International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) Program Evaluation

January 2010
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADS</td>
<td>Australian Development Scholarships</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDAB</td>
<td>Australian International Development Assistance Bureau</td>
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<td>ALA</td>
<td>Australian Leadership Awards</td>
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<td>APA</td>
<td>Australian Postgraduate Awards</td>
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<td>APA(I)</td>
<td>Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry)</td>
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<td>APRA</td>
<td>Australian Postgraduate Research Awards</td>
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<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>Average Staffing Level</td>
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<td>ATN</td>
<td>Australian Technology Network</td>
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<td>AVCC</td>
<td>Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee</td>
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<td>CAPA</td>
<td>Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLE</td>
<td>Contribution to Living expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRICOS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students</td>
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<td>CPI</td>
<td>Consumer Price Index</td>
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<td>CSG</td>
<td>Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008</td>
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<td>DCSP</td>
<td>Defence Cooperation Scholarship Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDOGS</td>
<td>Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
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<td>DEETYA</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs</td>
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<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations</td>
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<td>DEST</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training</td>
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<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
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<td>DIAC</td>
<td>Department of Immigrations and Citizenship</td>
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<td>DIISR</td>
<td>Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research</td>
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<td>DITC</td>
<td>Defence International Training Centre</td>
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<td>EMSS</td>
<td>Equity and Merit Scholarships Scheme</td>
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<td>EPA</td>
<td>Endeavour Postgraduate Awards</td>
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<td>ERA</td>
<td>Excellence in Research for Australia</td>
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<td>EIPRS</td>
<td>Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship</td>
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<td>ESOS</td>
<td>Education Services for Overseas Regulations</td>
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<td>Go8</td>
<td>Group of Eight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>High Degree Research</td>
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<td>HECS</td>
<td>Higher Education Contribution Scheme</td>
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<td>HEIF</td>
<td>Higher Education Indexation Factor</td>
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<td>HESA</td>
<td>Higher Education Support Act</td>
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<td>HEP</td>
<td>Higher Education Provider</td>
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<td>IAP</td>
<td>Introductory Academic Program</td>
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<td>IPRS</td>
<td>International Postgraduate Research Scholarships</td>
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<td>IRUA</td>
<td>Innovative Research Universities Australia</td>
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<td>KPIs</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator(s)</td>
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<td>NHMRC</td>
<td>National Health and Medical Research Council</td>
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<td>OCSG</td>
<td>Other Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines</td>
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<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Overseas Student Health Cover</td>
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<td>OPRS</td>
<td>Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarships</td>
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<td>PCE</td>
<td>Pre-course English</td>
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<td>RTS</td>
<td>Research Training Scheme</td>
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<td>RWS</td>
<td>Research Workforce Strategy</td>
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<td>SOPF</td>
<td>Special Overseas Postgraduate Fund</td>
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<td>SOSP</td>
<td>Subsidised Overseas Student Program</td>
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<td>UA</td>
<td>Universities Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>VAC</td>
<td>Visa Application Charge</td>
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Acknowledgements
The Department would like to thank the nominated universities and current and past IPRS students for their participation and contribution to the evaluation. Their openness in sharing their own experiences contributed greatly to the depth and usefulness of the findings of the evaluation. The input from the Project Advisory Committee and Technical Working Group members that supported the evaluation was also appreciated.
Executive Summary

As identified in the Department’s Annual Work Program and listed in the Portfolio Budget Statement for 2009-10, an evaluation of the International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) program was undertaken over the period September to December 2009. The IPRS program is part of the suite of Research Block Grant program funding provided through the Research Funding and Policy Branch within the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

The evaluation was undertaken by the Department and included commissioned work by KPMG in relation to the data collection and stakeholder consultations.

The evaluation considered the contribution of the IPRS program to the Australian Government’s higher education research policy agenda. It measured how well the IPRS program is meeting its stated objectives; and examined the alignment of the program with Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs) including specific consultation on whether APAs should be opened up to eligible IRPS recipients in future years (from 2011 onwards). The evaluation also considered work being undertaken on Australia’s research workforce and identified existing information on trends in research workforce participation by IPRS recipients.

Methodology

The evaluation methodology consisted of the following:

- A literature review on available reports and international programs;
- An examination of the Commonwealth Guidelines (Research) 2008;
- Stakeholder engagement involving telephone and face to face interviews;
- Survey of present and past IPRS students;
- An analysis of available DEEWR and DIAC data related to the evaluation.

The evaluation process was informed by input from a Project Advisory Committee comprising a number of key stakeholders and a Technical Reference Group comprising officials with technical expertise. Details of members for the Committee and Reference Group are provided at Appendix B.

Recommendations and Key Findings

As a result of the information gathered through the evaluation of the IPRS program, the key findings and recommendations have been grouped into three themes: policy framework; efficient delivery; and roles and responsibilities. The recommendations are aimed at enhancing the program’s stated objectives of attracting top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in Australian Higher Education Providers (HEPs).
Advice from stakeholders confirmed that IPRS students are of a consistently high quality based on their merit ranking within each university’s overall scholarship selection processes. Additional data collected from individual universities in relation to the value that IPRS recipients contribute to Australia’s research productivity, acknowledges the value that these high quality IPRS recipients provide, including a positive return on the investment made by Government and Universities through increased research outputs and long-term benefits. IPRS recipients have higher completion rates and in general publish more than any other HDR cohorts.

While the value of the investment in IPRS by the Government is acknowledged, it has also been suggested by some stakeholders that in general the allocated funds do not cover the full cost of tuition fees for IPRS students. In addition, because IPRS do not distinguish between high and low cost disciplines, it has been suggested that universities are likely to face an even greater cost subsidy because most of their IPRS students are in high cost areas.

Overall, the evaluation found that the IPRS program is meeting its objectives and continues to make a significant contribution to current government policy in the area of higher education research. The high quality of IPRS recipients and the excellent research outputs that they produce all contribute to a high level of effectiveness in the program.

**Policy Framework:**

**Recommendation 1**

Recommend that Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs) be made available to International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) recipients from 2011. Further consultations with the higher education sector would be required prior to this occurring with specific consideration given to a phased approach of the opening of APAs.

In an environment in which the government is looking to strengthen its research workforce and increase its international competitiveness, opening APAs to IPRS recipients is an appropriate response. Not only will this provide opportunities for international students wishing to engage in postgraduate research in Australia but also look to better harness the contribution that international postgraduate research students make to Australia’s research outputs and economic, social and cultural well being.

As part of this recommendation, it is suggested that further sector-wide consultation be undertaken in early 2010 about the process of opening the APAs to IPRS recipients, including options around a phased implementation commencing from 2011.

Feedback was also received from the sector to give further consideration to increase the number of IPRS offered. This is consistent with the recommendation made by the House of Representatives’ inquiry into research training and research workforce issues “Building Australia’s Research Capacity” and will be addressed as part of the Research Workforce Strategy.
**Recommendation 2:**
Recommend that universities ensure that top quality students are attracted and placed in identified areas of research strength within each institution consistent with the emphasis being placed by the Government on research excellence, and investigate how this might be facilitated through the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) and university compacts initiatives.

One of the main objectives of the IPRS program is that top quality students are attracted to areas of research strength. To maintain this focus, it is recommended that support for IPRS recipients continue to be directed to areas of research strength. It is expected that the results from the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative and the university compacts process will be able to be utilised in order to ensure IPRS recipients are focussed in areas of research excellence.

**Recommendation 3:**
Recommend that consideration be given to extending the IPRS PhD candidature from a period of three years to three and a half years. This is consistent with the recommendations made by the Government’s response to the House of Representatives’ inquiry into research training and research workforce issues “Building Australia’s Research Capacity” and should be explored further as part of the Research Workforce Strategy.

