the need for very strong teams based in key partner countries and multilateral centres to manage and implement the significantly expanded aid program through more diverse and complex delivery mechanisms.

There will be a greater focus on regional programs, global partnerships with key multilateral organisations and the international financial institutions, a much larger development research program and increased participation in the aid program by core Australian government agencies.

The delivery mechanisms under the program will be more complex, dependent on specific country circumstances and built around key partnerships. AusAID will have a much greater impact on host government policies through strategic policy dialogue that reflects both broad international priorities and areas of particular Australian interest and competency.

The program will be strongly accountable to both the Australian Government through ongoing reporting and the Office of Development Effectiveness, and to the respective host governments, institutions and communities.

Overseas staff will work in a variety of roles, from policy engagement and negotiations with host governments and donors, through direct implementation and management of aid interventions, to the necessary office support functions.

Having effective partnerships with key regional and multilateral agencies at both a country and headquarters level is vital for achieving broader Australian and international development objectives. To maximise results there needs to be timely information flows between in-country teams, multilateral offices, and the Canberra-based thematic and institutional partnerships groups to ensure an integrated approach to consultations and dialogue at respective institutions' headquarters and delivery of development assistance at country level.

Annex 1

AusAID diplomatic representation at posts, 30 June 2006

Country, international organisation or regional body	Post responsible	Type of post
Bangladesh	Dhaka	High Commission
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Embassy
China, People's Republic of	Beijing	Embassy
Burma	Rangoon	Embassy
East Timor	Dili	Embassy
European Office of the UN	Geneva UN	Permanent Mission
Fiji	Suva	High Commission
Indonesia	Jakarta	Embassy Remote Office (Kebon Sirih)
Kiribati	Tarawa	High Commission
Laos	Vientiane	Embassy Remote Office (ex-British Trade Office)
Nauru		Consulate General
OECD	Paris	OECD Delegation
Papua New Guinea	Port Moresby	High Commission Remote Office (Deloitte Tower)
Philippines	Manila	Embassy
Samoa	Apia	High Commission
Solomon Islands	Honiara	High Commission Remote Office (Lei Lei Resort)
South Africa	Pretoria	High Commission
Sri Lanka	Colombo	High Commission
Thailand	Bangkok	Embassy
Tonga	Nuku'alofa	High Commission
United Nations	New York UN	UN Permanent Mission
Vanuatu	Port Vila	High Commission
Vietnam	Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City	Embassy Consulate General

Islamabad, Pakistan (PSU managed)	Colombo	High Commission
New York, United States (Seconded Pos)	New York	Consulate-General
New Delhi, India (PSU managed)	Colombo	High Commission
Kathmandu, Nepal (PSU managed)	Colombo	Embassy
New Caledonia (PSU managed)	Local	Consulate-General
Maputo, Mozambique (PSU managed)	Pretoria	Consulate
Harare, Zimbabwe (Visiting Officer)	Pretoria	High Commission
Nairobi, Kenya (PSU managed)	Pretoria	High Commission
Rome, Italy (PSU managed)	Paris	Embassy
Ramallah, Palestine	Local	Consulate