



Australia Awards

Women's Leadership Initiative

Australia Awards Women's Leadership Initiative

Independent Strategic Review Summary Report





‘I have come to know that when women are involved in the decision-making processes that affect community we make better decisions and ones that are more inclusive and that stick..’

—The Honourable Ali’imalemanu Alofa Tu’uau, Pacific Co-Chair of the WLI Steering Committee

Prepared by Octo Consulting

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The Australia Awards Women's Leadership Initiative is an Australian Government program implemented by Cardno. For more information, visit <https://australiaawardsleadership.org>

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.

Acknowledgements

This review was commissioned by the Alumni, Communications and Private Sector Engagement Section, Scholarships and Alumni Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It was conducted over 15 days April–June 2020 by Kate Hayes of Octo Consulting. This Report reflects that enquiry. It was conducted as a strategic learning enquiry for DFAT and the Managing Contractor responsible for implementing the Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI), Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) Pty Ltd. This approach ensured both DFAT and Cardno learnt lessons together, iteratively adapting to the emerging messages. Critically, given the COVID-19 backdrop this Review will support recalibration of the out years of a five-year commitment and provide reflections for future iterations of the program.

The Review would like to particularly thank the DFAT Lead, Dr Hazel Lang, and the Cardno Team Leader for the WLI, Georgina Cope and her talented team. They all so generously gave their time, experience and diverse expertise to this review. Far more importantly, together they offered the Review the experience of a high functioning, organic and active partnership—one based on shared and individual goals; mutual respect; different and complementary contributions and equity. Participants of the WLI do not need to look very far to see *leadership* being exercised. In the past year, these partners and the WLI participants have had to navigate bushfires, hailstorms and COVID-19. They have pivoted—nimble, creatively and importantly together.

Finally, this Review would like to thank all those who gave their time to this enquiry. And particularly honour the participants and mentors in the WLI past and current—those interviewed and those reflected in multiple reports and updates. What an honour and a privilege to sit with such inspiring and inspired women; and beyond them learn from the wise voices of experienced leaders from the region who could see the program for what is and, critically, what it is not.

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Executive Summary

Overview

Commencing in September 2017, the [Australia Awards Women’s Leadership Initiative \(WLI\)](#) is a five-year, \$5.4 million initiative of the Australian Government to promote women’s leadership for development in the Pacific region, forge links between women leaders in the Pacific and Australia, and deepen Australia’s relationships with its Pacific neighbours. It is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and managed by Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) Pty Ltd (Cardno).

The WLI is currently only available to DFAT funded Australia Awards Scholarship holders from the Pacific and runs parallel to their studies at participating Australian educational institutions. Australia Awards are designed to contribute to the development needs of Australia’s partner countries (in line with bilateral and regional agreements).¹ WLI both targets and amplifies this contribution by providing Pacific women (and men) scholars a suite of offerings across three tiers that collectively promote women’s leadership for development in the Pacific. These offerings, and the recent COVID-19 pivots/innovations, include:

Tier	WLI Program Standard Program	WLI COVID-19 pivot (different/additional to standard program)
1	Learning and Networking (open to Pacific women and men Australia Award scholars and by invitation)	Pivot to full online delivery
2	Leadership and Mentoring (open to Pacific women Australia Award scholars by application)	Pivot to on-line teaching and learning; and <i>LeadershipConnect</i> (a new offering, open to Pacific women and men Australia Award scholars—by application)
3	Workplace Internships / Professional Development (open to women scholars, by application and on successful completion of Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring)	COVID-19 Leadership Fund (a new offering for women scholars who have successfully completed Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring and subject to project proposal approval)

1 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/Pages/australia-awards-scholarships>

Each tier is increasingly more selective, ensuring more targeted and meaningful engagement, and raising the profile of the program in order to attract women (and men) with the drive to exercise developmental leadership. A key message of developmental leadership, as taught in WLI, is that leadership is an exercise to drive change through mobilising people and resources. It is not a position. The Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring component runs over 18 months and provides the core of the three-tiered program. By 30 June 2020, four participant cohorts totalling 101 women had either completed or were progressing through Tier 2.

This strategic review (the Review) was completed over 15 days from April-June 2020. It is based on a review of key documents and interviews with select stakeholders including WLI participants, WLI alumnae, mentors, DFAT, the Cardno WLI Project Team (WLI team), the Australian National University’s Department of Pacific Affairs,² the WLI Steering Committee, and leaders from the Pacific.

Three key questions guided the review:

1. How **relevant** is the WLI to Australia’s aid and foreign policy objectives—especially in the context of COVID-19?
2. How **effective** is the WLI and what have been the key drivers of effectiveness?
3. What **improvements** could be made to the WLI in the short term and/or for potential future iterations of the program?

Key findings: Relevance (Question 1)

The Review finds that the WLI, with its focus on Pacific women and their exercise of leadership for development in their home countries, is highly relevant to the Australian Government’s policy commitments to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. This includes DFAT’s Gender equality and women’s economic empowerment strategy, while the WLI also directly supports Australia’s Pacific Step Up by deepening links between Australian and Pacific women and men.

The Review also contends that the WLI is strongly positioned to support the Australian Government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic Partnerships for Recovery policy (May 2020). Underpinning the policy focus on health security, stability, and economic recovery the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Marise Payne, with women leaders from the Pacific, also seeks to address the differentiated needs of, and impacts on, women and girls. To deepen engagement on these issues, the WLI team in their COVID-19 pivot designed *LeadershipConnect* (Tier 2) a six-month online leadership, networking and support program open to all Australia Award scholars from the Pacific. Further, the WLI team established a WLI COVID-19 Leadership Fund (Tier 3) to directly address COVID-19 impacts. It is currently supporting 15 teams of WLI participants and alumnae (49 women) to address COVID-19 related impacts in their home countries. COVID-19 has laid bare the structural inequities in the system. At a time when the imperatives for both reform and new ways of leading are critical, the WLI is both timely and very relevant.

² The Department of Pacific Affairs is an implementing partner for Cardno in their delivery of WLI, providing research and learning to support the iterative development of the program and ensuring that lessons learned are packaged and published for broader engagement.

Key findings: Effectiveness (Question 2)

The Review found convincing evidence that WLI is developing as a highly effective program.

The enquiry process identified three suites of evidence: progress against intermediate outcomes; the pedagogical foundations of the program; and six supporting drivers. The key factors are highlighted below.

Progress against intermediate outcomes:

- The program is a significant contributor towards improving the levels of confidence in exercising developmental leadership (Intermediate Outcome 1).
- Participants are increasingly using tools to influence development issues, particularly those women involved in Tier 2 and 3 activities (Intermediate Outcome 2).
- Participants are more aware of networks and are beginning to use and build networks to drive their development ideas. There are two promising trends: 1) the WLI alumnae are themselves becoming coalitions in their own right; and 2) 15 teams of participants and alumnae—across six countries—are currently engaging with local coalitions and networks as they navigate their COVID-19 related projects. They are undertaking their projects with the guidance of the Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations—PIANGO (a coalition itself) (Intermediate Outcome 3).
- There are strong connections with Australia's expertise, Australians, and Australian women of influence. Of note is the two-way value placed on the connections/relationships by the mentors and the mentees. Equally, participants highly value the Australian expertise and experience accessed in their learning (Intermediate Outcome 4).
- The program is regularly contributing to the body of knowledge on women's developmental leadership in the Pacific (Enabling Outcome).

Pedagogical foundations of the program:

The pedagogical foundations of the program and how they are curated in the three tiers are pivotal contributors to program effectiveness. The use of developmental leadership as the backbone of the program is key. The tools of adaptive leadership, and ontological leadership and coaching are crucial to support the *exercise* of developmental leadership:

- WLI's foundational framing of developmental leadership and its message that leadership is an exercise not an authorising position has provided breakthrough learning for participants.
- The practice of ontological leadership and coaching, with its focus on the nature of *being* as a leader, provided participants with a very powerful agent for self-development and transformation.

Supporting drivers of effectiveness:

The Review explored reasons why the WLI has been so effective, which provide important learnings for DFAT, Cardno, and other stakeholders for the medium term and/or for future iterations of the program. Six key drivers should be highlighted:

- **The quality of the WLI team and the strength of the partnership with DFAT.**
- The **architecture of the program**, including the cohort size and the layered approach to WLI. Of particular note is the 18-month Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring component for women with its two residential learning intensives. Participants, mentors, and alumnae consistently reflected the sustained exposure over time to learning and to each other were critical success factors.
- The focus of the WLI on **supporting participants to develop their own networks and coalitions**, through teaching and learning, infused with their direct lived experience.
- The ability of the WLI team to **successfully adapt to changes in the operating context and the calibre of their innovations**, with the Review noting the program has had to pivot three times in the past year in response to the Australian bushfires, due to the Canberra hailstorm and finally due to the impacts of COVID-19.
- The **quality of the M&E system** has been pivotal in collating a wealth of evidence for monitoring and learning, and supporting ongoing assessments of progress.
- The **partnership with the Australian National University's Department of Pacific Affairs**, as the WLI research and learning partner, has filled the role of 'critical friend' to the WLI team by bringing valued perspectives to programming considerations.

Key findings: Improvements for the current WLI program (years 4 & 5) and future iterations (Question 3)

While the WLI is very effective in its current form, the Review presents seven reflections that could strengthen existing practice and/or deepen the reach and effectiveness of the program:

- **Scale out the number of cohorts per annum but reduce the cap on number of participants per cohort.** The Review considers the WLI is very well placed for scaling out, beyond the Pacific, by increasing the number of cohorts per annum. Increasing the number of cohorts would provide targeted developmental leadership learning and experience for many more women (and men) Australian Award scholars. And it could contribute to broader change and positive development outcomes in the respective home countries of participants. New cohorts could be thematic or geographic (or both), which would deepen the opportunities for much tighter links to countries, to specific sectors, or emerging issues of need. Capping the number of women in cohorts to 25 (down from 35) would support closer participant engagement and manageability of inputs for the WLI team.
- **Select subsequent Pacific cohorts to support COVID-19 recovery in the Pacific.** New cohorts from the Pacific could be selected with the express intent of exercising developmental leadership for COVID-19 regional recovery. At the May 2020 Pacific Women Leaders Forum, co-chaired by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, leaders considered three core areas where women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. WLI could select cohorts poised for reform in these core areas and further focus the parameters of the COVID-19 Leadership Fund.
- **Formalise mechanisms of support (and the WLI mandate) for the transition home.** There is evidence that the WLI is increasing the yield on the Australia Awards investment but also that alumnae require support transitioning home to fully realise these gains. WLI already supports participants who return home mid-program, which has led to important WLI lessons and adaptations. The lessons highlight that women scholars face specific gendered challenges on their return home. Both those who return home while still engaged in Tiers 2 and 3 and alumnae would benefit from more systematic support to unlock their in-Australia learnings. It would be valuable to formalise mechanisms to strengthen vertical in-country cohort connections, and to 'sponsor' introductions and linkages into new networks and opportunities. Existing mechanisms through Post, Australia Awards Alumni and other Australian programs could be leveraged through an appropriate mandate and a re-alignment of/modest increase in resources.
- **Assess (and formally integrate) the WLI COVID-19 innovations of LeadershipConnect and the COVID-19 Leadership Fund.** The WLI designed these Tier 2 and 3 innovations to deepen program reach and effectiveness during COVID-19 but the review fully expects that future iterations will have ongoing and universal program value. *LeadershipConnect* supports the more meaningful engagement of more men in the WLI, providing women and men a safe space to consider key Pacific issues through an inclusive development lens. The COVID-19 Leadership Fund is a Tier 3 alternative (by application) for implementing COVID-19 related projects in their home countries. This innovation deftly bridges the transition home and provides a practical entry point for exercising developmental leadership. A further refinement could be to allow applications for this Tier 3 innovation from *LeadershipConnect* women and men.
- **Standardise framing and definition of fundamental WLI concepts and components.** Standardising fundamental WLI concepts and components, and ensuring their consistent use and communication, would both attract and support interest from participants and mentors who clearly understand the challenges and opportunities of exercising developmental leadership. Two specific recommendations are:

- *Developmental leadership* could be more consistently framed as the exercise of leadership for developmental outcomes rather than on the development of the individual leader. This could attract and support applications from Australia Award scholars who might not perceive of themselves as leaders but have a zeal for reform and are well positioned to exercise leadership from wherever they are in the system (in addition to women who inhabit/or aspire to inhabit more formal leadership roles and seek to exercise developmental leadership from those roles).
- *The mentoring component* of the WLI could be more deliberately and consistently framed to support and/or define the emerging change/reform aspirations of the mentee and thereby give the mentor-mentee relationship clear focus and containment lines from the outset.
- **Establish a mentors' collective.** There is unrealised value in the mentors as a collective of expertise and drive for reform. The WLI team could support light coordination and mentor hubs by location and/or theme. As a collective, mentors can both advocate for Pacific issues in Australia, and where appropriate also make connections in the Pacific—building their own understanding, links and networks. This collective could increasingly become a recognised go to reference point for Pacific engagement/issues. Equally, a collective provides a more plausible means to forge and deepen links between Australia and its Pacific neighbours.
- **Consider the naming of WLI but retain the initials for brand recognition.** From a Pacific perspective, there is a risk that the name might convey an issue with women or women's leadership; draw too much attention to the promotion of women and/or seem to exclude men. This may prevent some women from applying or may dissuade the positive engagement of the very men who need to be challenged (or worse sanction their non-involvement). If WLI was a new program a different name might be in order. The Australia Awards WLI brand, however, is so strong and building momentum. This is not a time for disruption. Instead, the Review suggests retaining the WLI initials and that the I shift from Initiative to Included, with a by-line added that reinforces a more inclusive set of responsibilities e.g. Women's Leadership Included—everyone at the table/everyone's responsibility/everyone's business or similar.

1. Review Orientation

This report details a strategic review (the Review) of the Australia Awards Women in Leadership Initiative (WLI). Conducted over 15 days in April–June 2020, it provides a summary of the drivers of program effectiveness that warrant recognition and ongoing support, and consideration of program aspects that could yield even more success with minimal recalibration and/or reconfigured investment.

Three key questions guided the review:

1. **How relevant is the WLI to Australia's aid and foreign policy objectives—especially in the context of COVID-19?**
2. **How effective is the WLI and what have been the key drivers of effectiveness?**
3. **What improvements could be made to the WLI in the short term and/or for potential future iterations of the program?**

The Review is based on an analysis of key documents, complemented by consultations with a selection of individuals from each of the following stakeholder groups: WLI participants; WLI alumnae; mentors; DFAT; the Cardno WLI Project Team (WLI team); the Australian National University's (ANU) Department of Pacific Affairs (DPA)³; WLI Steering Committee; and leaders from the Pacific. The Review offered anonymity to the interviewees and so names will not be used unless they serve purpose and only used with permission. See Annex 1 for the conducted interviews and Annex 2 for source documents.

The Review is both enlivened and limited by the findings possible from those interviews and source documents, which are further filtered through the reviewer's own knowledge and experiences of participative processes, gender, developmental and adaptive leadership, Australia and the Pacific.

3 DPA is an implementing partner for Cardno in their delivery of WLI, providing research and learning to support the iterative development of the program and ensuring that lessons learned are packaged and published for broader engagement.

2. Overview of the WLI

Commencing in September 2017, the WLI is a five-year, \$5.4 million initiative of the Australian Government to promote women's leadership for development in the Pacific region, forge links between women leaders in the Pacific and Australia, and deepen Australia's relationships with its Pacific neighbours (see Annex 3 for a program snapshot).

The WLI is linked to the DFAT funded Australia Award Scholarships that contribute to the development needs of Australia's partner countries in line with bilateral and regional agreements. The scholarships provide people from participating countries opportunities for full time undergraduate or postgraduate study at participating Australian education institutions.⁴ Since commencement, the WLI has been amplifying the impact of Australia Awards for interested Pacific women scholars (and Pacific men scholars for some aspects).

The WLI provides cohorts of women scholars a carefully curated suite of offerings across three tiers, which have been iteratively refined with the lessons learned from each previous cohort. Tier 1 provides learning and networking, Tier 2 provides leadership and mentoring, and Tier 3 provides workplace internships/professional development. The core of the three-tiered program is Tier 2 supporting on-award women scholars to build their skills, networks and readiness to exercise developmental leadership in their communities, workplaces and countries. By 30 June 2020, 101 women had either completed or were progressing through Tier 2 of the program (Cohorts 1-4).

Each tier is increasingly more selective, which ensures targeted and meaningful value to participants at each tier and promotes the profile/brand of the program to increasingly attract those women with a drive to exercise developmental leadership. Developmental leadership as promoted by the program can be defined as a political process of mobilising people and resources in pursuit of shared goals for the common good (of communities and nations). It is an exercise of leadership driven by ambition for societal change (development) rather than (or as well as) ambition for positional authority. The detailed information below reflects standard program delivery as of May 2020. COVID-19 pivots by tier are introduced in Section 3.1.

Tier 1 Learning and Networking: Through face-to-face and on-line events, women and men Australia Awards scholars from the Pacific are invited to participate in and share experiences with fellow scholars and leaders from the Pacific at a range of learning and networking events and activities. Woven through these events are discussions about barriers to gender equality and women's leadership, and the role of returning men and women scholars in tackling these layered and complex issues. This tier aims to build interest and momentum around these issues, connect women and men scholars with each other and importantly with leaders and networks from their home nations, and promote the value of Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring, (and Tier 3, Workplace Internships/Professional Development) to prospective Pacific women.

4 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/Pages/australia-awards-scholarships>

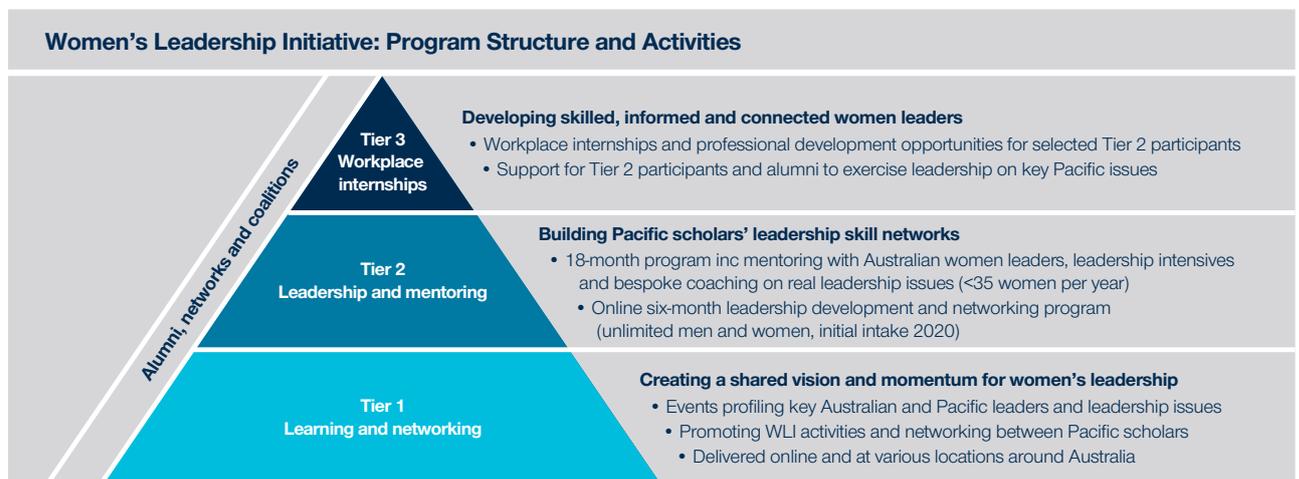
Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring: This eighteen-month offering is the core of WLI for women scholars. Selection for this tier is broadly based on a demonstrated capacity for, and interest in, exercising developmental leadership. Activities are tailored to the interests/needs of each group (within the frame of developmental leadership and through a gender lens) and include:

- Two week-long leadership intensives involving a range of outdoor, classroom and other learning experiences;
- Mentoring by an Australian woman leader who is matched/paired from the perspective of academic, professional and reform interests/ambitions;
- Access to one-on-one leadership coaching; academics; subject matter experts and the WLI team to help build participants' knowledge, apply their learning and hone their leadership practice;

- Access to counselling services;
- Refining and/or building a range of skills, tools, networks and competencies that support each woman to exercise leadership for developmental change from her own space and place, recognising the integral role of context and that for WLI, leadership is an exercise and not necessarily a position.

Tier 3 Workplace Internships/Professional development: Pending successful completion of the Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring component, participants are eligible to apply for Tier 3 internships/placements in Australia or in participant home countries. These are awarded based on participant proposals. At least five workplace internships/professional development opportunities are expected to be offered each year. Mentors play a vital role in this tier as placements are often secured through the support of a mentor and/or the mentors' networks.

Figure 1: WLI Program Structure and Activities (including COVID-19 pivots described in section 3.1)⁵



5 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report, p.i

3. Key Findings

3.1 How relevant is the program to Australia's aid and foreign policy objectives—especially in the context of COVID-19?

WLI has been positioned as a direct response to Australia's policy commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, and to amplify the intent/impact of the Australia Awards to building women's leadership.⁶ Australia's aid policy establishes gender equality as one of six priorities for the aid program, while DFAT's *Gender equality and women's economic empowerment strategy* sets out three priorities for the work of the aid program, including:

*"enhancing women's voice in decision making, leadership and peace building; promoting women's economic empowerment; and ending violence against women and girls."*⁷

A focus on women (but not only women) and the exercise of leadership are central to these priorities and this dual focus is also central to WLI. Further, WLI seeks to deepen links between Australian and Pacific women and men thereby directly supporting Australia's *Pacific Step Up*.⁸

Finally, WLI is strongly positioned to support the Australian Government's *Partnerships for Recovery* policy, which was released in May 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the foreword to that policy is a commitment:

*"Australia will stand with our partners in the Indo Pacific as we attempt to minimise the human, economic and social costs of this pandemic and chart a course to economic recovery. Our shared security, prosperity and stability depends on it."*⁹

On 29 May 2020, coinciding with the launch of this new policy, Australia's Foreign Minister, Marise Payne co-convened a meeting of 30 Pacific Women Leaders with the Samoan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Natural Resources and the Environment, the Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa. Leaders noted the differentiated impacts that COVID-19 was having on women, men, vulnerable groups and people with disabilities in the Pacific. The Foreign Minister reflected:

*"Pacific women must lead in the region's response to COVID-19 to ensure the interests of women and girls are at the forefront of government and community responses."*¹⁰

The Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa similarly noted:

*"we should find ways which not only build resilience in our communities and help to continue economic growth but do so in a manner which also enhances the well-being of women and girls."*¹¹

Underpinning the policy focus on health security, stability, and economic recovery is a growing acknowledgment of the imperatives to addressing the differentiated needs of, and impacts on, women and girls.¹²

This will require active coalitions of women and men, across a range of sectors, committed to bringing women's voice and agency to COVID-19 decision making. WLI actively promotes and supports this agenda. At the time of finalising the Review, 15 teams of WLI participants and alumnae (49 women) were addressing COVID-19 impacts in their home countries with the support of the WLI COVID-19 Leadership Fund (a WLI Tier 3 pivot/innovation). See [Annex 4](#) for a summary of the specific projects.