Consultations with stakeholders confirmed that IPRS students generally experience difficulty in completing their research within the three year scholarship period. The Government recently responded to the House of Representative’s inquiry into research training and research workforce issues “Building Australia’s Research Capacity”, by indicating that ‘the Australian Research Training Scheme PhD candidature period include the option of a six-month extension’ should be explored further as part of the Research Workforce Strategy. It is recommended that consistent with this response the Research Workforce Strategy also consider the option of including a six-month extension of the IPRS candidature time. It should be noted however that several stakeholders were of the view that there was a need for consistency between the length of support provided under the IPRS and RTS schemes.

**Efficient Delivery:**

**Recommendation 4:**
Recommend that the Department and universities continue to enhance and maintain student data related to IPRS recipients in order to provide information for regular monitoring of the program and its objectives.

A key challenge of the evaluation was the analysis of data collected by other Government agencies and universities. This provided a significant issue as data sets were incomplete and did not necessarily cover the full period since the last evaluation in 1996. In order to provide accurate information for future monitoring of the program and its objectives, it is recommended that the Department and universities continue to enhance and build upon data collection processes related to IPRS recipients.
**Recommendation 5:**
Recommend that universities continue to extend best practice principles across the sector in relation to international students and enhance existing opportunities for IPRS recipients to integrate into university life and the community as well as continue to provide support services.

It is recommended that universities share and extend best practice principles across the sector in relation to support arrangements that are in place for international students. Support services need to be continued and opportunities created to ensure IPRS recipients integrate more fully into university and community life.

**Recommendation 6:**
Given its unique and specialised position within the suite of Government scholarships it is recommended that Government agencies and universities continue to market IPRS scholarships through a variety of forums to ensure the best international students are attracted to study within Australia.

The IPRS is considered to be a prestigious scholarship that attracts high quality students and is the only scholarship program that is specifically designed to deliver high quality research outcomes. The unique position of the IPRS program within the suite of Government scholarships should be utilised to attract top international students to Australia. It is recommended that Australian government agencies and universities continue marketing the IPRS program as a flagship program in the internationalisation of the Australian higher education sector.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

**Recommendation 7:**
Recommend that relevant Government agencies led by DIISR and including, DEEWR, DIAC, AusAid, Defence and DFAT consider increasing flexibility within the IPRS program guidelines to remove limitations and impediments around eligibility in order to ensure that the best quality international students are able to access the program. In this context, the Government should give specific consideration to the IPRS program as a pathway for HDR students including in the context of the research training system.

Feedback from stakeholders provided the evaluation team with the opportunity to analyse the student eligibility requirements as set out in the guidelines. These were deemed to be somewhat restrictive and a possible barrier to attracting future applicants. It is recommended that, in association with other Government agencies, amendments to the IPRS guidelines be further considered to allow greater flexibility in the delivery of the IPRS program by universities.

In order to achieve the objectives of the IPRS program, it is vital that Australian Government agencies and universities share the responsibility of promoting pathways and support in Australia for international postgraduate research students. The IPRS program has an important role to play in this respect and needs to be considered in the wider context of the research training system.
**Recommendation 8:**
Recommend that the existing KPIs for the IPRS program are considered further to include an outcomes focus, and that as part of the continued monitoring of the efficiency of the program that the IPRS program be evaluated in three years time.

The program was established in 1990 with KPIs focused on the inputs and processes of the program. The evaluation found that in order to continue to strengthen and enhance the IPRS program, it would be appropriate to update the existing KPIs further with more outcome focused KPIs for the program. This also supports the new PBS reporting requirements and will assist in future evaluations of the program. As this is the second time that the IPRS program has been fully evaluated with the first full evaluation of the program undertaken in 1996, it is important to ensure that the recommendations have been duly considered. It is therefore proposed to monitor progress and formally re-evaluate the IPRS program in a further three years.

**Summary of Key Findings**

In summary, the case studies and student survey results demonstrate that the IPRS program is effective and meeting its policy objectives. Overall, the results demonstrate:

- strong support for the IPRS program to continue;
- strong support for APAs to be opened to IPRS students;
- that IPRS students see the scholarship as very prestigious;
- that the IPRS program is viewed as a key lever for universities to attract international students;
- that IPRS students achieve positive outcomes from their participation in the program including good completion rates, positive research outputs and positive post study outcomes;
- that in general the allocated funds do not cover the full cost of tuition fees for IPRS students, with universities meeting the cost differential; and
- that the IPRS program guidelines could be more flexible to encourage a wider range of potential IPRS students to participate in the program.

Areas for improvement were identified both from the university and student perspective. Recommendations for action in response to the issues raised by university stakeholders and students are set out in the final chapter.
1. Introduction

As identified in the Department’s Annual Work Program and listed the Portfolio Budget Statement for 2009-10 an evaluation of the International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) program was undertaken over the period September to December 2009. The IPRS program is part of the suite of Research Block Grant program funding provided through the Research Funding and Policy Branch within the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

The IPRS program was established in 1990 to maintain and develop international research linkages and aims to support research excellence and research effort within Australia by attracting top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in Australian Higher Education Providers (HEPs). Eligible international students (except from New Zealand) undertake a higher degree by research in Australia and gain experience with leading Australian researchers.

The scholarship covers tuition fees and health cover costs for the recipient and their dependants. The allocation of IPRS grants to participating universities is based on a formula that is reflective of their overall research performance. Each year 330 IPRS commencing places are awarded to Higher Education Providers (HEPs) at a cost of around $20 million. Section 46 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2008 provide the legislative basis for the provision of funding to this program.

The evaluation was undertaken by the Department and included commissioned work by KPMG in relation to the data collection and stakeholder consultations.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the evaluation were to:

- Examine the current performance of the program in meeting its objectives;
- Identify any known trends in research workforce participation by IPRS recipients within Australia and identify their collaboration and ongoing participation with Australian research following completion of their scholarship;
- Develop options to improve the IPRS program to better meet its objectives;
- Examine ways in which the IPRS program could be integrated and aligned with Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs), including whether APAs should be opened up to eligible IPRS recipients in future years (from 2011 onwards).

The full Terms of Reference for the evaluation are set out in Appendix A.
2. Evaluation Methodology

The methodology included the following:

Data analysis
- The data collections from DEEWR and DIAC were utilised to substantiate the views held by the universities and students. The data received from both agencies was also used to determine IPRS student enrolments, movements and completions and examination of immigration trends as well as any known trends in research workforce participation for IPRS recipients and their distribution within Australia following completion. To complement data from DEEWR and DIAC, in some cases universities provided their own data to support their assessment of the IPRS program.

Stakeholder consultations
- The evaluation required gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. Staff from Higher Education Providers (HEPs) were interviewed in order to examine the process of IPRS allocations within institutions and to determine any issues and views about the IPRS program from a stakeholder point of view. Stakeholder engagement involving the sector consisted of eight nominated universities participating in both telephone and face to face interviews. Selection of the universities was determined by members from the Project Advisory Committee who nominated two universities from their cohorts. KPMG was engaged to interview the stakeholders and prepare the case studies based on the interviews.

Three representatives from each university (Dean and Directors of Graduate studies, Researchers/supervisors of IPRS students and Administration staff) or their delegate were interviewed with a total of 24 interviews being held. Case studies of the interviews have been written up and analysed with the findings described in chapter 4.
Copies of the case studies can be found at Appendix G. A list of the eight universities that acted as case studies can be found at Appendix H.

Literature Review
- A literature review on available reports and international programs was undertaken to examine any international practices and evidence relating to International HDR students.

Survey of current and past students
- A survey of current and past IPRS students was undertaken in order to understand the student experience as well as gather specific information in determining whether the program evaluation requirements were met. All universities with IPRS students (n=40) were asked to distribute the survey to their IPRS students; additionally the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) was invited to circulate the survey amongst its members in order to ensure that as many students were reached as possible. KPMG was responsible for collection of the completed student surveys and summarised the results of the 464 responses that were received.
Governance arrangements

- The evaluation process was informed by input from a Project Advisory Committee comprising a number of key stakeholders from the higher education sector and a Technical Reference Group comprising officials from relevant branches within DIISR (i.e. International Branch, Corporate Strategy Branch and Research Performance and Analysis Branch) and from other Australian Government Departments (DEEWR and DIAC). Details of members for the Committee and Reference Group are provided at Appendix B.

