

CLASSIC WALLABIES INDIGENOUS EXCHANGE REVIEW

JULY 2018

1. Background and Context

Since the 1960s, the Australian Government has, through its aid program, supported Australians to volunteer in developing countries. International volunteering promotes cultural understanding through people-to-people linkages and is a means of promoting both public diplomacy and development outcomes. The current phase of the Australian Volunteers Program (AVP) (formerly AVID) commenced on 1 January 2018 as a \$190m Australian government investment in 26 countries, over a period of five years. The program continues to match skilled Australians from all walks of life with organisations overseas to support these organisations to deliver on their own objectives. The program uses international volunteering as a people-centred approach to capacity development¹.

An Australian Government funded research project conducted in late 2008² found that very few indigenous Australians had international volunteering experience. Among those who had volunteered internationally, only a very small number had participated through the Australian-Government funded volunteer program. The Australian aid program then committed, through its Reconciliation Action Plan, to actively promote international volunteering opportunities among indigenous Australians, with the ultimate aim of increasing the number of indigenous Australians participating in the AVID program. In 2013, AVI began working with AusAID (now DFAT) to increase the participation of indigenous Australians in volunteering.

One of the strategies developed under the *Indigenous Engagement Framework* was to develop smaller projects under the AVID program that would provide specific opportunities for indigenous Australians and serve as “feeders” into the broader volunteer program, or “pilots” for broader program innovations that addressed issues of inclusion in AVID. AVI collaborated with the Eidos Institute³ and its Classic Wallabies Exchange (CWE) program⁴ to develop an annual program for eight young indigenous Australians, over three years in South Africa. The initial plan, developed by the Eidos Institute, was for indigenous, university student athletes to undertake a volunteering assignment with a community service organisation affiliated with South African Rugby Union, followed by a semester attendance at a South African tertiary institution. Due to a lack of interest from identified universities in South Africa and difficulties recruiting suitable volunteers, the Classic Wallabies Indigenous Exchange program became a 6-week international group volunteering assignment for young, indigenous Australians with a local organisation (Eco Children⁵) in remote communities in South Africa.

Since 2014, the Classic Wallabies Indigenous Exchange (CWIE) has facilitated five cohorts of group volunteer assignments for young, indigenous Australians, with a total of 37 volunteers involved in the program (as of June 2018). The indigenous volunteers, aged between 18-35 years, work with local school communities in rural South Africa to build sustainable vegetable gardens and refurbish classrooms over a five-week period. The key objectives of the program are:

- Supporting community environmental awareness and increasing nutrition and economic empowerment through ‘keyhole’ gardens;

¹ Capacity development is “a process of increasing and maintaining the capabilities of individuals, teams, organisations and communities in order to achieve a range of positive sustainable outcomes” (OECD DAC, 2006; Rhodes, 2014).

² <https://forum-ids.org/2008/06/indigenous-australian-participation-in-international-volunteering-report-on-exploratory-research/>

³ <http://www.eidos.org.au/>

⁴ <http://cwexchange.org.au/#>

⁵ Eco Children is a non-profit organisation that focuses on environmental education, empowerment and whole school development in two provinces in north-east South Africa through education and conservation projects implemented in partnership with the Make a Difference (MAD) Leadership Foundation.

- Increasing indigenous understanding, participation and experience of international volunteering;
- Supporting the personal and professional growth of young, indigenous Australians;
- Creating greater demand and opportunities for indigenous participation in programs that promote shared learning, global citizenship and generational leadership;
- Promoting a broader understanding of Australia and its contribution to the global community.

The CWIE program sits under the broader global Australian Volunteer Program⁶ and represents one program within a portfolio of pilot investments that have purposefully focused on increasing indigenous participation in international volunteering. The CWIE volunteers currently make up approximately one-quarter of the total number of volunteers assigned annually to support partner organisations in South Africa to achieve their development objectives through the Australian Volunteer program⁷.

2. Review Purpose

The CWIE program has not previously been formally evaluated. The program is currently in its fifth year of implementation, providing an opportune moment to assess what is working well (or not) and why; identify enabling factors and barriers to program participation; and provide recommendations for strengthening the program. The purpose of this review of the Classic Wallabies Indigenous Exchange is to provide AVI and DFAT with:

- An analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency and value for money of the program against the program objectives;
- Information on the enablers and barriers to participation and completion of the program for indigenous Australians;
- Recommendations on whether to continue the program in its current form and/or provide recommendations on the best approach to creating volunteer opportunities for indigenous Australians.

The primary users of the review will be the Partnership team; In-Country Management teams; Volunteer Services team and DFAT Volunteer Section and Post in South Africa.