6 Lockley, A., Shah, R. and Ovington, K., 2015. *Building Women's Leadership: The Contribution of Australia Awards Scholarships*.

7 DFAT, 2017, *WLI Investment Design 2017-22* p.5

8 The Pacific Step-up is one of Australia's highest foreign policy priorities, highlighted in Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. The Step-up responds to and recognises the broad-ranging challenges of our region, identified by Pacific leaders and communities themselves, including: strengthening climate and disaster resilience; sustained economic growth; and support to promote healthy, educated, inclusive populations. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/engagement/Pages/stepping-up-australias-pacific-engagement>

9 DFAT, 2020, *Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response*, p.1

10 <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/standing-pacific-women-during-covid-19>, accessed 6 June 2020

11 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/news/media-release/joint-statement-co-convenors-meeting-pacific-women-leaders-australian-foreign-minister-and-minister-women-marise-payne-and-samoan-deputy-prime-minister-and-minister-natural-resources-and-environment-fiam-naomi-mataafa>, accessed 5 June 2020

12 DFAT, 2020, *Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response*, p.7

The Review commends the way the WLI has so nimbly pivoted its operations across the three tiers of its program both in response to the constraints imposed by COVID-19, and in order to address the emerging impacts and support women's developmental leadership. An overview of the pivot (at each tier) is provided in the following paragraphs.

Tier 1—Learning and Networking: Tier 1 events have now fully pivoted to online delivery. In May 2020, an on-line learning and networking event, attended by over 100 participants, explored the specific challenges of humanitarian leadership in the age of COVID-19 from Pacific and Australian perspectives. Two of the panellists were WLI alumnae who have both been exercising developmental leadership through this time. Adi Vasiti Radinivuna Soko, newly appointed Director of the Fiji National Disaster Management Office, successfully navigated Cyclone Harold from lockdown and Dr Pamela Toliman, is now Senior Scientist with the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Institute of Medical Research, the agency which has been central to the design and implementation of PNG's COVID-19 testing regime.

Tier 2—Leadership and Mentoring: In response to the changed operating environment forced by COVID-19, the WLI team successfully pivoted the Tier 2 program to on-line delivery and learning. There has been very positive feedback. In response to this, and the level of interest in the program from the broader Australia Awards Pacific cohort (coupled with an identified need/desire to be responsive to their needs for greater connection and support during lockdown), the WLI team designed *LeadershipConnect*. This new Tier 2 initiative was being launched at the close of the Review. It is a six-month online leadership, networking and support program open to all Australia Award scholars from the Pacific. While the value is yet to be fully realised/understood, 92 women and men scholars have enrolled in this program. From the perspective of the Review, this component has enormous potential to build safe spaces for men and women to *connect* and discuss the issues confronting the Pacific through a gendered lens. Moreover, it also creates a mechanism for more men to understand the cultural and structural barriers for Pacific women's leadership and build the momentum for male *champions of change*, recognising that including women's voice and leadership is everyone's business.

Tier 3—Workplace Internships/Professional

development: Just as with the previous two tiers, COVID-19 has both created challenges and opportunities for Tier 3. A savings in program costs has been realised through the COVID-19 pivot to online delivery of Tier 1 and Tier 2 activities. The WLI team (with DFAT support) designed a COVID-19 Leadership Fund to respond to this opportunity and a number of drivers/lessons emerging from the program. These include finding ways to support and optimise the transition home, to strengthen participants' networks, and to support WLI participants/alumnae exercise developmental leadership in their home contexts. The fund will support projects addressing a COVID-19 related issue. Framed as a Tier 3 alternative opportunity, project proposal criteria encourage collaboration across the cohorts and identification and engagement with in-country stakeholders, networks and coalitions. WLI have partnered with the Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations (PIANGO) to assess the proposals, and to support the implementation of projects and the women in their practice of developmental leadership. This organisation is well connected with broader networks across the Pacific. Fifteen teams made up of 49 WLI participants and alumnae from PNG, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Nauru have had their project proposals approved and funded for delivery. This Tier 3 initiative effectively responds to the drivers/lessons noted above: it bridges the transition home; it strengthens the WLI cohort connections; it supports and connects the WLI Tier 2 participants and alumnae to networks; and it provides a real time opportunity to exercise developmental leadership in response to a pressing regional/global issue.

Concluding reflection on relevance of WLI

The highly competitive Australia Awards selection is based on academic excellence and drive to positively contribute to scholars' families, communities, and countries from across the region. The women and men who participate in WLI are reflective of this. WLI is further selective and it amplifies and expedites participant opportunities to build their practice of developmental leadership with a gendered lens. It currently (since the COVID-19 pivots) attracts women (Tiers 1 to 3) and men (Tiers 1 and 2—*LeadershipConnect* only) who are driven to make change happen in their countries. It provides entry points for them to flex and exercise their leadership at a time when the imperatives for both reform and new ways of leading are critical. COVID-19 has laid bare and amplified the structural inequities in the system. WLI is both timely and very relevant.

3.2 How effective is the WLI and what have been the key drivers of effectiveness?

The Review would contend there is considerable evidence that WLI is developing as a highly effective program. The enquiry process identified three suites of evidence: progress against intermediate outcomes; the pedagogical foundations of the program; and six supporting drivers.

3.2.1 Progress against outcomes

The Review found strong evidence of progress against all intermediate outcomes and thereby progress towards the end of program outcomes.¹³

The Review firstly assessed effectiveness by considering progress made against the WLI intermediate outcomes. The intermediate outcomes provide a measure of the extent to which the goal and end-of-investment outcomes of the WLI are on track to be achieved by 2022. The Review drew heavily on the recent *Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report* for the most current evidence.¹⁴ The evidence in the Annual Report is underpinned by detailed quantitative and qualitative data and information sourced from the WLI's own performance monitoring system. The results have been reviewed and corroborated by the Review with feedback from key stakeholders interviewed during the consultation phase of the Review. For detail from the Year 3 Annual Report and the Review's corroboration/confirmation of progress refer to Annex 5.

Consistently repeated during interviews in the Review enquiry process was the invaluable support of fellow cohort participants and emerging vertical links across cohorts and/or new coalitions. In one interview, a participant reflected a general consensus that emerged through the Review:

"We had such a diverse group of amazing women—and I learnt so much from them and found that I wasn't alone in my challenges and frustrations. Super powerful to recognise most of my challenges are their challenges too—that they are systemic. I can draw strength from that sisterhood, but it is not ours alone. How do we get out of this? WLI taught me what networks and coalitions are and their power—total eye opener. And I am really conscious of this in my own country."

A snapshot of assessed progress against the four intermediate outcomes and enabling outcome is below.

Table 1: Snapshot of progress against the four intermediate outcomes and the enabling outcome

Outcome	Finding
<p>IO 1: WLI female Australia Awards alumni have developed more confidence in their skills and capabilities as leaders.</p>	<p>The program is a significant contributor towards improving the levels of confidence in exercising developmental leadership.</p>
<p>IO 2: WLI female and male Australia Awards alumni are using appropriate tools to analyse and influence development issues in their home countries.</p>	<p>Participants are increasingly using tools to influence development issues, particularly those women involved in Tier 2 and 3 activities.</p>
<p>IO 3: WLI female and male Australia Awards alumni are actively building and participating in coalitions and support women’s leadership.</p>	<p>Participants are more aware of networks and are beginning to use and build networks to drive their development ideas. There are two promising trends: 1) the WLI alumnae are themselves becoming coalitions in their own right; and 2) 15 teams of participants and alumnae—across six countries—are currently engaging with local coalitions and networks as they navigate their COVID-19 related projects with the support of PIANGO (a coalition itself).</p>
<p>IO 4: WLI female Australia Awards alumni have developed connections with influential women in Australia that contribute to positive perceptions of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise.</p>	<p>There are strong connections with Australia’s expertise, Australians, and Australian women of influence. Of note is the two-way value placed on the connections/relationships by the mentors and the mentees. Equally, participants highly value the Australian expertise and experience accessed in their overall learning.</p>
<p>Enabling Outcome: WLI contributes towards the body of knowledge of women’s leadership in the Pacific and developmental leadership.</p>	<p>The program is contributing to the body of knowledge on women’s developmental leadership in the Pacific—the targeted research briefs and projects of the DPA are folded back into the iterative development of the Program and shared more broadly with leadership, academic and development communities.</p>

3.2.2 Pedagogical foundations and the link to effectiveness

The Review found that the program's pedagogical foundations and how they have been curated in the three-tier offering of the WLI are important contributors to program effectiveness. As already noted in Section 3.1, WLI is shaped as a response to Australia's policy commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment and a **gendered lens** is applied through each of the three tiers. Accenting this, is the centrality of developmental leadership, and the tools of **adaptive leadership** and **ontological leadership and coaching** to support the exercise of **developmental leadership**. Highlights from these include:

- WLI's foundational framing of developmental leadership and its message that leadership is an exercise not an authorising position has provided breakthrough learning for participants.
- The practice of ontological leadership and coaching, with its focus on the nature of being when one is a leader, has been experienced by the participants as a very powerful agent for self-development and transformation.

Developmental leadership is the conceptual backbone of the program and is framed as the strategic, collective and political process of making change happen. Woven through all three tiers, though more greatly emphasised in Tiers 2 and 3, developmental leadership recognises leadership as an inherently political process and one that needs to mobilise collective action and resources in order to contest and legitimise shifts in the status quo.¹⁵ The program directs its efforts to optimising participants' opportunities to exercise developmental leadership in their situation, and to consciously work in political ways that leverage coalitions to nudge the distribution of power and resources in pursuit of positive development. The exercise of developmental leadership recognises that mobilising this kind of reform is less about positional authority and more about the exercise of leadership in all spheres and at all levels of society. This struck a chord with participants and unlocks a clear pathway for women to lead. One participant reflected to the Review:

"I learnt so much from the program, I don't have to be elected, selected, appointed or designated—I can lead from where I am—from who I am. I just need to watch and look for the right moment, the right connections and build the momentum..."

WLI promotes developmental leadership to mobilise development in the Pacific. It is a very appropriate approach to leading given the Pacific context and its articulated priorities and the concomitant commitments from Australia. The WLI acknowledges the diversity of contexts and challenges facing the Pacific and the diversity of contexts and challenges facing women who to seek to exercise developmental leadership. It is not capability that prevents Pacific women exercising leadership and in the words of the Attorney General of Tuvalu, Eselealofa Apinelu, a WLI graduate

"women's leadership or being a woman is not the problem."¹⁶

It is more often, but not always, a lack of opportunity amplified by any number of social, cultural, economic and political structural constraints.

In seeking to promote women's developmental leadership the program carefully considers the specific contexts within which the women and men scholars are operating. Of the many typologies of leadership, developmental leadership is fit-for-purpose in a development context and builds on and extends the leadership and development intentions of the Australia Awards.

Adaptive Leadership and Ontological Leadership and Coaching¹⁷ are two leadership approaches/ frameworks used in WLI to consider and accommodate context. Both offer relevant tools and resources for those choosing to exercise developmental leadership. The WLI Leadership Coach plays a pivotal role in supporting participants with these approaches.

15 Roche, C & Denney, L., 2020, Development Leadership Program, *How Can Developmental Leadership be Supported* p.3

16 Howard, E. et al. 2019, p.2.

17 Cardno WLI Team, *Developmental Leadership, Coalitions and Thinking and Working Politically, Participant Resource*, p.2

Adaptive Leadership is the practice of mobilising people to tackle tough and complex challenges and thrive. The adaptive leadership framework takes a gradual long-term view of change, one that builds on and evolves from the past while also challenging the status quo. Stakeholders expressed the value of this very practical approach and set of tools for the women undertaking WLI.