The role of the Project Advisory Committee was to provide advice and seek consensus on the evaluation, data collection, provide advice and support for stakeholder consultations and preparation of the report. The Committee met twice during the evaluation period and provided further input and advice via email as the development of the evaluation report progressed.

The role of the Reference Group was to provide advice and support throughout the evaluation process from a non-stakeholder point of view. The group formally met on one occasion with further input and advice subsequently provided as required.
3. Program Description & Framework

Australia, like other developed countries, has challenges in attracting and retaining skilled workers from overseas. It also has strong competition from its competitors both regionally and globally in attracting top quality HDR students. IPRS provides one vehicle to support Australia obtaining a greater intake of HDR students from overseas. Other countries also have well-established mechanisms as discussed in Appendix J.

IPRS Program History

Administration Arrangements

The IPRS program commenced in 1990 as the Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarships (OPRS) scheme. The aim of the OPRS scheme was to develop and maintain international research linkages. At the time the OPRS scheme commenced, the Government recognised a need to encourage students to undertake postgraduate research degrees due to the probability of a shortfall in trained research workers within Australia.

Prior to the introduction of the OPRS scheme, the Government administered the Subsidised Overseas Student Program (SOSP) which was available to students of developing countries. However in light of external economic changes and developments in the policy environment in December 1988 the Government decided to replace the SOSP with the requirement that all new overseas students seeking study opportunities in Australia would enter on a full cost basis, and required that students pay fees individually, or have the fees paid for by a government or private scholarship1.

The OPRS scheme introduced in May 1989 provided tuition-fee scholarships to complement funding provided to postgraduate students from developing countries provided under the Equity and Merit Scholarships Scheme (EMSS) administered by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) (now AusAID). EMSS awards included a stipend but were only available to students from AusAID nominated priority countries. (EMSS awards are now known as Australian Development Scholarships).

In 1991 and 1992 additional funding was provided by the Government for 60 new awards per annum, known as Special Overseas Postgraduate Fund (SOPF) awards. SOPF awards were similar to OPRS awards, however the difference was that support was provided for masters by coursework and graduate diploma students were also eligible. The SOPF awards were only allocated until 1994.

With OPRS providing support for students from developed countries and EMSS supporting students from AusAID nominated priority countries, some difficulties arose due to particular countries not being covered by either scheme. However in 1993, this issue was addressed with the eligibility of OPRS extended to include students from all countries except New Zealand.

The OPRS scheme was initially administered by the then Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC) on behalf of the then Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), although DEET retained formal responsibility for policy and payments, individual institutions were responsible for selecting students for the awards. However, during 1993, the administration was transferred to DEET.

In 1999, the name changed from OPRS to IPRS. In 2003 the IPRS program name was changed to ‘Endeavour IPRS’ (EIPRS) when the Government established the ‘Endeavour Awards’ initiative part of the Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future. The IPRS program name changed to ‘Endeavour IPRS’ (EIPRS).

In 2007, administration of the EIPRS program was transferred from an international education section (which administered the Endeavour Awards program) within DEST, to an international cooperation and scholarships section within DEST. As a result the EIPRS was no longer administered and funded through the same program as the Endeavour Awards initiative, and the name of the scheme reverted back to IPRS.

In early 2008, as a result of the change of government, administration of the IPRS program was transferred from DEST to the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR).

**Historical Process for Allocation of OPRS Awards**

The process for the allocation of OPRS awards has changed over time. From 1991 the OPRS allocation formula was based on a combination of each participating university’s share of awards received under the then Australian Postgraduate Research Awards (APRA), and total Higher Degree by Research (HDR) full time student load. By 1993, the formula was changed and based on the share of APRA awards and total full-time overseas HDR load, with the provision of at least one OPRS scholarship allocated to each university. From 1994, the formula was again changed and allocations to universities were based on 50 per cent full time overseas HDR load (of the most current year), and 50 per cent overseas higher degree research completions data (of the previous year).

**Evaluation of the Scheme - OPRS Evaluation 1996**

During 1996, the then Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) undertook an evaluation of the OPRS scheme – ‘The Internationalisation of Australian Higher Education: An Evaluation of the Contribution of the Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarships Scheme’. This was the first evaluation of the scheme apart from two specific reviews of the IPRS’ funding allocation mechanism undertaken in both 2001 and 2006.

A total of 13 recommendations were identified by the review. The recommendations included changing the allocation formula to the criteria for applicants, stipends, guidelines, enhanced data collection of both universities and the Department, completion times, overall performance of the OPRS scheme, and orientation of Australian life, culture, and the English language.
IPRS Funding Allocation Review in 2001

Between 1996 and 1999 a significant amount of funding for both the APA and the IPRS programs ($3.6 million) was recovered from participating institutions because of unspent funds. The underspends occurred as there was no redistribution of scholarships or reallocation of funds when scholarship holders terminated their scholarship early. These recovered funds were returned to consolidated revenue.

This issue of underspends occurring in the APA and IPRS programs was apparent until 2001 and in order to address this issue the Department conducted a review of the funding allocation mechanism for the both these programs. The Department consulted with the sector through the AVCC (now UA).

As a result of the review the RTS formula for the APA and IPRS programs was adopted in order to ensure that each university’s share of new APAs and IPRS awards would be reflective of their share of new research places (i.e. 50 per cent student completions 40 per cent research income, and 10 per cent publications). This new formula for APAs and IPRS was implemented in 2003 and allowed an interim year in 2002 in which the 50 per cent of the new formula and 50 per cent of the previous formula would be used to mitigate against significant swings in APA and IPRS funding. Unlike the RTS, the current IPRS formula does not weight high and low course costs. IPRS are intended to cover the full tuition fee for the student irrespective of the course cost.

As part of the outcome of the 2001 review, it was decided that as of 2002 the APA scheme would be granted a notional number of new places, so that HEPs have discretion in the number of awards they allocate, and that they may carry forward unspent APA funds to the next year. However, because of the significant differences in the cost of tuition fees for IPRS students across disciplines and HEPs, it was determined that these changes would only apply to the APA scheme. It was decided to increase the number of new IPRS places offered each year. In 2002, the number of new IPRS scholarships allocated each year was increased from 300 to 310.

As of 2003, a total of 330 new IRPS place have been offered each year.

Review of the Financial Management of the IPRS in 2006

In 2003 and 2004, the EIPRS program experienced overspends of approximately $77 thousand and $1.3 million respectively. As a result of these overspends, coupled with criticism from research intensive universities that the EIPRS program did not provide adequate funding to cover rising international tuition fee costs for research courses, a review of the financial management of the scheme was initiated to ensure that it continued to meet Australian Government research funding objectives.

The review determined that the overspending was a result of the requirement under the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines Research (CSG) for institutions to award the number of EIPRS allocated. Consequently, the CSG were modified so that:

- Universities would be able to fully utilise their EIPRS grant amounts, which they have earned through their research performance, and any unspent amounts would be rolled over into the next year;
• Negate the need for complex and time-consuming reconciliation and adjustment processes; and
• Reduce the amount of reporting required of universities.

**IPRS – current program**

The Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (CSG) sets out the purpose and programs under which grants may be made for postgraduate research scholarships (including the IPRS), as delegated by the Higher Education Support Act 2003. The CSG states that the IPRS program “was established to maintain and develop international research linkages and specifically aims to attract top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in the Australian higher education sector; and support Australia’s research effort”.

IPRS Scholarships are open to international students from all countries (except New Zealand) and are available for a period of two years for a Masters by research degree or three years for a Doctorate by research degree. The scholarship provides tuition fees as well as health cover costs for scholarship holders, as well as health cover costs for their dependants. Applications for a scholarship need to be made directly to a participating university. Universities are responsible for determining the selection process by which scholarships are allocated to applicants.

