



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Dr Michael Spence AC

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

16 July 2020

Senator the Hon David Fawcett

Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Submission made via the Parliament of Australia website

Dear Senator Fawcett,

Inquiry into strengthening Australia's relationships with countries in the Pacific region

Thank you for the opportunity to make a supplementary submission to the Committee's inquiry into strengthening Australia's relationships with countries in the Pacific region.

The University's original submission (#23 on the Committee's list) briefly set out the long history of our academics' provision of education, training, research, knowledge-generating and relationship-building opportunities to citizens and organisations from the Pacific region, which spans many decades. These activities gathered momentum in the 1970s with our Colombo Plan scholars. In more recent times they have continued with funding support from the Australia Awards program, and sought to expand the skills and networks of emerging Pacific Islander leaders who will be responsible for managing their countries' technological, economic, social and political development.

We noted in particular that our more recent partnership programs in agriculture, physics and veterinary science have addressed the region's growing need for critical attention to climate change, sustainable economic development and environmental management. We also strongly endorsed the Government's focus on providing future leaders with affordable access to high-quality tertiary education in Australia through the Australia Awards program.

In our supplementary submission (**Attachment A**), we highlight some current and recent projects in the Pacific region, led by Dr Amanda Harris in our Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Associate Professor Paul Jones in our School of Architecture, Design and Planning. They address the third term of reference for the Committee's inquiry.

As noted in our previous submission, the information we have provided represents only a fraction of the University's relevant expertise and current activities underway that seek to build and strengthen people-to-people links between Australia and its neighbours in the Pacific. Nevertheless, we trust this input is helpful and would be delighted to make some of our experts available to the Committee to share their insights about the Pacific and the policy measures the Australian Government could take to further strengthen relations across the region. If the Committee considers that assistance useful, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Tim Payne, Director, Higher Education Policy and Projects in my office in the first instance (tim.payne@sydney.edu.au, 02 9351 4750).

Yours sincerely,

(signature removed)

Michael Spence

Attachment A: Submission drawing on advice from academics in our Conservatorium of Music and the School of Architecture, Design and Planning

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Attachment A

ToR #3 - Measures to ensure Step-up initiatives reflect the priority needs of the governments and people of Pacific island countries

Urban development and management in the Pacific

The School of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney is ranked in the [top 20 in the world for Architecture / Built Environment](#). Associate Professor Paul Jones, Director of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at the School, has spent the last 20 years specialising in urban management and urban development projects in the Pacific region. His experience includes working in Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Fiji Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Marshall Islands, and living for more than a decade in the small low-lying atoll nation of Kiribati as its 'first urban development planner'.

Associate Professor Jones is a long-standing senior adviser in the Pacific in urban development and managing urbanisation and his research interests include understanding patterns of informal urbanism and their contribution to sustainable urbanisation in the Asia-Pacific region. He has participated in a number of United Nations (UN) forums in the last decade; contributing to the development of international urbanisation strategies in Asia and Pacific small island states and in 2019 advising the UN on Pacific Island urban policy. Associate Professor Jones also has an ongoing research agreement with the Office of Urbanisation in Papua New Guinea to support urban customary land development and implementation of a national urbanisation policy.

One area in which the School has significant expertise is city development, urban planning and the proper development of Pacific cities and towns. This includes urban management and the possibilities for training and MOU development with Pacific universities. Much of this work is increasingly trans-disciplinary due to the Pacific population now being concentrated in an urban/town/city setting. This megatrend in rapid urbanisation has resulted in environmental degradation, with growing pressure on natural resources, waste, pollution, disasters and communities left vulnerable to climate change.

The University has a number of schools, centres and institutes that encourage interdisciplinary approaches to development projects in the Indo-Pacific region. These include the [Sydney Southeast Asia Centre](#) (SSEAC), of which Associate Professor Jones is a member.

Pacific cultural heritage - preservation and access

The University's Conservatorium of Music publishes more [research](#) than any other Australian music institution, in both traditional formats (books, chapters, journals, and conference papers) and non-traditional outputs (compositions, performances, published recordings, festivals, events, and research websites). Our researchers advance music studies in all its forms through artistic exploration, music scholarship and fieldwork.

Dr Amanda Harris is a Research Fellow and the Director of PARADISEC Sydney. Dr Harris is also the Australian partner in a British Library project ("*True Echoes*") to repatriate the earliest sound recordings (1898-1918) back to Pacific communities.

The *Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures* (PARADISEC) is the only Australia-based pan-Pacific repository for the digital preservation of the languages and music of the Pacific, a region that contains nearly a quarter of the world's languages. PARADISEC provides online access to audio-visual records of more than 1230 languages for use in research and by communities and cultural organisations in maintaining and revitalising culture. PARADISEC has built a collection of more than 13,000 hours of audio records, in 300,000 files, and the University has taken responsibility for housing the collection into the future.

PARADISEC:

- preserves recordings of music and oral tradition
- has developed relationships of trust with Pacific cultural agencies
- has built the research infrastructure for curating and disseminating records
- runs regular training sessions in recording, transcription, and data management for cultural materials
- is an exemplar of non-government and community-based linkages
- leverages interest groups in the Pacific diaspora in Australia and, more broadly, addresses an urgent need expressed by Pacific cultural agencies to digitise analogue tapes in their collections.

PARADISEC has worked with the following agencies to either digitise tapes in their collections or return recordings to them: Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Solomon Islands National Museum; University of New Caledonia; Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies; University of French Polynesia. PARADISEC has also run training sessions on recording methods and data management techniques in English, Bislama, and French in Honiara, Port Vila, Noumea, and Papeete.

In 2013, PARADISEC was added to the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register, and in 2020, received the Core Trust Seal from the World Data System, certifying our data management processes.

Number of items from the Pacific region housed in PARADISEC:

Papua New Guinea 6830	Vanuatu 3360	Indonesia 2813	Solomon Islands 1496
Philippines 328	Fiji 204	Cook Islands 93	East Timor 92
New Caledonia 76	Tonga 76	New Zealand 69	French Polynesia 48
Micronesia 25	Samoa 24	Kiribati 16	Marshall Islands 9
Wallis and Futuna 8	American Samoa 5	Nauru 5	