Ontological Leadership and Coaching reflects on the nature and function of being for a leader and the actions of effective leadership. Ontological approaches help people access their own leadership style and encourage the natural self-expression of leadership—i.e., a way of being and acting in leadership that is spontaneous and authentic. The participants valued the affirming and authentic nature of this type of coaching and this dimension of leadership. A number reflected how well suited this approach was for women, who because of juggling multiple identities and responsibilities have previously often had very little time or permission to make the space to consider the source and motivations for their actions in the exercise of leadership. Three reflections from interviews with the Review:

“WLI in Australia was a journey of the interior for me and I am much more able to understand and address where my reactions come from and how I might harness them. Returning home is now the time for me to come out of myself...”

“Tony, the Coach was incredible, he never let me off the hook and I really liked the materials he threw my way. I learnt to ground the information in my head on facts and not assumptions; to simplify things; and to really focus on myself and my thinking in the change process...I learned that sometimes being quiet is not being submissive”

“We really came to terms with our multiple burdens—career, super mum, professional and leadership aspirations and how to balance that with self-love. September [residential intensive] affirmed for me that we can stop and look after ourselves—I know how to do that now without the guilt and self-doubt—well less of that.”

3.2.3 Other drivers of effectiveness

The Review considers there are key additional drivers that have contributed to the effectiveness of WLI to date. Six are highlighted in this section and are important considerations for the effectiveness of the program in the future.

a. The WLI Team/Partnership with DFAT

WLI is exceptionally well managed both operationally and strategically, while being relatively leanly resourced. Participants, mentors, members of the Steering Committee and DFAT all reflected on the high value that such an experienced, organised and supportive team provide.

Five critical contributing factors—all of them consciously selected and/or practiced have made the difference:

- The extensive experience, calibre and agility/responsiveness of every member of the WLI team.
- The calibre of the Team Leader, Georgina Cope. The Team Leader is experienced, strategic and engaged in all aspects of the program and is also very well positioned and networked herself—both in Australia and across the Pacific. She has access to, and significant respect from, key leaders, networks and coalitions and can leverage these for the benefit of the program. Across all three tiers, the Team Leader draws in and continues to build rich cadres of support for WLI. Participants reap the benefits of this quality engagement.
- The considered and responsive engagement of the DFAT lead, Dr Hazel Lang.
- The purposeful open, equitable and robust partnership practiced between DFAT and the WLI team anchored by regular contact and six-monthly reflection and refocus sessions (R&R) that are truly collaborative exercises. The R&R engage DFAT, the WLI team and the DPA to inform continuous program learning and adaptation, M&E, future planning and implementation.
- The adaptive and iterative design/management of the WLI team in the context of a strong responsive partnership with DFAT has allowed for innovation to flourish.

b. Program architecture

The layered approach to the WLI program and particularly the 18-month Leadership and Mentoring tier (Tier 2) with its two learning intensives; peer support; the through-coaching; and the leadership and support of the WLI Team all receive unequivocal positive feedback. The mentoring component gets positive feedback while also recognising some of the challenges. The participants reflect the overall value in terms of shifting hearts, minds and building new skills, tools and approaches. The women from Tier 2 reflect that they have new or honed skills and tools with which to exercise leadership, a horizontal cohort of 'go to' support, emerging vertical connections across the WLI alumnae and other Australian Awards peers and for many the support of a mentor.

Of note is the participant reflection on the 18-month length of the Tier 2 program and the value of the regular exposure to learning and to each other. Any less time is considered not enough to sustain the learnings and the connections made. The program is currently delivered in cohorts of up to 35 participants but the WLI team noted that Cohort 3 at 34 participants was getting towards too big. There is a manageability overhead and any more than 25-30 participants per cohort decreases the opportunity for collegiality and maintaining cohort identity, which is highly valued by participants.

Several participants reflected to the Review that their journey through their Australia Awards Scholarship was significantly enriched and supported by their participation in WLI. Indeed, some credit the support and development offered by WLI as the reason they completed their studies. For Pacific women, the expectations of family and/or family issues can distract and in extreme cases force the women home. Several WLI participants and mentors speculated whether WLI participants have a higher completion and/or wellbeing rate compared to non WLI Australia Awards Pacific scholars. Anecdotally, they suggest so. It may offer an interesting comparative especially if the differences are marked. The nominal total cost for a pre-COVID Tier 2 participant is \$8715.¹⁸ Given the depth and breadth of what participants receive for this and the emerging yield of retention and application on return it is very cost effective. It is also a very small supplementary sum relative to the average cost, for example, of an Australia Award to undertake a master's degree by coursework (approximately \$150,000 in 2020).

c. Networks and Coalitions

Developmental leadership hinges on mobilising coalitions for positive change and a key focus of WLI is supporting participants to identify their own networks and coalitions. In discussion with the Review an Alumna noted,

"I am so connected—and have access to a number of really supportive networks. I would not have 'seen' them or known how to positively engage them without WLI".

The program reinforces the value and importance of networks and coalitions through teaching and learning but also by direct lived experience. The program cohorts link participants horizontally. Each has a unique identity that is reinforced by the shared experiences of the Tier 2 residential intensives and ongoing contact through a range of WLI activities. The participants noted the incredible value of making these connections and learning from, and supporting, each other. The Outward Bound (outdoor education experience) component was cited as life changing experience that bonded cohorts, forged a shared identity and a deep belief in themselves that exists well beyond the end of their participation in WLI.

The Tier 1 events provide a space for men and women scholars to meet each other and with high profile leaders from across their region. Both the online Tier 1 events and the fortnightly Zoom sessions connect participants vertically across successive cohort groups, across geographies and across interest areas/themes. As the program numbers increase these links will become even more possible and the value of these country based vertical links more powerful as networks for change emerge. For example, in Papua New Guinea (PNG) a small cohort led by a WLI alumna and an Australia Award alumna are working to keep girls in school through access to menstrual hygiene products. They have accessed funds and are linked to support back in Australia and to the broader global movement, Days4Girls.

¹⁸ In discussion with the WLI Team Leader—a per person cost for Tier 2, based on 2018-2019 figures—and incorporating all travel, visa, accommodation, transfer costs for participants as well as the venue hire, facilitation, mentor and staff travel costs involved.

In multiple 'soft' ways networks and coalitions for development are being initiated and/or strengthened through WLI. In turn, given the three years of evidence, these WLI coalitions could sustain and amplify the value of the program over many years to come. The sustainability is heightened by the strong sense of service and responsibility the WLI participants and alumnae have to give back to their communities, to pay forward the investment in them. The Review was moved by the intensity of the commitment.

d. Adaptiveness

The program has had to pivot three times in the past year: once in response to the Australian bushfires; a second time due to the Canberra hailstorm; and finally due to the impacts of COVID-19. Activities and approaches across all three tiers needed to be adapted and/or postponed. At each step, the WLI team has turned adversity into opportunity. The Managing Contractor (especially the Team Leader and Leadership Coach) need to be given full recognition for their ability to adaptively lead and manage a project in rapidly changing contexts. The recalibrated program now has features that even in a post COVID world would and should remain e.g., the fortnightly Zoom sessions. These are facilitated by the WLI Leadership Coach to check in with all current Tier 2 participants and also draw in WLI alumnae. These regular gatherings have also helped strengthen both the horizontal and vertical cohorts of WLI participants and give participants who have returned home regular means of support where/when connectivity allows.

The pivot to online Tier 1 events, offers a less resource intensive approach and one that can reach a broader audience more readily and engage more Pacific leaders as speakers more easily (i.e., without the time and resource commitments of travel). The Review was able to participate in two and the one in June 2020 featured the Honourable Ali'imalemanu Alofa Tu'uau who shared her journey to becoming one of the first women in the Samoan Parliament. The Review was struck by the level of engagement by the men and the nature of their questions around addressing barriers to women's participation and representation. As these events provide a key opportunity to make connections and network with each other and with the Pacific leaders who are engaged as guest speakers, online engagement increases the opportunity for more participants to engage with leaders from their country/from the region. This is incredibly valuable for ongoing support and sponsorship for when the scholars return home. These online Tier 1 events would be of value post COVID-19 and the Review understands the WLI team are planning for these in conjunction with several smaller face-to-face networking events.

The introduction of the Tier 2 LeadershipConnect—an online leadership program for men and women Pacific scholars is currently in implementation with 92 participants. This is a major pivot and was rapidly implemented. For the Review, the potential value is that more women and men from the Pacific can share learning experiences and together explore the big issues confronting the Pacific through a gender lens and together consider how they might exercise developmental leadership in addressing them. It potentially provides a very meaningful mechanism for more effectively drawing in more men. Sustained change will depend on coalitions of women and men addressing the many structural and institutional barriers to development. Going forward, *LeadershipConnect* should be carefully assessed for its ongoing/post COVID value.

Similarly, the COVID-19 Leadership Fund to support in-country collaborative projects addressing COVID-19 impacts (as a Tier 3 option) is a pivot that will only deepen the effectiveness of the Program. It seamlessly builds a transition bridge, providing, as it does, support to WLI participants and alumnae to exercise developmental leadership on their return home.

Based on the adaptations and innovations to date that draw on the WLI team's established iterative learning and feedback loops, the Review is sure there will be further positive adaptation and innovation in response to new developments in the regional landscape.

e. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor to the program is very experienced and has been instrumental since her engagement in refining fit-for-purpose processes for tracking and reporting progress, collating a wealth of evidence. These include surveys (qualitative and quantitative), case studies, and interviews to support an ongoing assessment of progress. Examples of the quality data collection and reporting activities are:

- The 2019 Leadership and Mentoring program (Tier 2) exit survey, which captured immediate reactions to the second intensive, with an emphasis on participants' assessment of the program's influence on their leadership journey (Brisbane, September 2019).
- The 2018 Cohort 2 and the 2019 Cohort 3 mentor survey 2, which capture mentors' understanding of how the mentor-mentee relationship is progressing, including an assessment of the degree to which their expectations as mentors are being met.
- The first online Tier 2 participant longitudinal survey for 2019 Cohort 3 participants, which seeks to understand participants' views and progress of their leadership journey.
- An audit of all the program's data that is used for M&E purposes, including the monthly mentor and coaching records requested from mentors by program staff.

The five-year program is sighted on three end of program outcomes and progress to date has been tracked against four intermediate outcomes and an enabling outcome. The shift to focus on progress towards the end of program outcomes at the start of Year Four is appropriate and timely. During the enquiry process, the Review held several very engaged and forward-looking discussions with the M&E Advisor. As the Review closed the Advisor had initiated a review to recalibrate the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This is to be commended. Importantly, it will: streamline the approach; ensure that the program goal and end of program outcomes are more fully aligned with the intent and design of the program; and ensure the full value of the Program is being appropriately captured.

f. Research and Learning

As previously noted, the DPA is the research and learning partner for the Women's Leadership Initiative. Through its research contribution and its ability to convene events that privilege Pacific issues and voices in safe spaces, the WLI team reflect that DPA fills the role of 'critical friend' to WLI. They bring different and valued perspectives to programming and partnership considerations. From the perspective of the Review there is a rigour in engaging applied research that helps keep the program on strong pedagogical footings and provides an emerging evidence base for any recalibrations and innovations. This has sharpened the reflective gaze and has placed the lessons learned to date in a broader discussion on women's developmental leadership in the Pacific.

Interestingly, while it has contributed in this way to the WLI team and the program, interviewed participants reflected that they did not necessarily access the academic support available. Two participants felt it was too PNG-centric and others did not feel comfortable to do so.