The CSG states that ‘Providers’ new year allocation of notional IPRS places will be determined according to the total notional IPRS places available for the new year multiplied by each provider’s share of the IPRS performance index which includes all eligible providers. The IPRS performance index is a list of the relative performances of a group of providers defined for a particular purpose. The relative performances are expressed as a percentage of the sum of all performances within the defined group. Each provider’s percentage is known as a share. A share is the sum of three performance components after each has been multiplied by a proportioning factor:

- HDR student completions performance has a proportioning factor of 0.5
- Research Income performance has a proportioning factor of 0.4
- Research Publications performance has a proportioning factor of 0.1.

Each category of data is the average of the most recent two years for which data is available.

Each university’s IPRS funding is therefore determined according to their relative performance in the areas of HDR student completions (this counts for 50 per cent), Research Income performance (this counts for 40 per cent), and Research Publications performance (this counts for 10 per cent). The latest two years (i.e. the current year, and the previous year’s) data are taken into account. The IPRS funding formula is the same as the APA funding formula.

A notional number of 330 IPRS places are allocated each year. The funding for these places is indexed according to the Higher Education Indexation Factor (HEIF) which considers the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Safety Net Adjustment Index. As a 2009/10 budget initiative, a revised indexation arrangement for all Research Block Grant
programs was announced. From 2012, the indexation arrangements will be changed by replacing the current Safety Net Adjustment index with a wage price index (discounted by 10 per cent) which is comparable to the Labour Price Index (Professional).

**Visa Requirements**

IPRS recipients are covered by the *Migration Regulations 1994*, the requirements for which depend upon a person’s Visa sub-class. IPRS recipients generally fall under the Student Visa sub-class 574 (Postgraduate Research students). Applicants need to check with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to confirm what information regarding enrolment will be required from DIAC for the purpose of obtaining the appropriate visa.

Currently, under the *Migration Regulations 1994*, all student visa holders are automatically granted permission to work, however they are not permitted to undertake paid work (voluntary work may be permitted in certain circumstances) until they have commenced their course in Australia. They are also not permitted to work more than 20 hours a week while the course in which they are enrolled is in session. However, they are permitted to work unrestricted during non-study periods. This limitation does not apply to work that was specified as a course requirement when the students’ course of study was entered in the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). Student dependants of Masters or Doctorate students can work unrestricted hours once the student has started studying towards the Masters or Doctorate award.

As per DIAC policy, IPRS students are eligible for exemption of their Visa Application Charge (VAC), however IPRS students are defined as ‘Partial Commonwealth Funded Students’ because their course fees, living costs and travel fees are not provided in their entirety by the Commonwealth Government. This means that IPRS students need to provide DIAC with evidence that they can meet living and travel costs, as well as English language requirements in their visa application.
Comparative analysis with other Government scholarships

A comparative analysis of the IPRS Program’s policy objectives was completed as part of the evaluation. The IPRS program was examined in relation to other Australian government international scholarship programs. The purpose of the analysis was to consider the role of the IPRS program within the scope of the government’s suite of scholarships available to international postgraduate students and to determine if the program overlapped with other government initiatives and whether it was fit for purpose.

While the IPRS scholarship was found to share some characteristics with other government programs it is unique in that it is designed to specifically address a niche market for high quality international postgraduate research students. One way in which the IPRS program greatly differs to other award programs as determined by the analysis is the distinct focus on a merit-based application process. Applicants are aware of the prestige of this government funded scholarship and its academic significance. The high level of scrutiny that is associated with the IPRS application process is well recognised amongst applicants. Universities are individually responsible for the selection process and allocation of the scholarships to IPRS recipients based on their own merit process.

The Endeavour Awards is an internationally competitive, merit-based scholarship program enabling citizens of the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Europe and the Americas to undertake study, research or professional development in Australia. Awards are also available for Australians to do the same abroad.

The aim of the Endeavour Awards are to:

- Develop on-going education, research and professional linkages between individuals, organisations and countries
- Provide opportunities for high achieving individuals to increase their skills and enhance their global awareness
- Contribute to Australia’s position as a high quality education and training provider, and leader in research and innovation
- Increase the productivity of Australians through an international study, research or professional development experience.
Endeavour Postgraduate Awards (EPA)
Portfolio: DEEWR

Differences to IPRS:

- While an objective of IPRS is to maintain and develop international research linkages, EPAs aim to strengthen bilateral ties between Australia and the participating countries. EPAs also aim to strengthen mutual understanding between the people of Australia and Award Holders’ home countries, and build international linkages and networks.
- EPAs provide a capped allowance for tuition fees, (which may or may not actually cover the full cost of a student’s tuition fees).
- EPAs provide a stipend.
- Available to both postgraduate coursework and research students.
- Available for any field of research/study in Australia, whereas IPRS places are targeted at Australian universities’ “areas of research strength”.
- To be eligible for any Endeavour Award international applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of a participating country and reside in a participating country; furthermore, applicants must not be living, studying or working in Australia prior to the year they would commence their award (i.e. the year for which they are applying for the Award).
- A DEEWR selection panel is responsible for the assessment of the applications.

Policy: EPAs aim to enable high achieving international students to undertake a postgraduate qualification either by coursework or research in their chosen field of study in Australia.

EPAs also aim to strengthen bilateral ties between Australia and the participating countries, strengthen mutual understanding between the people of Australia and Award Holders’ home countries, and build international linkages and networks.

The monetary value of the Endeavour Postgraduate Awards is up to $173,500 (which consists of a travel allowance of $4,500, establishment allowance of $4,000, monthly stipend of $2,500 per month, and tuition fees per semester of $12,500 per semester/trimester).

Other types of Endeavour Postgraduate Awards

Endeavour Research Fellowships (ERF)

Differences to IPRS:

- ERFs aim to support both international and Australian undergraduate and postgraduate research students to study in each other’s home environments.
- ERFs are only available to citizens of participating countries.
- ERFs do not provide a tuition fee, but rather a stipend.
- ERFs do not provide funding to cover tuition fees.
- ERFs are available to undertake short-term research (four to six months).
- A DEEWR selection panel is responsible for the assessment of the applications.

Policy: ERFs provide financial support for postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows from participating countries to undertake short-term research towards a Masters,
PhD or postdoctoral research in their home country, in any field of study in Australia; and for Australian postgraduate and postdoctoral students to undertake short term research towards a Masters, PhD or postdoctoral research in Australia, in any field of study, in participating countries.

The Endeavour Research Fellowships’ total award value is up to $23,500 (which consists of a travel allowance of $4,500, establishment allowance of $4,000 and a monthly stipend of $2,500 per month).

Two other Endeavour awards that fit within this suite of scholarships on offer are the Endeavour Europe Awards and Endeavour Australia Cheung Kong Research Fellowships. These two scholarships share similarities with the IPRS program in that they are aimed at high achieving international students and available for postgraduate study/research for a Masters degree or PhD. More Endeavour awards are available but these are not specifically aimed at postgraduate research students.
Australian Development Scholarships (ADS)  
Portfolio: DFAT - AusAID

Differences to IPRS:
- Not specifically aimed at research study, or for high achieving students
- ADS aims to contribute to the long term development needs of Australia's partner countries to promote growth and stability. Therefore fields of study are targeted to address agreed priority human resource and development needs of recipient countries
- ADS equip scholars with the skills and knowledge to drive change and influence the development outcomes of their own country through obtaining tertiary qualifications at participating Australian higher education institutions and technical colleges
- ADS holders are required to return to their country of citizenship for two years after they have completed their studies to contribute to the development of their country
- Applicants must be a citizen of an ADS participating country (these countries are developing countries). Applicants for ADS must satisfy both the general eligibility criteria and specific criteria established for each country. Applicants must also meet specific eligibility criteria imposed by the Government of their country of citizenship
- ADS are available for both undergraduate and postgraduate study in Australia
- ADS have a range of financial assistance options available (including a fortnightly stipend, contribution to airfares, and establishment allowances)
- Introductory Academic Program (IAP)—a compulsory 4-6 week program prior to the commencement of formal academic studies covering information on life and study in Australia
- Application and selection process is run by the AusAID overseas post in each participating country

Policy: The objective of ADS is to contribute to the long term development needs of Australia's partner countries to promote growth and stability. ADS aims to provide recipients with tertiary qualifications from Australian higher education institutions and technical colleges to target and address agreed priority human resource and development needs of recipient countries, in line with Australia's bilateral aid program. Scholarships are offered for the minimum period that the individual could be expected to complete the academic program, including any preparatory training. Up to 1,000 ADS are awarded each year across 31 countries. ADS holders are required to return to their country of citizenship for two years after they have completed their studies to contribute to the development of their country.