3. Review Methodology

This review adopted a twin-track approach that involved a desk review and analysis of secondary data and the collection of primary data through interviews with key program stakeholders including AVI staff, DFAT Post, returned volunteers, Australian Partner Organisations and the overseas Partner Organisation. A short survey for returned volunteers was developed and used to obtain information on the experience of volunteers involved in the CWIE program. Secondary data reviewed included existing documentation related to the CWIE program and available research on indigenous participation in volunteering. The approach aimed to synthesise existing information and collect new information across all stages of the volunteer life-cycle (pre, during and post assignment) to identify key findings and develop a set of recommendations to inform future support for the program.

In parallel to this review, Coffey International is conducting a formative evaluation of how to increase diversity in the volunteer applicant and volunteer pool. The formative evaluation seeks to understand the barriers to access to the AV program and interest in international volunteering across diverse groups and generate lessons for targeting in terms of

⁶ In 2017-18, around 1100 volunteers will be supported across 26 countries

⁷ Based on consultations with AVI and DFAT through the CWIE review, June 2018.

recruitment, volunteer support, advertising and promotion. Findings from this evaluation are expected to support the findings and recommendations from this review of the CWIE program.

Key evaluation questions for the CWIE review were developed based on the broader Australian Volunteer program MELF and end of program outcomes. The Australian Volunteer program's end of program outcomes are:

- Partner organisations are supported by Australia to progress their development objectives.
- The public and governments in Australia and overseas better appreciate the value of volunteering.
- Australian volunteers gain professionally and personally.

The **five key questions** answered through this review are:

1. To what extent has the program delivered on its objectives?
2. Have the program participants and partner organisations been adequately supported before, during and after their assignments?
3. What has been the role and benefits of the existing partnerships in the program?
4. To what extent is the program visible as an Australian government funded program?
5. To what extent is the program considered good value for money and is it worth replicating?

4. Review Limitations

The limitations related to the CWIE review include:

- Limited documented qualitative and quantitative M&E data for the CWIE program;
- Limited research and documentation available on best practice approaches to indigenous participation in volunteering;
- Limited number of programs globally that have specifically focused on indigenous participation in international volunteering;
- Formative evaluation on increasing diversity and AVI Diversity and Inclusion Strategy still under development at the time of the review.

5. Key Findings

Key findings from the review are outlined below under each of the key review questions.

5.1 To what extent has the program delivered on its objectives?

Key Findings

The CWIE program is valued by all stakeholders involved in the program and delivers on the program objectives to varying degrees. All stakeholders consulted viewed the program in a positive light and identified a range of ideas for strengthening the effectiveness of the program as well as opportunities for expanding and replicating the program. In line with the AV program end of program outcomes, the CWIE program contributes to the objectives of the partner organisation (Eco Children), increases appreciation of the value of volunteering and supports the personal and professional development of volunteers.

From a **volunteer perspective**, the CWIE program provides benefits to the volunteers both personally and professionally. For the majority of the volunteers involved, the CWIE program is a transformative and life-changing personal experience. The group volunteer assignment experience provides volunteers with an opportunity to connect with other indigenous Australians and explore both their own indigenous culture and compare and share their experience as first nation people with the experiences of indigenous South African people. It

is often the volunteers' first experience overseas, undertaking formal volunteer work and living and working with developing poor communities in a developing country. The experience can be transformational and empowering, providing the volunteers with increased confidence and a sense of pride and achievement. The experience supports volunteers to develop leadership and mentoring skills, with a number of the volunteers taking up the role of team leader for subsequent cohorts of CWIE volunteers. Participants in the program gained a positive introduction and exposure to the world of development and international volunteering. Moreover, returned volunteers feel the experience contributed positively to their professional development and work within their own communities. Returned volunteers articulated the following professional and personal outcomes from the experience as follows:

“My volunteer assignment changed the course of my life, I changed what I was studying at university, this course opened my eyes up to ways in which I can really make a difference”

“My volunteer experience has helped me personally with my confidence and given me a clearer direction in my career and given me a greater passion to volunteer more”.

“My volunteer experience gave me experience with dealing with different team dynamics and personalities...This has helped me professionally and since returning to work I have been appointed and taken on more management and leadership roles within my team”.

From the **perspective of the Partner Organisation** (Eco Children) and the communities in which they work, the CWIE program brings multiple benefits. Firstly, the building of the sustainable vegetable garden and school refurbishment projects provide a platform for Eco Children to work with schools and communities to support improved education outcomes and environmental awareness more broadly. The CWIE volunteers are critical to establishing relationships with communities and building local ownership of Eco Children's broader education programs. As stated by the CEO of Eco Children, the CWIE program is “the “foundation for all other Eco Children support to schools and communities”. Secondly, the children (Grades 6-7) within the schools are involved in the development of the gardens and the vegetables produced are used to provide a cooked meal for school children once per day, supporting improved nutrition and learning outcomes for these students. In addition, the vegetables grown are used for small-scale school income generation⁸. Thirdly, the CWIE program supports school and community collaboration, with members of the community including parents volunteering their time to support the project and school activities. The manual labour of the garden project provides a shared experience and equal space for engagement between the school, community, partner organisation and volunteers, strengthening a sense of teamwork and providing opportunities for relationship-building, mutual learning and cross-cultural exchange.