This perhaps reflects a preference by participants 'not to be a trouble' as one Alumna put it. There may be other ways to promote this offering to facilitate more uptake. Certainly, the WLI team reflected the more visible DPA are, the more they are used. The Review promotes this visibility/engagement, otherwise there could be a risk that the DPA research becomes less applied and more removed from the realities (the opportunities and finite limits) of managing such a program. The Year 3 Annual Report does reflect that a small number of participants and alumnae leveraged the connection with DPA to help clarify their leadership focus; for academic support; and/or for making connections with other academics and practitioners including those from the Pacific.¹⁹ This is positive and to be encouraged.

19 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, *Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report*, p.14

3.3 What improvements could be made to the WLI in the short term and/or for potential future iterations of the program?

The following seven reflections for improving the WLI and deepening effectiveness are not radical suggestions. There is no need as the strong partnership (WLI team/ DPA with DFAT) has established such strong mutual learning feedback loops that the program has already adapted and innovated, or is in the process of doing so, in a direction that the Review would affirm.

1. Scale out the number of cohorts per annum but reduce the cap on number of participants per cohort

The Review considers that the WLI is very well placed for scaling out, beyond the Pacific, to increase the number of cohorts per annum. Cohorts are the structural unit of engagement, and the pedagogical foundations and approach to leading and leadership have been well honed over three years. The program can efficiently and effectively scale from this basis. Increasing the number of cohorts would provide targeted learning in developmental leadership and experience for many more women (and men) Australia Awards scholars, which could contribute to broader social change and positive development outcomes in the respective home countries of participants. The 2017 WLI Investment Design noted that the Pacific focus was for the first five-year phase of the initiative, but it was envisaged that the initiative would develop into a global program over time.²⁰ New cohorts could be thematic and/or geographic, for example, a WLI Timor-Leste or WLI-ASEAN might be considered. This could deepen the opportunities for much tighter links with specific sectors or emerging issues of need. Developing subsidiary teams aligned with cohorts supported by/trained by the core WLI team would ensure quality and consistency as the program scales.

The Review would not increase the number in each cohort, and indeed would suggest capping each cohort at a maximum of 25 participants. This balances the need for diversity but also promotes collegiality amongst participants and it contains the administrative, coaching and mentoring overhead for supporting each cohort i.e., the manageability costs and inputs.

2. Select subsequent Pacific cohorts to support the COVID-19 recovery in the Pacific

Selecting new Pacific cohorts to support the COVID-19 recovery in the Pacific builds on the WLI COVID-19 Leadership Fund initiative. Additional cohorts could be specifically selected from the Pacific with the express intent of exercising developmental leadership for COVID-19 recovery in the Pacific. At the May 2020 Pacific Women Leaders Forum, co-chaired by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, leaders considered three core areas where women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic including health impacts, women's safety, and economic impacts and recovery. They all agreed that this period of disruption has created opportunities to reconstruct systems and norms to advance gender equality. Successive WLI cohorts in the Pacific could optimise this disruption. WLI could select cohorts galvanised and poised for reform in these three areas by their choice of academic degree, and drive and vision for change (as assessed by application), and further focus the parameters of the COVID-19 Leadership Fund.

3. Formalise mechanisms of support (and the WLI mandate) for the transition home

The Australia Awards writ large seek to support leaders and change makers. The Global Tracer Facility tracks progress against this to hone the program/selection processes and to ensure Australia is nurturing positive economic and social outcomes for the countries involved and the soft power potential of these connections. Women undertaking an Australia Awards Scholarship, however, consistently score slightly lower than men on a range of positive indicators for professional advancement and leadership,²¹ which reduces the yield on Australia's investment and further entrenches an unequal status quo. WLI is a cost-efficient and effective response to address this.

There is evidence to suggest that, in just three years, WLI is increasing the yield on Australia's Australia Awards investment (i.e., there are already examples of women exercising leadership in a range of contexts) but evidence is also emerging that participants and alumnae require support transitioning home to fully realise the gains.

20 DFAT, 2017, *Investment Design WLI:2017-2022*, p.3

21 Office of Development Effectiveness, 2015, *Building women's leadership: the contribution of Australia Awards Scholarships*, p.2

The challenges of the transition home have already had to be informally assessed and accommodated by the WLI team. The program has adjusted to support participants of the Tier 2 and 3 processes who transition home mid-program to optimise and unlock their in-Australia learnings when at home. While WLI is typically referred to as an on-Award enrichment program it needs to be acknowledged that on-Award is not synonymous with in-Australia. WLI Australia Award scholars can sometimes finish their degrees from home and/or WLI scholars can finish their studies and return home but still have Tier 2 and Tier 3 processes to complete.

There is a need to help facilitate/deepen horizontal and vertical cohort connections and to 'sponsor' introductions and connections into new networks and opportunities in the home context. For many women, who may return to a status quo that seeks to keep them in their pre award position both in the family, community and their workplace, this is critical to ensure the investment yields its full value.²² Men return to a status quo more likely to nurture and celebrate their Australian experience and qualifications. The women of WLI, whether mid program or post degree and program, could benefit from a more systematic approach to supporting their transition. The return on investment for this support would be more women better positioned to exercise developmental leadership and more women connected into coalitions and networks of change.

To fund this shift of mandate and support the WLI women in their transition home, the Review suggests keeping a portion of Tier 1 events online and Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring cohorts to a maximum of 25 women. This will both optimise Tier 2 cohort learning and release resources to dedicate to the coordination and support of the 'return' phase. It will add value to the WLI by linking participants into other existing programs and networks in their countries (for example, Pacific Women) and strengthening the horizontal and vertical cohorts. The WLI team are poised to optimise this space and can do so in the first instance with a shift in mandate and a realignment of funding. As the value is realised there could be more support from the Australia Awards alumni managing contractors and/or directly from Post, which are both key avenues for linking and connecting (for sponsorship).

It will therefore be increasingly important that the WLI alumnae are acknowledged by both the Australia Awards alumni managing contractors and Post as a specific subset of Australia Awards alumni with specific needs and also discrete and valuable offerings. While the Review concedes a small sample size, her own experiences at various Posts confirms that the messages are well worth heeding. WLI alumnae reflected to the Review that the timing and nature of Australia Award alumni events hosted by Post often precluded women attending. There has not been a great deal of attention to the differentiated needs of women. Further, one of the mentors, herself in the private sector in the region, noted that invitations to industry to attend special events for alumni were often generically addressed. She reflected these need to be much more strategically targeted e.g., to the Human Resources Director (and by name) who would have a direct interest in meeting with the highly trained and motivated Australia Awards alumni, and more particularly WLI alumnae. More targeted engagement with industry is a critical entry point for WLI alumnae, as are engagement and connections made through the networks and connections of the WLI Steering Committee members and the WLI team. Expanding the mandate of the WLI team to formally include support to the transition home could unlock and optimise these informal processes and connections.

²² It is not as necessary for male awardees as they return to a status quo that nurtures and rewards their efforts with professional advancement and formal leadership opportunities.

4. Assess (and formally integrate) the WLI COVID-19 innovations of *LeadershipConnect* and the COVID-19 Leadership Fund

The WLI is structured in tiers to allow Australia Award scholars to engage at the level that suits their interests and availability. The recently developed *LeadershipConnect* (Tier 2) engages men and women in shared learning. Further, the COVID-19 Leadership Fund is an alternative Tier 3 option for supporting the exercise of developmental leadership on the return home. The Review could foresee this Tier 3 option (or versions thereof) becoming increasingly valued as it bridges the transition home, provides an early means and support to connect with other WLI alumnae in the meaningful exercise of developmental leadership. The support to this innovation by the Pacific regional organisation, PIANGO, further provides a network of contacts and potential developmental opportunities. The COVID-19 Leadership Fund could be further refined to allow applications from the *LeadershipConnect* cohort if they applied in collaboration with those who have successfully completed the Tier 2 Leadership and Mentoring. This would increase the avenues for women and men to work together for developmental change.

These additions to Tiers 2 and 3 naturally open a relatively safe space for men to consider issues through a gendered lens and to explore avenues for development with women. It will be important to monitor these additions over the coming year. These innovations have for the interim, however, deftly found an avenue to engage men more meaningfully.

Another tangential avenue for the more meaningful engagement of men is to consider the Australia funded Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) and Seasonal Worker Program (SWP). These bring in large numbers of men and women, who are the community peers of the scholars on the WLI and who may have constrained views of women exercising leadership. The Honourable Ralph Regenvanu, the leader of the Opposition in Vanuatu challenges a broader view of how to engage men and reflects whether the pastoral support offerings of these labour mobility programs could not be influenced through WLI to include novel ways of promoting gender equality and women exercising leadership.

A parallel option to explore is the power of the diaspora churches as channels to these PLF/SWP workers for new messaging around women and women exercising leadership. The Review notes the work of Pacific gender theologians Rev Dr Cliff Bird and Siera Bird, who engage with ministers from partner churches across the Pacific to grapple with biblical themes of equality and anti-violence. They discuss how principles from the Bible can be powerful forces for positive change in their communities, where violence against women continues to be a significant problem.²³ Without prescribing the way, the Review suggests that the potential for cross program fertilisation and support should be considered.

5. Standardise framing and definition of fundamental WLI concepts and components

Standardising key WLI concepts and components, and ensuring consistent use and communication, would both attract and support interest from participants and mentors who understand the challenges and opportunities of exercising developmental leadership. The Review makes two specific reflections: on developmental leadership; and on mentoring.

Developmental Leadership

The focus of developmental leadership is more on the exercise of leadership for developmental outcomes rather than on the development of the individual leader. A person does not necessarily need to have an authorised leadership role to exercise developmental leadership. The approach is a good fit for the Pacific given its development agenda and it gives the participants breakthrough learning on the nature of leading and leadership. Participants are currently sourced via application and interview. While much of the application process and supporting literature is framed in developmental leadership terms there are anomalies. For example, the long-term objective envisages women of influence in leadership roles, the opening question in the application form seeks information on previous leadership roles. Follow up participant surveys seek to understand how participants rate themselves as leaders before the program and then at the point of survey.

23 Uniting World, 2018, *Theology of Gender Equality Making Waves in the Pacific*, accessed 7 June 2020

This framing puts the inherent focus back on the individual as a leader as opposed to the exercise or practice of leadership to bring about change, regardless of role. While a nuanced reflection, these occasional references to positional leadership risk sending mixed messages and inviting participants and mentors to a potentially different emphasis/direction than intended. An opening frame that highlights the individual and individual role may attract people who want to be promoted, elected or selected into formal leadership roles and who then may feel pressured to pursue developmental reform. This might explain why some participants struggled with the real-life project component of the program (i.e., reform may not necessarily have been part of their plans).²⁴ Their interests and aspirations may have been more personal/positional.

It might be more useful in the application process to ask potential participants about when they last exercised leadership; what drove them to exercise it; and, what did that experience teach them about the process of change (of development). In the tracking surveys, one question might better ask how experienced the participants were in exercising leadership and/or understanding how to make change happen before the program and then now. This would both capture and track women with the drive for reform in their own communities and countries.

An interesting point to note, as the WLI team reflect, is that the two models are not exclusive and the suggested refinements will certainly still attract and/or support women who will both seek and inhabit more formal leadership roles and drive reform (and there are many examples); but they will also and importantly attract and support women who would not perceive of themselves as leaders—as they do not have the formal tag (and do not seek it) but who are attracted to exercise leadership from wherever they are in the system to drive reform for their families, communities and beyond. Ensuring these women are not missed will be key to deepening reach and driving effectiveness.