The ADS total award value includes a $5,000 establishment allowance, $25,000 per annum contribution to living expenses, as well as full tuition fees and health cover costs.

Australian Leadership Awards (ALA)  
Portfolio: DFAT - AusAID

Differences to IPRS:
- Not specifically aimed at research study
- Awards are only offered to students who have links to the public, private and community sectors within certain Asia-Pacific region countries (where Australia has a significant aid program)
• ALA course of study must relate to priority areas of AusAID (i.e. disability, economic growth, education, environment, food security, gender, governance, health, human rights, infrastructure, regional stability, rural development and water and sanitation)

• ALAs seek to develop the capacity of individuals and their workplaces to contribute to the long-term development, stability and security of specific partner countries; and the establishment and maintenance of mutually beneficial linkages between partner countries and Australia

• Because ALAs are an investment in the future of the Asia-Pacific region, scholars are required to return to their home country or the region for two years after they have completed their studies

• AusAID overseas posts are responsible for assessing applicant’s eligibility and interviewing applicants. A decision is made by an AusAID selection panel

Policy: ALAs are only offered to students who have links to the public, private and community sectors within certain Asia-Pacific region countries where Australia has a significant aid program. Course of study must relate to priority areas of AusAID (i.e. disability, economic growth, education, environment, food security, gender, governance, health, human rights, infrastructure, regional stability, rural development and water and sanitation).

The ALA total award value is a fortnightly contribution to living expenses (amount changes each year; the 2009 rate was $26,800), and additional expenses can be claimed.
Defence Cooperation Scholarship Program (DCSP)

**Portfolio:** Department of Defence

**Differences to IPRS:**
- DCSP aims to aid in the development of strong and constructive contacts with regional defence and security organisations, and to help meet the demand from the region for increasing highly skilled defence personnel
- The scholarship scheme aims to provide prospects for leadership in regional defence organisations, and the opportunity to further develop their skills
- DSCP scholarships are military based scholarships (rather than research based)
- Only offered to certain countries within Asia and the Pacific
- The main objective is to improve links with regional defence and security organisations
- Includes a prior 300 hours of English Language Training to enable candidates to meet the English language proficiency requirements of Australian universities

**Policy:** The DCSP is provided through the Defence International Training Centre (DITC). The aim of the DITC is to enhance the effectiveness of training provided in Australia to South East Asian and South Pacific Defence Force personnel, by facilitating the integration of those personnel into Australian Defence Force training systems, and fostering and promoting cross cultural awareness between members of the ADF and foreign military personnel.

The DCSP is offered to military personnel of countries in the North/South East Asian and South West Pacific regions with approximately 70 scholarships offered each year in Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia expanding to Tonga, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in 2010. The DSCP provides Accommodation Allowances, Health care, English language training, Spouse work opportunities and Travel administration.
**Flagship Postgraduate Scholarships**
*Portfolio: CSIRO*

**Differences to IPRS:**
- Scholarships are only available in the Flagship fields (which consist of engineering/technology, environmental sciences, medical/health sciences and general sciences), and the student must be working on (or expected to work on) a project which is directly relevant to a flagship.
- Of critical consideration in being granted a scholarship is the student project/study’s relevance to the particular flagship.
- Mostly consists of top-up scholarships, with full scholarships only available in limited circumstances.
- Scholarships amounts are available for general purposes (whereas IPRS covers only tuition and health cover costs).
- Collaboration focused program, and students are jointly supervised by their university and CSIRO researchers.
- The CSIRO allocates applications to the relevant Flagship, and the individual Flagship allocates awards based on the relevancy of applicant's projects.

**Policy:** The Flagship Collaboration Fund aims to facilitate the involvement of the wider Australian research community in addressing the critical national challenges targeted by the Flagships (which include Climate Adaption, Energy Transformation and Preventative Health).

The Flagship scholarships have a value of $7,000 per annum for three years. There are also some full scholarships available, which offer a stipend equivalent to an APA, as well as the top-up amount ($7,000) each year.
Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry) (APA(I)); and Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry)-IT (APA(I)-IT)
Portfolio: Australian Research Council (ARC)

Differences to IPRS:
- Funds are provided for the student’s stipend, but funds are not provided to pay the fees of international students
- Award is industry-focused, and the recipient’s research is linked not only to their university, but also to the partner organisation. Award supports collaborative research and development projects between universities and other organisations, including within industry, to enable the application of advanced knowledge to problems. Proposals for funding under Linkage Projects must involve a Partner Organisation from outside the higher education sector
- Contribution towards costs of producing a thesis
- The ARC will reimburse up to a maximum of $6,000 for a recipient’s relocation allowances (where the recipient relocates residence in order to take up his/her position or for an approved transfer)
- APA(I) and APA(I)-IT funding is provided on the basis that the student undertakes full-time study and the student is to begin her/his studies in the first year of the project

Policy: Under the ARC’s Linkage Projects scheme, APA(I)s are available for postgraduate research students. There are also APA(I)-ITs, which are available for postgraduate research students in the field of information technology and communications. The Linkage Projects supports all types of research.

The value of the APA(I) and APA(I)-IT is up to $34,602 (which includes a stipend of $27,222 per year, a relocation allowance of $6,000, and a thesis allowance of up to $840).

APA(I)s can be sought for up to three years. If the award is based on enrolment for a Masters degree, the ARC will allocate up to two years stipend only. If the award is based on enrolment for a PhD degree the ARC will allocate three years stipend, with a possible six-month extension.

Universities are required to select and allocate APA(I) places, however they must enter into a Funding Agreement with an eligible Partner Organisation.

[Note: The APA(I) scheme, administered by the ARC, is not related to the APA scheme administered by DIISR.]

[NHMRC HRD scholarships are only available to Australian citizens or permanent residents or New Zealand citizens holding a Special Category Visa].
Scholarships Available to International Postgraduate Research Students

Supporting Australia’s Research Effort

International Postgraduate Research Scholarship
Support Australia’s research effort
(DIISR)

Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry)
Support collaborative research and development projects between universities and organisations
(ARC)

Flagship Postgraduate Awards
Facilitate the involvement of the wider Australian research community in addressing national challenges
(CSIRO)

Endeavour Postgraduate Awards
Enable high achieving international students to undertake postgraduate qualification in Australia
(DEEWR)

Australian Leadership Awards
Develop capacity to contribute to long-term development, stability and security of partner organisations
(AusAID)

Australian Development Scholarships
Contribute to long term development needs of partner countries (for growth and stability)
(AusAID)

Defence Cooperation Scholarship Program
Improves links between participating countries’ defence and security organisations
(Defence)
4. Research and Analysis Findings

Evidence for the Evaluation

As set out in Chapter 3, to support the evaluation the Department reviewed the history of the IPRS program and the context within which the program operates. In addition, the IPRS evaluation involved the collection of data from key personnel in a sample of eight universities together with a survey of 322 current and 142 past IPRS students. The Department contracted KPMG to undertake the eight university case studies and collated the survey results of IPRS students.