From a **DFAT perspective**, the CWIE program provides significant public diplomacy opportunities for promoting the Australian aid program overseas and in Australia, and broader access to local organisations and networks within South Africa. The CWIE program provides links to local organisations and partners that may not be directly involved in the Australian aid program in South Africa and makes a significant contribution to the number of Australian volunteers in South Africa. DFAT Post in Pretoria have recognised the value of the project and its partnership with Eco Children.

The CWIE program has supported increased demand and opportunities for young, indigenous Australians to undertake international volunteering. Since the start of the

⁸ While it was beyond the scope of this review to assess the sustainability of the gardens, anecdotally schools are maintaining and sustaining the gardens built through the CWIE projects.

program, there have been annual increases in the number of applicants from around 15 applicants in the first year (2014) to a total of 60 applicants in 2018. Key factors identified as contributing to increasing interest in the program and successful outcomes from the program include:

- **Word of mouth:** Recruitment for CWIE is promoted through multiple platforms and networks, however, almost all volunteers involved in the CWIE program heard about the program through word of mouth (friends, family, colleagues etc). This indicates that a large portion of the volunteers had a positive volunteer experience and have therefore encouraged others to get involved;
- **Group assignments:** Group assignments likely appeal to young people who may not have the confidence to apply for or undertake an overseas assignment alone, particularly in a country with significant security issues. In addition, a group approach is likely more culturally appropriate and accessible for young people who have grown up in cultures where overseas travel is not normative;
- **Short-term assignments:** Many of the CWIE volunteers were able to get involved due to the short-term nature of the assignment which reduces impacts on work and study obligations. The short time frame provides volunteers with a taste of volunteering in a safe environment. The majority of previous volunteers felt that given the intensity of living and working together to complete the project, a longer time-frame than 5-6 weeks would not be ideal.
- **Team roles and responsibilities:** The approach of assigning each team member with a designated role on the team (e.g. Team leader, health and well-being officer, coordinator etc) is effective as it ensures all members of the group have clear responsibilities and a valued role in the project. The team leader role is invaluable as it supports leadership opportunities and contributes to a positive experience for new volunteers.
- **Indigenous to indigenous exchange:** The sense of a shared or common history between indigenous Australians and indigenous South Africans breaks down barriers between the volunteers and communities in South Africa and supports strong connections and enduring relationships;
- **Indigenous only approach:** This approach makes volunteering accessible to young, indigenous Australians and supports a tailored recruitment and mobilisation process;
- **In-Country Support:** Volunteers identified the high quality of the in-country support from both the AVI country team and partner organisation (Eco Children) as a key reason the program is successful;
- **Community development approach:** Volunteers identified working with local community and school children as the best part of their assignment, with many volunteers maintaining relationships and communication with members of the community in which they volunteered.

5.2 Have the program participants and partner organisation been adequately supported before, during and after their assignments?

Recruitment

The program employs a range of recruitment approaches that target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18-35 years. Approaches include advertising and promotion through websites, social media platforms and networks linked to AVI, Eidos and Classic Wallabies. Most applicants hear about the program through word of mouth, with returned volunteers playing a vital role in building momentum and the credibility of the program among their peers and communities. The application process requires applicants to answer

4 key questions and is relatively straightforward and accessible, though there is room to identify ways the application process could be more accessible.

Short recruitment time frames have resulted in rushed recruitment processes and minimal time for candidates to reflect on the opportunity prior to departure. The short time-frames have also impacted workloads within AVI. The AVI recruitment panel for the program does not currently include an indigenous Australian panel member and indigenous organisations are not formally involved in recruitment and mobilisation processes. Due to the time difference between South Africa and Australia, in-country staff and the Partner Organisation are not involved in interview processes. Based on available data, most volunteers selected for the program have lived on the east coast of Australia (Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland) and more females than males have been involved in the program (approximate ratio of 2:1)⁹.

Pre-Assignment

The key factor impacting support provided prior to assignments is a lack of commitment to multi-year funding of the CWIE program. This has resulted in annual uncertainty over whether the program will proceed and in turn extremely short time frames for the recruitment and mobilisation of volunteers once funding has been approved. This negatively impacts all key stakeholders including AVI, the volunteers and the Partner Organisation¹⁰. In addition, annual funding uncertainty has limited opportunities for a strategic, long-term approach to program planning and potentially led to missed opportunities for strengthening program effectiveness. This is further compounded by the need for the projects to be completed during South African school holidays to avoid disruption to schooling.