Mentoring

Similarly, it is important to consider how mentors are invited and inducted into the program. The Review observed that shaping and implementing the mentoring node within WLI has been an iterative and resource intensive challenge. It has focused on improving the pairings to address disconnects and perhaps less on the pedagogical scaffolding for the overall mentoring model for the program.

Traditional mentoring typically operates within a hierarchical frame and often in a workplace/organisational setting. There is the mentor who has more experience, knowledge and status so they can both support the development of the mentee and perhaps even sponsor their career advancement. In a more disparate setting such as WLI, it is less clear how to effectively forge the right model (including the right pairings), particularly where the mentor and the mentee do not share a common culture or context. The WLI team has been very responsive and iteratively adapted their approach with each successive cohort. Their concerted efforts have reduced the margin for disconnects, seeking as often as possible to combine those with common interests and in the same location to increase the chance for building rapport and more sustained relationships.

The benefits are clear for the participants and mentors for whom the pairing works and there is a correlation between successful mentoring, confidence, skill development and Tier 3 engagement.

“The mentor from Australia has more networks and even has connections to influential people in my home country. They can also discuss any way forward from a broader perspective related to their latest technology as a goal setting for us developing countries to move forward to.”²⁵

Having reflected on the reports from the three years and in discussion with mentors, mentees, the WLI team, DPA, DFAT and members of the Steering Committee, the Review concludes that there is real value in keeping this mentoring component and ensuring it as effective as possible. This is with a caveat, as acknowledged with the WLI team, that there will always be a relational element to mentoring that cannot be predetermined (mentor and mentee) and expectations need to be managed and/or navigated.

24 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, *Australia Awards Women's Leadership Initiative, Six Monthly Report July-December 2019*, p.13

25 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, *Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report*, p.28

The current Pacific Co-Chair of the WLI, one of the first women parliamentarians in the Samoan Parliament is herself an alumna of a previous Australian leadership program with a significant mentoring component, the Pacific Leadership Program. The Honourable Ali’imalemanu Alofa Tu’uau reflects that her mentoring experience was pivotal to her current trajectory. In turn, she actively seeks out and nurtures potential women parliamentarians. She currently has two women preparing for the next Samoan elections and is now turning her mentoring eye to returning WLI alumnae. Australia’s investment in the Pacific Leadership Program is being multiplied through her efforts and increasingly yielding high returns. WLI is similarly placed for sustainability and refining this mentoring component increases the potential yield. It is possible to foresee that over time the WLI alumnae will themselves become mentors.

The partnership with DPA, as an implementing partner, has provided emerging research on mentoring as a developmental modality that is very instructive. It provides consideration of distinct types of mentoring with distinct and different purposes and an articulation of the learning continuum for the mentees (see Figure 2 for the range of purposes to mentoring relationships).²⁶

Figure 2: Mentoring Purposes Continuum

Developmental	Facilitating critical awareness	Mentor supports mentee to develop capacity for critical questioning of power structures and to consider collective actions that can bring about change (Freire 1970; Mezirow 2000)
	Problem solving and strategising (including coaching)	Mentor supports mentee to improve contextual knowledge of the rules of the game to help the mentee better navigate their way through barriers to their leadership (Dworkin et al. 2012).
	Emotional/psychosocial support and confidence building	Mentor supports mentee to increase their confidence or knowledge and clarify their goals and directions (Harvey et al. 2009)
Instrumental	Professional advice or knowledge transfer	Mentor assist the mentee with technical advice, professional development and strategies for working within existing systems (Harvey et al. 2009).
	Sponsorship	Mentor uses influence and position of power to expose their mentee to developmental experiences through shadowing, internships, connecting with networks and advocating for the mentee when opportunities arise (de Vries and Binns 2018; Eby et al. 2008; Harvey et al. 2009).

26 Howard, E. Barbara, J. Butler, M. 2019 *Mentoring as a Development Modality*, p.3.

The DPA research makes a very cogent case for clearly defining from the outset the type of mentoring that is being considered. In its original conception, the mentoring component for WLI was more about forging Australia-Pacific relationships and building positional leadership capability (i.e., instrumental mentoring as per the continuum). WLI invited mentors based on their own positional authority and experience. Yet, WLI is a program that seeks to optimise developmental leadership in the Pacific for positive reform and promotes that it can be exercised from within any domain and/or from any level. It shifts the focus away from position and the individual to the process of mobilising coalitions for change.

Aligned with the reflections in the DPA paper, the Review suggests that the mentoring component of the WLI could be more deliberately and consistently framed to support and/or define the emerging change/reform aspirations of the mentee. Thereby giving the mentor-mentee relationship clear focus and containment lines from the outset. Further, a more critical purpose to mentoring in development contexts would engage in transformative pedagogies.²⁷ These would support women in their exercise of developmental leadership and reduce the emphasis from the individual and individual barriers to social change. It would open the mentees to consider the structural barriers, and 'raise the mentee's critical awareness of inequality and the structures and systems and social norms that reinforce the inequality.'²⁸

As in the previous discussion on developmental leadership, this does not mean that WLI mentors would not support the individual or an individual's career aspirations. It also does not mean that mentors would not provide a range of other support along the continuum to meet the mentee where they are in their leadership practice. This is essential as it acknowledges the participants' diversity and the diversity of their cultural and leadership contexts. It does mean, however, that the mentoring could be done more explicitly and with the intent of this part of the program consistently framed from the outset (in every document, in communications and on the website) for both the participants and the mentors.

Within the mentor group there are women who are more than capable of shaping this critical purpose to mentoring and sharing it within and across the collective of mentors. This could perhaps become the core matching criterion underpinning all pairings—the fundamentals of the process of reform/of change. Matching one who has deep experience and critical awareness, with another who has deep drive and a case for reform/development. This could be further refined by interests/sectors.

In summary, sharpening the pedagogical frame for both developmental leadership and the type of mentoring that best supports its expression, consistently through all documentation and communications, could result in refined attraction and selection of participants and mentors who are more often aligned with the developmental leadership intent of WLI. This could deepen both the development yield and the opportunities for this program to reach well beyond its participants, as per the example of the multiplier effect of the Pacific Leadership Program through the Honourable Ali'imalemanu Alofa Tu'uau.

6. Establish a mentors' collective

The Review contends that there is unrealised value in the mentors as a collective. Just as the participants are building connections horizontally and vertically (i.e., emerging coalitions), the mentors themselves are a powerhouse collective of drive, expertise, and reform. Currently, their role is one-to-one but there is value in their collective as an ongoing resource to the WLI team, to DFAT, to Australians interested in the Pacific, to the participants and also to each other.

There is investment yield to be realised in the WLI team supporting light coordination and reframing the of the mentors, not as a group of individuals but rather as a collective who drive and support developmental leadership in the Pacific while also building up their own understanding, links and networks. So framed, this collective becomes a space/opportunity for building cross-learning and mentor and mentee hubs on specific areas of interest; thereby giving participants access to a range of contacts and networks as well as their own one-to-one mentors.

27 Howard, E. Barbara, J. Butler, M. *Mentoring as a Development Modality*, p.2

28 'Ibid, p.2

This collective could also be convened once or twice a year as a think tank, a source of deep knowledge of Australia and increasingly the Pacific. It could become a 'go to' reference for building linkages and networks with the Pacific for Australian business and interests including the Canberra polity.

It is also worth considering the mentors' pay. The low rate, while not intended this way, almost plays to that classic assumption that women like to help other women. What this perhaps fails to do is place a value on time, and too often while senior and influential mentors are attracted to the program and mentoring, they have too many highly paid drawdowns on their time to prioritise 'lower value' pressures. Without meaning to, or wanting to, the mentor-mentee relationship is relegated to the fringes of negotiated time. If the program seeks to continue with high profile women of influence and there is value in this, then this may need to be addressed or otherwise the mentors will increasingly need to be drawn from the emerging leadership echelons and/or the recently retired.

7. Consider the naming of WLI but retain the initials for brand recognition

An ongoing program challenge has been how to give women opportunities to hone their exercise of developmental leadership in the safe and inspiring company of other women and yet also to engage men (at key points) as men can be agents for and against shifts in the status quo. The reforms required in the WLI participant home countries are not ours to define but nor are they for women to bear alone. They will take concerted effort by coalitions of women and men. This is acknowledged by the program, promoting as it does a gendered developmental leadership lens and it is also recognised by the participants:

"In our Pacific context we can't avoid the challenges that are present when working with men. The reality is in our society and culture men are present whether we may like their leadership style or not. I firmly believe we have to find a way to work alongside them if we want to effect change in our society."²⁹

In Australia there is broad-based recognition of the need to promote and support both women's rights to gender equality and to equal access and agency. In our domestic setting, a women's leadership program would raise few eyebrows. In the Pacific, however, there is some risk that the current naming may inadvertently imply that the change agenda is for women alone to lead. Equally, it may dissuade men from engaging or sanction their non-involvement. For some stakeholders, while the program hits the mark the name and whom it might exclude sits uneasily. There is concern that the name may prevent some women from applying and work against positively engaging the very men who need to be challenged. For example, there is concern that it might convey there is an issue with women or that women's leadership needs addressing³⁰ or perhaps draws too much attention to women, and/or might seem to exclude men or even be anti-men.

If this was a new program a different name might be in order, one that is more nuanced to the diverse Pacific context. WLI, however, has very quickly established a strong brand for Australia Awards and is gaining traction and esteem in the Pacific and in Australia. There is too much that would be lost for the name to change. The Review would suggest that the / shift from initiative to 'included' and a by-line be added that points to a more inclusive frame e.g. *Women's Leadership Included—everyone at the table or everyone's responsibility* or similar. Women and men are then invited into the frame from the outset. For women seeking to exercise developmental leadership it immediately (and realistically) reflects that it is not their job alone. This is an important message.

29 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, *Australia Awards WLI Annual Report*, p.27

30 Howard, E. 2019, *Women's Leadership: bringing context to life*. p.2

Annex 1

List of Interviews

Name	Role	Notes
WLI Steering Committee		
Hon Ali'imalemanu Alofa Tu'uau	Pacific Co-Chair	The Hon. Ali'imalemanu Alofa Tu'uau is a key Pacific leader and champion for the program.
Jean Martin	PNG/Private Sector Representative	Oil Search
Pamela Toliman	WLI Alumna and Participant Representative	
Managing Contractor—Cardno		
Georgina Cope	Program Leader	Multiple engagements
Marli Hutcheson	Contractor Program Representative	Senior consultant
Karyn Docking	M&E	Multiple engagements
Tony Liston	WLI Coach and Facilitator	Leadership Coach and Facilitator (part time) and Visiting Fellow, Department of Pacific Affairs, ANU 2 x discussions
Felicity Mascetta	Program Coordinator	2 x discussions
Bebe Beckerman	Program Manager	1 x discussion
DFAT		
Michael Bergmann	Director Alumni, Communications and Private Sector Engagement Section, Scholarships and Alumni Branch	Michael has been Director overseeing WLI since Jan 2018
Dr Hazel Lang	Assistant Director Alumni, Communications and Private Sector Engagement Section, Scholarships and Alumni Branch	DFAT lead on WLI and on the Internal Reference Group and support to the Steering Committee (multiple discussions/support)
Gaye Moore	Assistant Director Pacific Gender & Regional Development Section, Pacific Partnerships & Human Development Branch Pacific Operations & Performance Division	Gaye manages key Pacific gender equality investments in DFAT. She is a key stakeholder for WLI and a member of the WLI Internal Reference Group