The eight participating universities were nominated by the Project Advisory Committee Members and included two universities each from the three university sector groupings (nominated by Go8, ATN, IRUA) and two unaligned universities (nominated by UA). This provided a representative coverage of universities across the sector.

Three representatives from each university from areas responsible for the strategic; academic; and organisational and administrative direction of the IPRS program were invited to participate in the interviews. Deans and Directors of Graduate studies; Researchers/supervisors of IPRS students; and Administration staff or their nominees were interviewed with a total of 24 interviews taking place. Their responses have been produced as case studies (Appendix I) and analysed against three major themes – policy framework, efficient delivery, roles and responsibilities.

In addition, available data from DEEWR and DIAC were analysed to provide evidence in the context of a number of the issues under consideration. The summary of available data and the results from the case studies and student survey are presented below.

In addition, based on the evidence collected as part of the evaluation, the Department examined the degree to which the IPRS program complied with the Government’s expenditure review principles – appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, integration, performance assessment and strategic policy alignment. This analysis is also presented below.

Background information on IPRS Students from available data sources

DEEWR and DIAC data was examined for the purposes of the evaluation. Examination of the available data revealed that a full data set covering the commencement of the program in 1990 was not possible.

From the available DEEWR data, the background characteristics of IPRS are that:

- IPRS students are predominantly from China compared to other international students who tend to be primarily from other Asian countries (see Graph 1); and
- between 1990 and 2008, there has been a movement away from other Asian countries as a major source of IPRS recipients (see Graph 2).
Graph 1: Country of origin of IPRS Students against all international students for 2008 Enrolments

Sourced DEEWR 2009

Sourced DEEWR 2009
In terms of the other characteristics of IPRS students compared to other HDR students, the data shows that:

- IPRS students complete their studies faster than any the rest of the HDR student cohort (see Graph 3); and
- this trend in completion times is consistent regardless of disciplinary differences (see Graph 4).

Graph 3: Length of time taken to complete course, IPRS students against all HDR students

Sourced DEEWR 2009 - *Note includes part-time students
Graph 4: Length of time taken to complete course by field of study, IPRS students against all HDR Students

Sourced DEEWR 2009
DIAC collects data on two relevant Visa Subclasses - Visa 574 (Postgraduate Research Temporary Visa) and Visa 576 (AusAid or Defence Sponsored Temporary Visa). Both visas allow recipients to study in Australia and work up to 20 hours a week. Family members are able to accompany the recipient and can work, depending on the date the visa was granted.

It should be noted that in the 2004-05 year, reporting for the Visa subclass 574 was altered to exclude Masters by Coursework students.

For these two visa categories, DIAC data shows that:

- most offshore applications come from China, India and Bangladesh and while all countries showed drops over time due to visa definition changes, there were disproportionate drops in visas that were applied for offshore from China, India and Bangladesh (see Graph 5), and
- Postgraduate Research Student visas remained quite static, allowing for the Visa definition change in 2004-05 (see Graph 6).

Graph 5: Postgraduate Research Visas – Offshore applications

![Graph 5](image)

Source: DIAC 2009

Graph 6: Postgraduate Research Visas – Onshore applications
Number of Visas '000's

- China
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Southern and Eastern Europe
- Southern and Central Asia
- South-East Asia
- South America
- Oceania and Antarctica
- Not codeable
- North-West Europe
- North-East Asia (excl China)
- North America
- North Africa and the Middle East

Sourced DIAC 2009
Outcomes from Case Studies and Student Survey

Both the interviews with key personnel in universities and the student survey were designed to assess the performance of the IPRS program and to consider whether the program’s objectives were being met. The interviews were used to examine the IPRS allocation process, to identify any administrative issues and ascertain general views about the program from the university’s perspective. The questionnaire was specifically used to obtain an insight into the program from the student’s point of view. In order to ensure consistency in the interviews, a standard set of questions were used to guide the discussions, but allowed for participants to share their views and experience informally (Appendix C, D and E).

Case Studies

Policy framework

Overall, the case studies demonstrated that universities believed that the IPRS was an appropriate and effective vehicle to attract and retain higher degree by research students. In terms of assessing whether the IPRS program fits within the policy framework of Government and the internationalisation of Australia’s research, discussions with the Dean and Directors of Graduate Studies or their representative confirmed that the IPRS is a prestigious scholarship that attracts high quality postgraduate research students as well as provides opportunities to contribute human capital to Australia’s research workforce. Additionally, the IPRS program contributes to research collaboration and the establishment of international linkages that are invaluable to Australia’s international network and position in an increasingly globalised environment.

The scholarship covers tuition fees and health cover costs for the recipient and their dependants. The IPRS does not provide a stipend, and therefore any such support, usually in the form of university specific scholarships, are provided by the universities and faculties themselves. This amount in general is equivalent to an APA stipend which is $22,500 for full time students in 2010.

The case studies based on the selected universities found that in general the allocated funds do not cover the full cost of tuition fees for IPRS students. The shortfall varies by institution and by discipline, but ranges from $5000 per scholarship to for example the University of Queensland's situation where the block grant covers an average of only 55-60% of the fees. This has resulted in some anomalies occurring in the total number of places being filled as IPRS funding is distributed as a block grant to each eligible institution. Government allocates IPRS places and while there is an expectation that the number of new places allocated to each institution each year will be filled, this does not always occur. If they are not, universities must apply to have the funds roll over to the next year. Some stakeholders have indicated that if issues around underfunding are not addressed, universities will be forced to reduce the number of IPRS scholarships they offer - a scenario that is already being played out at some institutions; and one that is not favourable in meeting government policy aims and the high demand for IPRS places.

It has also been suggested by some stakeholders that IPRS funding is meeting a decreasing proportion of fees and that universities must ultimately divert resources from
elsewhere to meet the shortfall. In addition, because IPRS do not distinguish between high and low cost disciplines, universities will face an even greater cross-subsidy because most of their IPRS students are in high cost areas.

As part of the evaluation, specific consideration was given to whether APAs should be extended to IPRS recipients. The overwhelming response from the sector was that this option would be very well received under the condition that it did not disadvantage domestic students. Given the doubling of the number of APA places by 2012 the option presents itself to open a certain number of APAs to IPRS recipients without negatively impacting on the number of scholarships currently accessible to domestic students. Additionally, stakeholders suggested an increase of IPRS places offered. In the context of the RWS, consideration will be given to increase the number of IPRS recipients.

One of the key objectives of the IPRS program is to attract top quality students to institutions. Encouragingly, feedback from face to face interviews with selected universities confirmed that IPRS recipients are of an extremely high quality. As a result of this feedback, the evaluation considered the quality of IPRS recipients against their ranking as part of individual university's allocation processes for scholarships. Universities were asked to provide information on the merit ranking for either 2008 or 2009 IPRS recipients. Seventeen responses were received from universities with IPRS recipients ranking predominantly in the top ten percent of scholarships awarded on a merit basis by those universities, thus confirming the high quality of IPRS recipients. Through the interviews, it was also found that the amount of IPRS applicants far outweigh the number of IPRS places available. In some instances the success rate for IPRS applicants was less than three percent, as illustrated by the University of Newcastle, which last year had approximately three hundred applicants for eight IPRS places.

The Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008 state that IPRS are to attract top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in the Australian higher education sector. Through the consultation process, it was found that while IPRS recipients are of a high quality they are not always necessarily engaged in areas of research strength at each university. Whilst universities attract IPRS recipients based on their reputation, it is important to ensure that areas of research strength are clearly defined by all stakeholders and IPRS recipients directed towards these areas. Considering the Government’s future planning of research investment with initiatives through the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative and the University Compacts process, it is important that the IPRS program ensures that IPRS recipients continue to be directed to, and engaged in areas of excellence by HEPS.