Due to short time frames for mobilisation, volunteers are inundated with pre-departure information and requirements from multiple people which can lead to unnecessary anxiety and stress for the volunteers and their families. In some cases, this has led to selected candidates choosing to not take up assignments. For many of the volunteers it is their first time overseas and the required processes prior to departure are often new and overwhelming (e.g. applying for a passport, police checks, medical and dental checks), particularly when they must be completed within a limited timeframe.

Based on volunteer feedback, the Pre-Departure Briefing and In-Country briefing are both of high quality. The workshops are tailored to the CWIE program and cover a broad range of topics specific to the assignment context including project and community orientation; personal security; South Africa context; public diplomacy; cultural competency; team work; and child protection. Through the briefing volunteers have the opportunity to speak with a returned CWIE volunteer and the South Africa AVI team. The involvement of indigenous representatives in pre-departure preparation and briefings was identified during consultations as a key area for consideration. In addition, there is opportunity to ensure volunteers have clear expectations prior to the assignment of the division of roles and responsibilities between Eco Children and the volunteer group in relation to implementation of the project.

During Assignment

Volunteers surveyed during consultations identified the quality of support provided in-country as a key factor for program success and the positive experience of volunteers on assignment. Volunteers felt fully supported and welcomed by the Partner Organisation and

⁹ Data provided by AVI, 14 June 2018.

¹⁰ The lack of certainty impacts Eco Children's ability to plan and secure funding for the project from the Make a Difference Foundation and other donors.

believe that the program would not work without the high level of support provided by both Eco Children and the AVI office in South Africa. There is opportunity to provide Eco Children with information sessions on Australia's indigenous history and culture and contemporary issues impacting indigenous Australians as background information to support the ongoing partnership and a smooth orientation for incoming volunteers¹¹.

Post Assignment

Volunteers are provided with a one-day debriefing session in Melbourne on their return, with a significant amount of information condensed into this debriefing. There is opportunity to extend the debriefing session and include additional topics that would support volunteer reintegration, access to broader volunteering opportunities and facilitate ongoing linkages with the returned volunteers. Some volunteers have attended national Returned Alumni Volunteer Network (RAVN) events, however, based on consultations there is minimal interaction with volunteers post-assignment¹². In addition, there is opportunity to increase and formalise the involvement of past volunteers in the program and mentor newly recruited volunteers.

5.3 What has been the role and benefits of the existing partnerships in the program?

The CWIE program was established as a partnership between Classic Wallabies, Eidos Institute, AVI and Eco-Children, funded by DFAT under the AVID program (now AVP). The program is fully funded by DFAT, with no financial contributions from other partners involved in the program.

Rugby Australia and the Eidos Institute developed the initial idea for the program and operationalised the program through a partnership with AVI. Both Classic Wallabies and Eidos support promotion of the program, participate in public diplomacy events in Australia and have sent rugby sporting personalities to South Africa to meet with the volunteers, communities and partner organisation and develop promotional media material for the program. Based on the Eidos Institute-AVI Partnership Agreement, Eidos roles and responsibilities include participation in volunteer pre-departure preparation and communication with volunteers during the assignment, however, in practice these roles are not fulfilled.

AVI manages and coordinates all aspects of the program across all stages of the volunteer lifecycle, from recruitment to mobilisation, in-country management, public diplomacy, post-assignment debriefings and returned volunteer alumni events. AVI manage the partnership and liaise directly with Eco-Children and DFAT, oversighting risk management and are responsible for the overall well-being of the CWIE volunteers while on assignment.

DFAT Post in Pretoria are actively involved in the CWIE program, welcoming volunteers to South Africa and supporting opportunities for the CWIE volunteers to engage with other volunteers in-country and participate in local events and functions. DFAT Post conduct visits to the communities where the volunteers are assigned and interact with the volunteers, AVI country team in South Africa and Eco-Children. DFAT AVS have minimal engagement with the day-to-day implementation of the program, however, liaise with AVI Melbourne on any issues and risks related to the program and the ongoing funding of the program.

The partnership between AVI, Eidos and Classic Wallabies made sense within the framework of the original design for the program. However, the program model shifted from a longer-term assignment that involved recruiting academic, indigenous, youth athletes to

¹¹ This was identified as a need by the 2018 CWIE volunteer group.