Name	Role	Notes
Sandra Kaushaar	Acting Director Gender Multilateral Section DFAT Gender Equality Branch	Sandra is both DFAT and a WLI Mentor for Catherine Pukena (2018 WLI Cohort)
WLI Pacific participants and alumni		
Sinead Kado	Cohort 1	
Florence Siba	Cohort 2	
Greta Harris	Cohort 3	
Pamela Toliman	Cohort 3	
Eselealofa Apinelu	Cohort 3	
Pacific leaders		
Hon. Ralph Regenvanu	Leader of the Opposition, Vanuatu	Pacific Leader and engaged in Tier 1 events
Lesieli Taviri	CEO, Origin Papua New Guinea	Board of Pacific Women
WLI Mentors		
Jean Martin	Gender Adviser, Oil Search Foundation, QLD Cohorts 2 & 3	Jean is both a WLI Steering Committee member and WLI mentor
Joanna Hayter, AO	Cohort 3	
Jane Alver	Cohort 3	
ANU Department of Pacific Affairs		
Dr Julien Barbara	Senior Policy Fellow	Julien is a key expert and academic adviser to WLI, with expert knowledge on women's political participation in the Pacific
Dr Kerryn Baker	Research Fellow	Content expert on women's leadership in the Pacific. Kerryn hosts and/or convenes WLI Tier 1 panel discussions
Online Tier 1 Events (attended)		
'Humanitarian Leadership in the Pacific' May 2020		Co-convened with Humanitarian Action Group
'Women's Political Participation—in conversation with Hon Ali'imalemanu Alofa Tu'uau June 2020		Co-convened with DPA, ANU

Annex 2

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Annex 3

Women's Leadership Initiative Program Summary (at 30 June 2020)³¹

Item	Description
Program Name	Australia Awards Women's Leadership Initiative
Location	Australia based
Commencement	1 September 2017
Scheduled Completion	30 June 2022 (Y4–Y5 extension to 2022 confirmed December 2019)
Contract Value	\$3,300,000 (Y1–Y3) / \$5,400,000 (Y1–Y5)
Year 3 Statement Period	1 July 2019–30 June 2020
Year 3 Expenditure	\$1,315,901(39.87 per cent of total three-year value)
Expenditure to 30 June	Overall program expenditure estimated to 30 June 2020 \$3,274,464 (99.22.8 per cent of total three-year value)
Program Goal	WLI female Australia Awards alumni are holding positions of influence that contribute to long-term development outcomes for the Pacific.
Intermediate Outcomes	<p>WLI female Australia Awards alumni have developed more confidence in their skills and capabilities as leaders.</p> <p>WLI female and male Australia Awards alumni are using appropriate tools to analyse and influence development issues in their home countries.</p> <p>WLI female and male Australia Awards alumni are actively building and participating in coalitions and support women's leadership.</p> <p>WLI female Australia Awards alumni have developed connections with influential women in Australia that contribute to positive perceptions of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise.</p> <p>WLI contributes towards the body of knowledge of women's leadership in the Pacific and developmental leadership³².</p>
End-of-Program Outcomes	<p>WLI female and male Australia Awards alumni are actively engaged in networks and coalitions that seek to achieve change in their own countries.</p> <p>WLI female Australia Awards alumni are strengthening cooperation between Pacific countries and Australia.</p> <p>WLI female Australia Awards alumni use their leadership skills to contribute to sustainable development outcomes for the Pacific</p>

31 Summary taken from the Cardno Six Monthly Report (July-December 2019) and adjusted for June 2020 from WLI Year 3 Annual Report p.v

32 Enabling outcome, which underpins all WLI activities.

Item	Description
Program Structure / Delivery Model	<p>Delivers skills development, mentoring and other resources to on-Award women and men Australia Awards scholars from the Pacific. Links emerging women leaders and influential women in Australia and the Pacific. Supports participants to build coalitions and networks. Delivered in three tiers:</p> <p>Tier 1: learning and networking events to raise awareness of program and of key Pacific leadership / development issues.</p> <p>Tier 2: residential intensives, mentoring and coaching to develop key leadership skills and capabilities, and foster a sense of collective identity and purpose.</p> <p>Tier 3: workplace internships in Australian or Pacific organisations to strengthen linkages between Australia and the Pacific.</p>
Implementing Agencies	Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) Pty Ltd, in partnership with the Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University
Australian Government management and governance arrangements	<p>Day-to-day oversight by DFAT Partnerships and Private Sector Relations Section, Scholarships and Alumni Branch.</p> <p>The DFAT Internal Reference Group meets quarterly to promote coordination and information sharing between DFAT stakeholders.</p> <p>The program Steering Committee provides strategic direction, advice and other high-level support to the program</p>

Annex 4

COVID-19 Leadership Fund— Summary of Successful Projects

WLI Participants/ Alumni	Country	Activity	Timing	Focus Area
Dorothy Jolly (C1), Matilda Kapiipi (C1), Lisa Ijape (C4)	PNG	Rain Water Catchment System for rural schools	July–September 2020	Health; Education
Paula Zebedee Aines (C3), Rose Polume (C3), Janet Bue Towaki (C3), Karen Anawe (C3)	PNG	COVID-19 Awareness and Support System	June–September 2020	Health; Education
Marlene Delis (C2), Lina Sanawe (C3), Vidiro Gei (C1)	PNG	Combatting COVID-19 through WASH in schools	June–November 2020	Health; Education
Clera Sam (C2), Welenie Yaki (C4), Rhoda Karl (C4)	PNG	Economic Empowerment of Women impacted by COVID-19	July–November 2020	Safety / Security
Rebecca Krai (C3), Angela Pisa Tom (C4), Michelle Silip (C4)	PNG	School-based awareness for COVID-19 in Mui-Baiyer District	July–December 2020	Education
Goretti Kodovaru (C4), Lydia Kaforau (C4), Kristalee Horoto (C4)	Solomon Islands	COVID-19 health education rural awareness program	July–December 2020	Health
Florence Siba (C1), Anna Apop (C2), Lavinia ToVue (C1)	PNG	Menstrual health hygiene education and awareness	June 2020	Health; Education
Ruline Pokote Ketawuo (C2), Jeanne Tereasi (C4), Dorothy Kenneth (C2)	PNG /Bougainville	Reusable sanitary pads and facemasks for female high school students	July–November 2020	Health; Education
Lilu Moala (C3), Mele Mangisi (C1), Malia Halaapiapi Vaka'uta (C3)	Tonga	COVID-19 preparation and prevention-focused program	July–August 2020	Health
Tagiilima Neemia (C3), Falelua Maua (C1), Ezethanie Tofilau (C2), Della Siomia Savaiinaea (C4)	Samoa	Empowering mother to keep families safe during COVID-19	June–December 2020	Health; Education; Agriculture / Food Security

WLI Participants/ Alumni	Country	Activity	Timing	Focus Area
Maria-Goreti Muavesi (C3), Sugandha Goswami (C3), Lilian Mausio (C3), Laisani Macedru (C2), Vasiti Soko (C3)	Fiji	Veinanumi Project	June – December 2020	Health; Agriculture /Food Security
Valentina Yamanea (C4), Lomot Rodney (C4), Robyn Robinson (C2)	PNG	Topak Health Centre Water Supply and Sanitation Project	August–December 2020	Health
Aloesi Dakuidreketi (C2), Nanise Tuqiri (C3), Lani Ragusuloto (C2), Laisani Macedru (C2)	Fiji	Integrated Farming of Fish & Poultry	June–December 2020	Agriculture / Food Security
Greta Harris (C3), Clarissa Jeremiah (C3), Jasmira Giouba (LeadershipConnect 2020 participant)	Nauru	COVID-19 Information and Awareness Initiative	June–December 2020	Health; Education
Scholar Pope (C3), Irene Semos (C2), Eunice Eva (C3), Lomot Rodney (C4)	PNG	Project Proposal Writing and Management Training of Namatanai Rural Health Middle Management Personnel for Infrastructure Improvement for WASH and COVID-1	July–October 2020	Health

Annex 5

Progress against the intermediate outcomes

Intermediate Outcome 1: WLI female Australia Awards alumni have developed more confidence in their skills and capabilities as leaders

WLI is making a strong contribution towards developing confidence in the leadership skills and capabilities of Tier 2 and Tier 3 participants. The sense of confidence and achievement were palpable in the interviews—two reflections are emblematic:

“we did the Outward Bound, now we know we can do anything”.

“I am much more confident now, especially to step back and really look who needs to be engaged and how to engage them”.

In interviews with mentors there was also examples of the lived experience of observing and supporting the confidence and skills journey of participants. Several mentors confirmed the value of supporting mentees to actively review and assess the prevailing context and the available networks. Furthermore, to consider how to consciously build and extend the available networks. One mentor spoke of helping her mentee consider who she would meet at a Tier 3 professional development opportunity and how she might approach each one in ways to build connections and follow through opportunities.

From the Year 3 Annual Report:

Three longitudinal surveys of Cohorts 1–3 (both in Australia and from home) assessed that the program contributed to a significant increase in their confidence as leaders through exposure to and learning of new concepts, skills and tools. This was augmented and more deeply practiced through a range of program events, intensives, networking opportunities and their through-engagement with mentors and the Leadership Coach and Facilitator.

The majority of Cohorts 1 and 2 (now alumnae) who have completed the program and returned home rated themselves significantly higher as leaders compared to when they started the program and attributed their high levels of leadership confidence as a result of participating in the WLI. Importantly, 93 per cent of respondents acknowledged that the program provided them with greater knowledge and skills to exercise leadership.

For Cohort 3 who are still on the program, respondents rated themselves significantly higher as leaders by the end of the ‘in Australia’ component of the program. Ninety-two per cent of Cohort 3 reflected in the in-Australia Survey they were more confident leaders.

This improved confidence was evident from the survey feedback. For example, a response in the Longitudinal Participant Survey #2 2018 cohort:

“This participation and opportunities have ... given me the bold courage to go out and be an inspiration to others because I can see, think and align as an adaptive leader. I see that I have potential to influence change and be a mentor to others.” [referring to a range of conference and public speaking opportunities present through the program]³³

33 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report, p.26

Intermediate Outcome 2: WLI female and male Australia Awards alumni are using appropriate tools to analyse and influence development issues in their home countries

Both through interviews and feedback sourced from reports there is good evidence that participants are deploying lessons learned and tools acquired in their exercise of developmental leadership on their return home. The Review would note that the evidence pertains to women and not to men. This is reasonable as the tools are mostly introduced through the Tier 2 intensives, where they are introduced in a layered way. Several participants reflected how much they valued this approach to teaching the tools and approaches as it deepened the learning and helped embed these tools/practices.³⁴

The most current evidence against this intermediate outcome is the application process for the COVID-19 Leadership Fund. Applicants had to bring their learning and apply it to a COVID-19 related issue. A key aspect of this was using the tools and lessons learned to analyse the stakeholder landscape and identify who could be mobilised as advocates, where were the points of resistance, and then identify concomitant strategies. Fifteen teams are now engaging in their projects across six countries.

Prior to this, WLI alumnae were already beginning to address a range of development issues in their home countries. These range from health to agriculture, medicine to education and in government, community and in the private sector. One alumna from PNG interviewed by the Review reflected on identifying girls missing school because of not having access to menstrual hygiene products. Deploying the tools and lessons learned she initiated a small venture to address this. She linked forces with a fellow Australia Awards alumna, a church community in Wagga, Australia and sourced funding from the US Embassy to produce products and use her education networks to dispatch them to the community. This has subsequently expanded through a successful submission to the COVID-19 Leadership Fund and now a collective of three WLI alumnae is promoting menstrual health hygiene awareness and education in the context of COVID-19.