Having already established that IPRS recipients are outstanding international students, all participants confirmed that international students have very low withdrawal rates, have higher completion rates than any other student group and generally also produce more publications than other student groups. This is supported by evidence on completion rates collected by the University of Melbourne (Table 1) as well as Queensland University of Technology (Table 2).

In terms of the completion rates, the evidence shows that IPRS students are performing well. The following table indicates the completion rate of students from the University of Melbourne who began their candidature in the period 2000-2002. The IPRS cohort has a completion rate of 89%, which is much higher than local APA recipients or international
students who receive a University scholarship for international students (MIRS). Very few abandon or lapse and none have been terminated.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 2000-2002</th>
<th>IPRS</th>
<th>APA</th>
<th>MIRS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinued</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due (Continuing)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapsed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Examination</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source University of Melbourne

The University of Melbourne has collected data on how often students publish their work in journals, books, reports etc. This is a very important measure of performance of a researcher.

A greater proportion of international students are authors each year relative to local students. Over the 3 year period 2006-2008, 58 % of international students publish whereas 31 % of local students did.

Table 2

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IPRS Completions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27.6</td>
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<td>IPRS Under Examination</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPRS Discontinued</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPRS Current</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average completion time (softbound) (years)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.55</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shortest completion time (years)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<table>
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<th>Longest completion time (years)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.18</td>
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</table>

Source Queensland University of Technology
A key concern to all interviewees is that IPRS recipients are in most cases not able to complete their research within the given timeframe of three years. This is particularly significant especially when taking a global perspective as in other countries such as the US, a PhD is able to take up to seven years to complete. As a result of this feedback (Graph 7 and Table 3), and consistent with work currently being undertaken by Government it is proposed that consideration be given to extend the PhD candidature by six months. It is predicted that based on extending IPRS support to 3.5 years plus a possible 6 months would result in an additional cost to the Government of $5 million annually. Some stakeholders were of the view that there was a need for consistency between the length of support provided under the IPRS and RTS schemes.

Data from UQ PhD candidates who received a fully funded living allowance scholarship and who have submitted their thesis for assessment were analysed to measure the time period between the end of their scholarship duration and the submission of their thesis for assessment.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period From Expiry of Scholarship to Submission of the Thesis for Assessment</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within duration of scholarship</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within duration of the scholarship extension</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 6 months of expiry</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 6 and 12 months after expiry</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 year and 18 months after expiry</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 18 months and 2 years after expiry</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 and 3 years after expiry</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 3 years after expiry</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source University of Queensland
Efficient Delivery

The case studies demonstrate that overall, the IPRS program was been delivered in an efficient way although opportunities for improvements do exist. Given that the program had not been evaluated since 1996, it was important to collect and analyse data for the evaluation as far back as the commencement of the program. Agencies such as DEEWR and DIAC who have a responsibility for international student data collection, were consulted and where available administrative data was also received from participating universities.

The main problem identified with the current data collection is that agencies collect and maintain different data as per their own requirements and needs. Changes to organisational structure, systems and delivery of the program over the past decade have also meant that there are inherent gaps in the available data. Nonetheless, available data was utilised effectively to support the findings of the evaluation. However, it should be noted that the lack of available data could inhibit future assessment of the program and its objectives. It is recommended that the department together with the sector continues to improve on data collection, in order to provide accurate and timely information for policy related purposes, as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the program.

The overseas student industry is worth $15.5 billion to Australia and is our third biggest export. Given the significant importance of this industry, it is imperative that the student experience is a positive one whether this is at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. The eight universities interviewed all indicated that they have programs in place to support their international students. This includes support through online orientation courses prior to commencement, or assistance with finding accommodation, or providing English language classes, and a host of other support programs and services. While it is left to the individual university how international students are supported, best practice principles should be promoted and shared across the sector to ensure that the quality of support services is maintained.

Feedback from participants during the consultations indicated that IPRS are not marketed individually but are part of a suite of scholarships that universities have at their disposal. The general response was that IPRS did not need to be marketed as applications far outweighed the number of scholarships that were available.

Because IPRS is highly sought after and is seen as a prestigious scholarship, there is significant potential for it to be more widely promoted as the flagship program for attracting high calibre international postgraduate research students to Australia. Not only should the actual IPRS program continue to be marketed, its outcomes should be better publicised and documented.

IPRS students who remain in Australia contribute to our research workforce as well as provide a source of future academics for universities. They also provide an important source of research leaders. Several senior staff at the universities interviewed were former IPRS recipients. A number of past IPRS recipients who left Australia and returned home are now working in high level positions throughout the world. This supports the view held by most participants that a secondary benefit of the IPRS program is not only contributing to international collaboration and linkages but also is an opportunity to strengthen inter government relations.
Roles and Responsibilities

The case studies highlight the key role of the Australian Government and individual institutions in supporting and enhancing the IPRS initiative. Each individual Higher Education Provider is responsible for the administration of the IPRS application selection and offer processes and must make information about the process, policies and conditions of scholarship readily and publicly available.

As part of the evaluation, it was found that the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008 were somewhat restrictive around the eligibility requirements for students. For example, students who have held an Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) scholarship within two years prior to commencing an IPRS are not eligible. In order to explore the option of increasing the flexibility within the program guidelines, the DIISR will need to consult other agencies to ensure that the highest quality international students are able to apply for the IPRS program. Given the fact that the responsibility for the administration of international students is shared between different Government agencies, it is essential that all agencies are encouraged to work closely together.

As previously indicated, the IPRS is highly competitive, with significant numbers of high quality students unable to receive a scholarship due to the limited number of places available. Feedback from the sector reveals that the current allocation of approximately 330 annual scholarships is insufficient to meet demand. In order for the Government to address Australia’s future labour needs as well as to strengthen its research workforce, opportunities presented by IPRS recipients should be capitalised on. In order to accommodate the high demand of international students, consideration should be given to increasing the number of IPRS places available each year.

The first full evaluation of the program took place in 1996, followed by two evaluations which considered the allocations and financial management of the program. This current evaluation is only the second full evaluation to take place. To ensure that the recommendations have been duly considered, it is proposed to monitor progress and formally re-evaluate the IPRS program in a further three years.

Student Survey

The evaluation was also concerned with the particulars of the IPRS program from the perspective of current and past IPRS students.

The student survey was circulated by the department to all universities. CAPA, who was represented on the Project Advisory Committee, also distributed the survey amongst its extensive membership base. This process ensured that individual student information was not shared with external parties other than the relevant organisations. Responses remained confidential and were only used for the purpose of the IPRS review. Respondents were given ten working days to submit their replies. In all 464 survey responses were received by KPMG - 322 from current IPRS students and the remainder from past IPRS students.

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2 Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2008, chapter 3.15.1
As no measure was taken of the number of survey’s mailed out by universities, a response rate cannot be calculated. However, by comparing the demographics of respondents to those enrolled in universities in 2008, it can be seen that the survey respondents are similar to the IPRS respondents in the enrolment data.

The demographic variable(s) of the student survey were compared to the DEEWR 2008 student data to ensure there were no significant biases in the response patterns.

**Demographics**

70% (n=322) of respondents were current recipients of an IPRS (Graph 8).

**Graph 8: Current IPRS student**

![Graph 8: Current IPRS student](image1)

Sourced KPMG 2009

Of the 320 respondents who provided information on the level of study they were or had undertaken supported by IPRS, nearly 99% reported undertaking a Research PhD. This applied irrespective of whether they were current or past IPRS students (Graph 9). This is not significantly different to the 96% of Research PhDs to actual IPRS enrolments reported in 2008.

**Graph 9: Respondent by degree**

![Graph 9: Respondent by degree](image2)

Sourced DEEWR 2009 and KPMG 2009
Our survey appears to be representative of IPRS students generally. Respondents appeared to be of similar ages to IPRS students (Graph 10).