¹² All volunteers surveyed expressed interest in stronger engagement with the program beyond the volunteer assignment.

undertake study at a university followed by a short-term volunteer assignment, to a program targeting indigenous youth and only involving a short-term volunteer assignment with Eco-Children. As a result, there is minimal engagement in the program from Eidos and Rugby Australia and a lack of clarity on the functional role and contribution of these two partners to the program outside broader promotion of the Classic Wallabies. A review of AVI indigenous programs in 2015 found that “the program is currently extremely vulnerable with limited or no support from partners such as EIDOS and Classic Wallabies”¹³. There may be opportunities to develop volunteer assignments within the program with a focus on sports for development or university exchanges that more deliberately involve these partners, however, there is little evidence of a functioning partnership with a clear division of roles and responsibilities under the current program. In addition, the Classic Wallabies Indigenous Exchange website¹⁴ outlines program objectives and aims that differ from the objectives identified by AVI and appear to be more reflective of the original program design.

Multiple stakeholders suggested that a more practical approach to partnerships would be for AVI to partner with an indigenous organisation, or multiple indigenous organisations, to extend the reach and visibility of the program; ensure the program is culturally appropriate; strengthen support structures for indigenous volunteers; and increase the credibility of the program within indigenous communities and networks.

5.4 To what extent is the program visible as an Australian government funded program?

The AVI website includes branding of all partners and states: “The Classic Wallabies Indigenous Exchange (CWIE) is part of the Australian Volunteers program, funded by the Australian government. CWIE is an initiative of the Eidos Institute, delivered in partnership with the Classic Wallabies and AVI”. However, the Classic Wallabies Exchange website markets the program as an “Eidos Institute initiative delivered in partnership with the Classic Wallabies, Australian Volunteers International, the Make a Difference Leadership Foundation and Eco Children with the support of the Australian government”¹⁵. The Classic Wallabies Exchange website does not include branding for any of the partners and the program is not visibly an Australian government funded program. The branding of promotional materials and films does not clearly identify the program as Australian government funded. The Eco-Children website identifies AVI and Classic Wallabies as partners and provides links to their websites, however, the website does not identify the Australian government as the donor or as a partner. There is opportunity to review the branding and visibility of the program and ensure marketing consistency across program partners.

The CWIE program is part of the broader Australian Volunteer Program story and approach to public diplomacy. It provides niche public diplomacy opportunities for promoting the broader volunteering program and Australian aid. Previous years of the program have involved high-level public diplomacy events at the Opera House in Sydney and all returned volunteers are part of the Returned Australian Volunteers Network (RAVN). Stakeholders have highlighted the need to ensure public diplomacy events are timed to showcase volunteer achievements post-assignment rather than holding promotional events pre-assignment, which can lead to a perception that the event is celebrating the volunteers being indigenous rather than their achievements as volunteers.

Media exposure within South Africa and in Australia has demonstrated the public diplomacy value of the project and valuable media material has been developed that showcases

¹³ Belyea, J., 2015, Indigenous Volunteer Programs Review, unpublished.

¹⁴ <http://cwexchange.org.au/#>, accessed 21 June 2018

¹⁵ <http://cwexchange.org.au/#>, Accessed 22 June 2018.

Australia's contribution to international development and the cultural diversity of Australia and indigenous youth. The positive introduction and exposure to volunteering experienced by the volunteers provides a valuable resource for broader marketing activities and strengthening knowledge of international volunteering within indigenous communities. However, there remains significant opportunity to strengthen the visibility and reach of the program going forward (see section on recommendations below).

5.5 To what extent is the program considered good value for money and is it worth replicating?

DFAT defines value for money in terms of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethics. Cost-consciousness is the first principle considered in the DFAT approach to value for money, however, it is noted that "cost is one critical aspect of the value for money equation, but value for money does not always mean choosing the lowest cost option"¹⁶. In the case of CWIE, determining value for money requires clarification of the program's objectives. If value for money of the program is assessed purely in terms of development outcomes then the program would not be deemed value for money due to the high cost per head of sending volunteers to South Africa¹⁷, short timeframe of the assignments (tangible development outcomes will not be achieved in a 5-week period) and AVI resourcing requirements for the program. However, if value for money is considered in terms of the benefits to volunteers professionally and personally, public diplomacy and greater inclusion of indigenous Australians in the volunteer program, then the program does provide value for money. In addition, stakeholders identified the shared indigenous/colonial history between South Africa and Australia and valuable relationships established between the volunteers and schools/communities as critical to elements of the program's success. In summary, assessing value for money would require a clearer articulation of the key objectives of the program and a broader assessment of value for money than simply measuring program inputs versus outputs. Additionally, assessing value for money more comprehensively would require improved M&E processes that capture information on the impact of the program on schools and communities as well as volunteers.