The Longitudinal Participant Survey #2 2018³⁵ (n22) notes that 73 per cent of Cohorts 1 and 2 considered that they made a positive influence on change when they returned home, compared to before they engaged with the program. On a low to high (1 to 10) rating scale, just under half (45.5 per cent) rated their positive influence at the highest scales of 9 and 10.³⁶

Intermediate Outcome 3: WLI female and male Australia Awards alumni are actively building and participating in coalitions and support women's leadership

There is evidence of good progress being made towards building and participating in networks by WLI alumnae. There also evidence of emergent progress towards the building and use of coalitions to affect change. WLI fully recognises that these coalitions need to be driven from a strong basis of contextual analysis and must engage with/include men. The program purposefully creates opportunities for all WLI participants to network and engage with fellow Pacific Islanders and Australian and Pacific leaders. Tier 1 Learning and Networking events are experienced by participating WLI Australia Awards scholars as a valuable means by which to engage men in women's leadership and other Pacific developmental issues. They also help to initiate and contribute towards the building of networks.

Through the Tier 2 intensives and overall tiered approach, the challenges and opportunities associated with building coalitions and working with men are further considered. Stakeholder/network mapping tools are a vital support to a more conscious deliberation of the change landscape and how to engage key stakeholders and coalitions. The recent addition of *LeadershipConnect* provides an additional and very deliberate mechanism to engage with even more men (and women) and for them to consider the many developmental issues confronting the Pacific through a gender lens.

34 The tools introduced and deployed include a range of ontological leadership tools (for example, listening and speaking; making and managing commitments; moods and energy management); self-care tools (restorative yoga, stress management and trauma counselling); developmental and adaptive leadership approaches (peer coaching / problem analysis; analysing the system in which we live; adaptation and experimentation; taking the systems view); specific targets areas such as working with men to affect change and, tools to support action planning, and reflection. Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report, p.26

35 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report

36 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report, p.26

"There were two strategies that I have learnt and was able to apply them back home. Firstly, the recognition of working through coalitions with women and men. I come from a patriarchy society that's embedded in my culture. For instance, in my family my father is the head and he make the key decisions. However, when there's any issues concerning our family, I have found ways to work closely with him but knowing where I stand in terms of the respect and the boundar(ies)". (Longitudinal Participant/s Survey 2 2018 Cohort).³⁷

With regard to Tier 2, the *Tier Two Intensive Survey 2* (September 2019) found that 88 per cent of Cohort 3 surveyed (n34) following their September Intensive reflected that they were using or growing their networks. The majority reflected that they had maintained networks with many of their WLI participant cohort.³⁸ Consistently repeated during interviews in the Review enquiry process was the invaluable support of fellow cohort participants and emerging vertical links across cohorts and/or new coalitions. In one interview a participant reflected a consensus that emerged through the Review:

"We had such a diverse group of amazing women—and I learnt so much from them and found that I wasn't alone in my challenges and frustrations. Super powerful to recognise most of my challenges are their challenges too—that they are systemic. I can draw strength from that sisterhood, but it is not ours alone. How do we get out of this? WLI taught me what networks and coalitions are and their power—total eye opener. And I am really conscious of this in my own country".

Another participant added that the WLI connections are rich but harder to maintain at home and some support on an annual basis to facilitate and "give permission" to engage would be invaluable to cement these for the long term.

The Year 3 Annual Report states that 34 unique networks were identified at the second intensive in September 2019 and all participants were able to share their personal and professional network maps with others. Over 80 different networks, coalitions, organisations, associations and clubs were identified by name as those that will likely help Cohort 3 in their reform ambitions. Most of the identified networks are Pacific based but others are Australian, international or regional groups. The Australia Awards Alumni Network is frequently cited and could provide a lever for participants to engage with Australia, its people, and its institutions. Mentors were seen to be beneficial in leveraging Australian and international networks for participants. From the Year 3 Annual Report:

*"It was great because of the depth of knowledge and also the experience. In comparison with a mentor in my home country, although it's also good, but with an Australian mentor it can open doors for you to build a network within Australia, so while in my home country I can ask my Australia network on something that I may need their advice or help with".*³⁹

From a Review interview:

"The mentoring was a great way for cross fertilisation of what is happening in one country that could help in another"

Alumni surveyed from Cohort 1 and 2 (n22) had increased their use of networks and coalitions post engagement with WLI. Sixty-four per cent used networks and coalitions much more, while 27 per cent used them a little more than compared to before they engaged with the program. Cohort One and Two also reflected that they had formed strong networks with other participants in the program. Almost 60 per cent had maintained contact with ten or more fellow participants once they returned home. The Year 3 Annual Report also notes that while this is a decrease from the 74 per cent who had contact with ten or more participants when they completed the 'in Australia' survey, it is still a very promising sign that their WLI network will be with them as they continue their journeys.

"Through WLI, I was able to build professional networks not only within my country but the Pacific island region and knowing and learning from the women and men that I engaged with throughout the program."⁴⁰

37 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report, p.27

38 Ibid

39 Ibid. p.28

40 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report, p.29, from an email from 2018 Tier alumni, 11 March 2020

All Tier 3 participants who have completed a workplace internship or professional development opportunity (e.g. participation at a conference or other event) have extended their professional and personal networks with other leaders in Australia, the Pacific and globally. This finding is based on discussions with mentors, the WLI team and further evidenced in the Year 3 Annual Report through the three longitudinal surveys. Interestingly, it emerges that Tier 3 can mitigate the potential negative impacts of a mentor relationship that does not thrive. One participant found that she learned from a mentoring relationship that did not work and still gained an enormous amount from her WLI experience. The Tier 3 component gave her other avenues to link up with women politicians in Fiji and to attend a political forum in Brisbane to facilitate her networks.

Intermediate Outcome 4: WLI female Australia Awards alumni have developed connections with influential women in Australia that contribute to positive perceptions of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise

There is solid evidence that WLI alumni are connecting with and have positive or very positive views of Australia's expertise, Australians and influential women. A core avenue for generating this perception has been through the mentoring component of the WLI. The three surveys reported on in the Year 3 Annual Report paint a compelling affirmation of this offering (detailed following).⁴¹ This is a credit to the implementing partners who have worked hard to develop and recalibrate this component over successive cohorts. The Review would note that interviewed participants and mentors were similarly positive, reflecting the value for supporting women's exercise of leadership, and for building two-way Australia-Pacific engagement and knowledge. Some mentorship relationships continue beyond the program. But for most, regardless of the value while in Australia, needs and demands on time shift on the return home. The role of the Australian mentor perhaps becomes less accessible or relevant but no less valued. One WLI Alumna reflected to the Review:

“Having a mentor from Australia was the best thing... We have so many things on our plate, so many challenges to address when we get home, we need to deal with family, with community, and some of us also have to look for jobs. Now I need different help.

After completing the WLI program, the perceptions of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise by surveyed Cohorts 1 and 2 (n22) was high (86.4 per cent). Sixty-four per cent had much stronger perceptions compared to before they studied in Australia. Those surveyed connected most with their WLI mentor, the university where they studied, their 'other' Australian based mentors and their academic supervisor. They connected with the WLI Leadership Coach, WLI team, the university where they studied and their WLI mentor between two to five times a year (Longitudinal Participant Survey #2 2018 Cohort).⁴²

41 Ibid

42 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, *Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report*

Cohorts 1 and 2 also highly valued having a female mentor in Australia. Specific advantages cited included being exposed to different ways of doing things; being able to see issues differently; being able to create strategies for change; having conversations that were relevant to the mentees context and; having trust that the conversations between them were confidential. They did note though that their mentors were less able to provide contacts in the mentee's home country (Longitudinal Participant Survey #2 2018 Cohort⁴³).

Based on their WLI experience, surveyed Cohort 3 participants (n26) had high or very high perceptions of Australian friends and colleagues and Australian expertise and skills. Ninety-three per cent had high or very high perceptions of Australian people. Mentors and mentoring were highly valued by this cohort (notwithstanding the challenges associated with developing, enhancing and enriching the mentor-mentee relationship). Positive views about the impact mentors have on their mentees was evident. Specific reference was made to the strategies, support and materials provided, the networks they bring, and the specific practical mentoring provided (Longitudinal Participant Survey #1 2019 Cohort⁴⁴). Interviewed mentors spoke of the positive engagements, deepened learning, and regard for the Pacific. They spoke perhaps the most vigorously of deepened learning and regard for the diversity of the Pacific such as the contextual differences and challenges of Tuvalu compared to PNG compared to Fiji or Samoa. Making connections is a two-way process and certainly the mentoring component opens up these opportunities if both parties are willing. From the Year 3 Annual Report the mentees reflect,

"The benefits include the cultural exchange, learning from someone that has experienced a different working culture on a much more international scale that includes countries in the Asia-Pacific region"

"I see it as an advantage, we now live in a global society and hearing different views is a bonus. I don't see any disadvantages in this (having an Australian mentor)"

In Review interviews, two mentors reflected,

"I learnt so much about Tuvalu—its history of law—the price of fish (all the same) and how families live. I loved that..."

"I had a connection with Kiribati from over a decade ago but WLI gave me a way to reconnect with a young I-Kiribati woman and language"

Enabling Outcome: WLI contributes towards the body of knowledge of women's leadership in the Pacific and developmental leadership

WLI's program of face-to-face and online Tier 1 events, and its research partnership with DPA, have made positive contributions to the body of knowledge on women's leadership in the Pacific and developmental leadership.

Over its third year, the WLI held eight Tier 1 events attracting an audience of more 400 scholars and members of the wider community. These events profiled prominent Pacific and Australian leaders and practitioners and generated discussion on key leadership issues of relevance to the Pacific, with a strong gender lens.

Following two online events in May and June 2020⁴⁵ and in response to the very high level of audience engagement, the program produced and disseminated two Summary Briefs: 'Humanitarian Leadership in the Pacific' (co-convened with Humanitarian Action Group) and 'Women's Political Participation—In Conversation with Hon. Ali'imalemanu Alofa Tu'uau' (co-convened with DPA). Capturing key discussion points, the briefs are designed for use in advocacy, learning and programming activities by a range of Pacific and Australian stakeholders.

43 Ibid.

44 Cardno WLI Team, 2020, Australia Awards WLI Year 3 Annual Report

45 both of which the Review attended

Two DPA papers linked to WLI activities and participants ('Barriers and opportunities for aspiring Pacific women politicians' and 'Women's Leadership: Bringing Context to Life') have been published and are now form part of the knowledge base in this area. Further, the team has completed three new policy briefs that capture key points of DPA/ WLI research. These will be disseminated early in Year 4 through the WLI website and through broader academic, development and leadership communities in Australia and the Pacific. They are:

- **Lessons Learned: Supporting Women's Leadership:** capturing key lessons from the research on women's leadership and presenting recommendations to policymakers for more effective programming.
- **Mentoring to Enhance Women's Leadership:** reviewing the literature on mentoring and presenting key questions that should be asked when structuring effecting mentoring programs in development contexts.
- **Leadership: Pacific Women's Perspectives:** presenting the views of three WLI scholars on women's leadership in their respective country contexts, based on the panel session held during the Research for Development Impact Conference in 2019 on Inclusive Leadership for Development.

DPA have commenced work on a long-term research program examining the experience of WLI participants on their return home. This work is expected to continue through Years 4 and 5 and will generate a range of important knowledge and evidence for refining the program approach to the transition home and for sharing more broadly. The Review concludes that this enabling outcome has been strongly advanced.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANU	Australian National University
Cardno	Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) Pty Ltd
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPA	Department of Pacific Affairs, ANU
IO	Intermediate Outcome
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
Pacific Women	Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Program
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations
PLF	Pacific Labour Facility
PNG	Papua New Guinea
R&R	Reflection and Refocus Sessions
SWP	Seasonal Worker Program
TL	Team Leader
WLI	(Australia Awards) Women's Leadership Initiative