A long-term financial commitment would increase the value for money of the program. With a multi-year funding commitment, it would be possible to adopt a more strategic approach to programming including identifying long and short-term program objectives, partners, implementation approaches and activities, replication strategies and streamlining management processes. A more strategic, long-term approach could support cumulative development impacts from short-term assignments for communities, strengthen outcomes for volunteers and partner organisations, and achieve better overall value for money. In addition, a more strategic approach to partnerships could provide opportunities for co-contributions from the private sector and philanthropists and engagement with indigenous organisations in Australia. Moreover, a strengthened and more purposeful approach to engaging returned indigenous volunteers would increase the overall value for money of the program, providing opportunities for ongoing volunteer engagement and public diplomacy.

There is opportunity to replicate the CWIE program approach in countries in Asia and the Pacific with indigenous communities¹⁸. The financial cost of mobilising indigenous volunteers to countries in these regions would be less than the costs incurred sending volunteers to South Africa due to closer geographic proximity. In comparison, similar to the CWIE program the AVI VOICE program in Vanuatu involved 6-week volunteer assignments for 10

¹⁶ <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/who-we-work-with/value-for-money-principles/Pages/value-for-money-principles.aspx>, Accessed 25 June 2018.

¹⁷ Approximately AUD10,000 per volunteer and around 0.2% of the total AV annual budget, Indigenous Volunteer Programs Review (August 2015).

¹⁸ Potential countries include Vanuatu, Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia, Fiji.

indigenous Australians. The volunteers built houses in indigenous communities and supported community empowerment activities. The estimated financial cost per head for this program was slightly less than the cost of the CWIE program¹⁹. It is difficult to compare value for money of the CWIE program with other programs targeting specific groups, such as youth, as programs specifically targeting indigenous Australians are not likely to attract the same volume of volunteers as a youth program and the two programs have different purposes and objectives.

6. Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for strengthening and improving the CWIE program and AVI's overarching approach to indigenous inclusion. Considering the CWIE program is currently the only program that specifically targets opportunities for indigenous Australians, it is recommended that the program continue, however, with some revisions and changes that will enhance the overall effectiveness and relevance of the program.

1. Re-design, Expansion and Replication

A future program would benefit from a multi-year funding commitment that would support a more strategic approach to programming and partnerships. If multi-year funding can be secured, a redesign of the program is recommended. A program redesign would be framed under the *DFAT Indigenous Peoples Strategy 2015-2019: A framework for action*, the AVI Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (currently under development) and the AVP MEL Framework. The new design would build on learning from CWIE and previous AVI indigenous programs (VOICE and Oodnadatta) and include a program logic that clarifies the program purpose, outcomes and implementation and replication strategies and approaches.

Recommended areas of focus for the re-design would include:

- Developing multiple streams within the program to attract a more diverse range of young, indigenous Australians; provide a variety of indigenous volunteering pathways; and better leverage specific volunteer skills and experience. Examples of potential volunteer streams could include Professional/Leadership, Vocational, Sport, Student streams. The different streams could involve establishing partnerships with Partner Organisations focused on working with indigenous communities or Australian Organisations that specifically work with indigenous communities overseas;
- Identifying additional partner organisations for volunteer assignments in South Africa (other than Eco Children) and consider multiple annual volunteer intakes if budget is available. A number of local organisations in South Africa have expressed interest in hosting volunteers to support community development initiatives. There is potential for Eco Children to provide initial mentoring support to other local organisations, recognising they have significant experience and knowledge of the CWIE program and requirements for hosting volunteers;
- Outlining a phased approach to strengthening, expanding and replicating the CWIE program in other countries in the Pacific (and potentially Asia) drawing on the expertise, ideas and networks of indigenous organisations and returned indigenous volunteers. It is recommended that the approach be tailored to different contexts rather than applying a 'one size fits all' approach, however, the indigenous to indigenous, short-term and group approaches should be retained.
- Mapping potential countries, partner organisations and indigenous communities the program could work with (in addition to South Africa);

¹⁹ Approximately AUD7,000 per volunteer, Indigenous Volunteer Programs Review (August 2015).

- Identifying purposeful and practical strategies for supporting longer-term volunteering opportunities for indigenous Australians under the AVP, with the CWIE program serving as a gateway for broader participation in Australian volunteering;
- Developing a simple M&E framework and tools for the program to capture information on how the program supports the broader AVP outcomes and measure impacts more systematically. A key area requiring strengthened M&E is measuring and capturing information on how the program benefits Partner Organisations and communities. In addition, there is opportunity to conduct longitudinal studies of volunteers²⁰ to assess how the program impacted them professionally and personally and use blogs and video documentation as a key tool for program monitoring and evaluation²¹.
- Reviewing child protection requirements and compliance with DFAT standards for child protection including a risk assessment of the CWIE program that involves a review and update of Eco Children's Child Protection Policy and assessment of CWIE compliance with AVI and DFAT child protection standards and requirements for volunteers.

2. Indigenous Partnerships and Representation

The CWIE program and any future volunteering programs specifically focused on opportunities for indigenous Australians would benefit from strengthened internal and external approaches to indigenous resourcing and partnerships. Proposed approaches include:

- Identifying the most appropriate Australian partners including indigenous organisations and other Australian organisations specifically focused on indigenous community empowerment such as National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA), i2i and Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME), CareerTrackers, universities and private sector organisations;
- Recruiting indigenous internal AVI staff to support program design and implementation and foster linkages and connections with returned volunteers, new volunteers, indigenous organisations and indigenous communities in Australia to expand the reach and impact of the program;
- Establishing dedicated resources and focal points within AVI (preferably indigenous Australians) to manage long-term engagement with communities, volunteers and their families;
- Building a purposeful strategy for strengthening and building ongoing linkages with indigenous communities in Australia;
- Ensuring indigenous representatives are involved in volunteer recruitment, selection and mobilisation and facilitating more opportunities for returned indigenous volunteers to support new volunteers;
- Identifying returned indigenous volunteers and/or community representatives to support administrative and compliance processes required prior to departure. This could include recruiting the group Team Leader earlier in the process to support participant recruitment and mobilisation processes;
- Developing cultural awareness training for Eco provide and AVI on indigenous Australian culture to support ongoing partnership and a smooth orientation for incoming volunteers.

3. Volunteer Support

Recognising that the existing support systems for volunteers through AVI are well-established, any additional support to volunteers should build on what already exists and be

²⁰ This could involve case studies of past volunteers conducted 1 year after volunteer assignments.

²¹ A longitudinal study could be conducted 3-5 years after a volunteer assignment.

tailored to the specific needs of the program. Potential additional and tailored volunteer support systems and processes to support the program could include:

- Creating a project management plan for the program to ensure sufficient timeframes for recruitment, selection and mobilisation processes;
- Maintaining a database of volunteers (returned volunteers and second tier applicants) who can be mobilised for assignments when late drop-outs occur, and providing unsuccessful applicants with timely, constructive feedback on their applications;
- Reviewing and increasing coordination between AVI Melbourne, AVI South Africa and Eco Children on the content of the Pre-Departure Briefing (PDB) and In-Country Orientation Program (ICOP) to avoid repetition and ensure ongoing relevance. This should include acknowledging and integrating culture into the program and highlighting opportunities for volunteers to share their culture with staff and communities while on assignment;
- Developing cultural awareness training for Eco Children (and any future partner organisations) with information sessions on Australia's indigenous history, culture and contemporary issues impacting indigenous Australians as background information to support the ongoing partnership and a smooth orientation for incoming volunteers;
- Establishing a program manager/focal point within AVI to coordinate all the different mobilisation processes, manage communication with volunteers and maintain engagement with volunteers, their families and communities pre, during and post assignment. The program manager/focal point would provide end-to-end support for volunteers and establish a case management system for each volunteer to ensure they are adequately supported and engaged across all stages of the volunteer life-cycle, including post-assignment.
- Developing a checklist and visual flowchart/cheat sheet for volunteers that outlines all the different mobilisation processes and timing to ensure volunteers have clarity up-front of requirements and are not overwhelmed. In addition, develop a family/employer information pack that provides the families and employers of volunteers with information about the assignment, AVP, role of volunteers, important contact details, etc. This approach was used for the VOICE and Oodnadatta programs and was a proven effective tool for supporting volunteers and their families. The information pack could also include a formal letter from AVI to employers to support volunteers approach their employers to take time off work for volunteering;
- Considering a proportional approach to compliance with AVI's pre-departure medical and dental requirements, taking into consideration the short-term nature of the assignments (5-6 weeks);
- Establishing a dispute and complaints mechanism for volunteers to address any issues while on assignment and/or clarify appropriate channels for volunteers to report cases of bullying while on assignment. The dispute and complaints mechanism would likely need to be managed by AVI in-country management team and the dedicated program manager at AVI in Melbourne;
- Clarifying expectations around what the assignment involves prior to departure including that volunteers will be working with a local organisation as part of a broader school/community program and that volunteers will not be leading the project but rather working with the local organisation and community to build the sustainable vegetable gardens. There may be a need to more clearly formalise that the volunteer assignment is part of a community empowerment project and that the role of the volunteers is to support relationship building, local ownership and act as ambassadors for Eco Children and the Australian aid program. In addition, the role and responsibilities of the group Team Leader specifically, as well as the role of other members of the group should be

clarified prior to the assignment. Portfolio areas of responsibility for the volunteers such as M&E lead, rotating second-in-charge could be considered.

- Consider working with selected volunteers prior to departure to identify and develop a set of activities they will undertake with the school students each day, recognising that half of every day involves volunteers engaging with the school students and community. These activities could range from sports and games to workshops that allow volunteers to share their own indigenous culture through storytelling, games, art, music etc. A more formal approach to community development activities with schools has the potential to increase the development impacts of the program. In addition, work with Eco Children to provide plans for the 'keyhole' gardens prior to volunteer mobilisation so volunteers can start to prepare ideas and preliminary thinking prior to being in-country;
- Supporting returned volunteers to identify and conduct 3-4 activities related to the assignment within their own communities when they return to Australia. For example, showing family members photos, holding talks in schools, presentations at work places, building community gardens/other community activities etc. These activities can then be promoted as stories about the volunteer experience and what volunteers gained from the assignment and took back to their communities. The identification of structured post-assignment activities would support ongoing engagement with volunteers and the volunteers' own reintegration back into their communities;
- Developing a purposeful plan for engaging returned indigenous volunteers including establishing an Indigenous Returned Volunteer Network as a stand-alone network or a sub-network under RAVN. Other support should include ensuring sufficient time post-assignment in-country and in Australia for volunteers to reflect on their experience and support for volunteers to identify practical ways they will take forward skills, learning and ideas from the volunteer assignment in their communities, work places and academic institutions.

4. Marketing and Branding

While there has been a steady increase in the number of applicants for CWIE volunteer assignments, there is opportunity to strengthen marketing and branding approaches and platforms and extend the reach of the program. Most volunteers heard about the program through word-of-mouth. While this is clearly an effective mechanism for promotion of the program, it may restrict the diversity of applicants and reach into rural/remote areas and regions outside south-eastern Australia. Recommendations related to marketing and branding include:

- Advertising and promoting indigenous volunteering opportunities through state-based indigenous organisations (such as Aboriginal Medical Services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, cooperatives, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations, Gathering Places), national indigenous organisations and/or indigenous peak bodies, NAIDOC events, universities (indigenous centres) and TAFEs;
- Strengthening the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn to promote opportunities. Volunteers identified Facebook and Aboriginal/indigenous Facebook groups as the most effective social media platforms;
- Recruiting for specific skills linked to community development and/or conducting skills mapping of selected volunteers to formally identify skills the volunteers bring and potential activities the volunteers can undertake within communities while on assignment;
- Ensuring there is indigenous representation on recruitment selection panels and identifying a range of application and interview approaches and pathways to reduce potential barriers to participation in the program. For example, for some candidates the

requirement of a written application could create a barrier to participation. Other potential barriers include understanding the medical system and travel requirements and processes (airlines, bookings, navigating airports etc).

- Reviewing and applying branding requirements that clearly and consistently identify and promote all key partners including DFAT/Australian government as the program donor and supporting all partners to comply with branding guidelines. Indigenous program specific branding could also be considered to increase the visibility of the program's focus on indigenous volunteering;
- Coordinating with DFAT Post in Pretoria to time volunteer assignments to coincide with indigenous events and festivals in South Africa. There is potential to support volunteer engagement in these events as part of the cultural exchange as well as identify other in-country opportunities for cultural exchange, learning and promotion of the program;
- Working with returned volunteers and indigenous organisations in Australia to promote the program (and other indigenous programs) at the national, state and community levels in Australia through local events, networks and institutions;
- Establishing an Indigenous Volunteer Network that is linked to RAVN and indigenous organisations in Australia to develop a more systematic approach to promoting indigenous volunteering, supporting indigenous networks and increasing the reach of the program;
- Convening joint promotional events with relevant universities and other education institutions to promote indigenous volunteering and opportunities through the AV program more broadly.

List of Stakeholders Consulted

AVI Office Melbourne

- Farooq Dar (Acting Manager Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL))
- Yola Frank-Gray (In-Country Coordinator)
- Amanda Everton (Volunteer Services Manager)
- Jen Wiggins (In-Country Manager)
- Melanie Wilson (Public Diplomacy)
- Zoe Mander-Jones (Team Leader)
- Lara Bernardo (Recruitment Coordinator)
- Emma Hess (Partnerships Manager)
- Nicole Donaldson (Learning & Development Consultant)

AVI Office South Africa

- Claudia Phiri (In-Country Manager)

Partner Organisations

- Bruce Muirhead (Eidos Institute)
- Mark Moore (Classic Wallabies)
- Corne Havenga (Eco Children)
- Robert Le Brun (Eco Children)

DFAT Post

- Sarah Withers (Senior Research and Program Officer)

Volunteers

- Kevin Yow Yeh
- Carlene Frank
- Dimity Shillingsworth
- Clinton Wilson
- Online survey responses from returned volunteers (anonymous)

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