**Graph 10: Age group of respondent to IPRS survey, all IPRS students enrolled in 2008 and all HDR students enrolled in 2008**

![Graph 10](image)

Sourced DEEWR 2009 and KPMG 2009

**Graph 11: Sector groupings of respondent to IPRS survey and all IPRS students enrolled in 2008**

![Graph 11](image)

Sourced DEEWR 2009 and KPMG 2009

Respondents from IRUA and non-aligned universities were more likely to respond to the survey (Graph 11).
Satisfaction with IPRS Program

Respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the IPRS program with 96% indicating satisfaction (Graph 12).

**Graph 12: Satisfaction with IPRS Program**

Of the 49 respondents who indicated a dissatisfaction with the IPRS program, 46% (n=23) requested a living stipend to accompany the IPRS. The living stipend, or an increase to the stipend provided by the university would allow IPRS students to bring their families to Australia and support them, therefore improving the study experience of the student. Nearly 20% (n=9) felt the duration of the IPRS support should be extended to 4 years. Suggestions were made for other items that should be supported by IPRS, including moving costs, travel concessions, fieldwork support, attending conferences, purchasing books (20%). 12% suggested an improvement to the medical cover, including reducing the amount claimed and the time taken to be reimbursed for medical claims. It should be noted that that some of these improvements are already covered by individual university’s scholarships.

**Living stipends received by IPRS recipients from Universities**

64% of respondents reported receiving a living stipend from their university above their IPRS entitlement (Graph 13). The bulk of IPRS recipients (56%) received a stipend valued between $19,000 and $20,999. This puts most stipends at a similar level to the APA.
Satisfaction with financial support provided by Universities to IPRS recipients

Even with the wide ranging value of stipends the majority of stipend recipients (69%) reported satisfaction with the stipend received (Graph 14).

Graph 14: Satisfaction with level of financial support received from university

Of the 104 recipients who made recommendations for improvement, 82% stated the stipend should be increased, several suggesting that $30,000 would ensure an acceptable standard of living. 27% asked that those recipients with families should attract a greater stipend. A further 21% said universities should also provide affordable accommodation, a moving allowance, and increased support for conference registration, travel and fieldwork expenses.

Graph 15 below shows the stipends paid by universities to IPRS recipients against the Henderson Poverty line (using the Poverty Lines: Australia, June Quarter 2009, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, Melbourne, 2009).
Around 78% of IPRS recipients living with families are living under the Henderson Poverty Line for single people. Only 3 recipients who were married and living with their family were paid a stipend above the Henderson Poverty line for a couple with 2 children.

**Graph 15: Stipend value by family status**

![Graph showing stipend value by family status.](source)

Sourced KPMG 2009

25% of recipients reported supplementing their university stipend from one or more other sources. Graph 16 shows the other sources of income these students use to supplement their stipend.

**Graph 16: Sources of income to supplement stipend**

![Graph showing sources of income to supplement stipend.](source)

Sourced KPMG 2009

Of those recipients reporting working part-time for pay, 67% reported they were able to secure work in a position related to their area of research, while 22% were not able to gain employment related to research (Graph 17).
Of those who were married, 76% were able to bring their family with them. Of those who reported not living with their family, 17% stated they remained in their home country due to work or study commitments, and 13% because they could not afford for them to come.

The IPRS scholarship was reported as being either important or very important to the decision to bring their family to Australia for 88% of recipients as shown in Graph 18.

**Graph 17: Part time work related to research**

![Chart showing part time work related to research](chart17)

**Graph 18: Scholarship value by family status**

![Chart showing scholarship value by family status](chart18)
Contribution to the Research Workforce

Graph 19: Contributed to publications while undertaking IPRS

As set out in Graph 19, 76% of respondents reported contributing to one or more publications while undertaking their IPRS. They reported a total of 485 publications undertaken. While the bulk (62%) contributed to one or two publications, nearly 5% contributed to ten or more publications (Graph 20). This supports the feedback received from the stakeholder consultations that IPRS recipients have high publication rates.

Graph 20: Number of publications

Sourced KPMG 2009
Alignment with Expenditure Review Principles

The evaluation is required to comply with the Government’s Expenditure Review principles. Given this need, these principles have been addressed below in order to illustrate the program’s performance within the required framework.

Appropriateness:
In evaluating the IPRS program against the theme of appropriateness, the review was unable to substantiate a case that the scheme provides IPRS on the basis of social inclusion. The IPRS program was not designed with social inclusion as an objective, nor was the program intended to address disadvantage. The main focus of the IPRS program is in attracting high quality international postgraduate research students.

The IPRS program is designed to attract high quality international postgraduate research students to areas of research strength in Australian Higher Education Providers. Consideration could be given to the possible additional benefits of having students who remain in Australian and become a permanent resident, thus contributing to Australia’s social fabric and economic base. While IPRS was not specifically designed with this objective in mind, it is an unintended consequence of the program. The evaluation found that both domestically and internationally the IPRS is seen as a prestigious scholarship and is highly competitive.

The IPRS program was established in 1990 with the aim to develop and maintain international research linkages. The government at the time confirmed that there was a need to encourage students to undertake postgraduate research degrees due to probability of a shortfall in trained research workers within Australia. The current scheme still addresses these same objectives as well as aiming to strengthen Australia’s research workforce and is consistent with Government policy. A comparative analysis has been done with other scholarships offered by the Government to international students; however this is the only scholarship program that delivers high quality research outcomes.

In terms of whether international students would still study in Australia without the presence of a Government funded scholarship, it could be suggested that Australia, through its quality Higher Education Sector would still attract significant numbers of foreign students. However, in terms of being globally competitive, the lack of a Government funded scholarship would diminish the prestige and importance that the Government places on research quality and international linkages. As a result many high calibre international students would be more likely to study in other countries that offer more competitive incentives and place higher value on attracting and supporting high quality international students. Australia like other developed countries, has challenges in attracting and retaining skilled workers from overseas. It also has strong competition for attracting top quality HDR students. IPRS provides one vehicle to support Australia obtaining a greater intake of HDR students from overseas. Other countries also have well established mechanisms as discussed in Appendix J.

The IPRS is administered by the right level of Government. The scholarship is a specially designed research scholarship and fits into the suite of Research Block Grants for universities managed by the DIISR portfolio.
**Effectiveness:**

In examining the effectiveness of the program, the evaluation was required to determine whether the IPRS program was meeting its objectives to support research excellence and research effort within Australia by attracting top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in Higher Education Providers (HEPs).

An indicator of the effectiveness of the program was the feedback received from all interviews with selected universities. They provided sufficient evidence to conclude that IPRS recipients are of a high quality. In order to establish the level of quality, universities were asked to provide information on the merit ranking for either 2008 or 2009 IPRS recipients. Seventeen responses were received from universities with IPRS recipients ranking predominantly in the top ten percent of scholarships awarded on a merit basis by those universities. This confirmed the high quality of IPRS recipients selected each year.

In terms of the objective to attract these top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in Australian HEPs it was found that not all universities engaged IPRS recipients in areas of research strength. In order to ensure that this objective continues to be achieved in the future, it is suggested that the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative and the university compacts process which are both in their early stages of development could be utilised in order to ensure IPRS recipients are focussed in areas of excellence.

The IPRS program was originally designed to meets its policy objectives by utilizing process focused KPIs, such as retention rates and high quality scholarship recipients, to the program. The evaluation found that it in order to continue strengthening and enhancing the IPRS program, it would be appropriate to further consider the existing KPIs including the provision of more outcome focussed KPIs for the program.

The objectives of the IPRS program have not changed over time. The IPRS is a unique program and fits into a niche market that successfully addresses the need to encourage international postgraduate research student to come to Australia and provide opportunities for international research collaboration and linkages as well as contribute to a significant investment into Australia’s research as well as provide a pool of talent for future academic staff for Australian universities.

An international comparison was undertaken between the IPRS program and other comparable schemes in Canada, the US, UK, Singapore and Hong Kong (a full overview can be found at Appendix J). Considering the IPRS program is worth $20 million per annum and Australia is competing with countries that are investing in similar schemes with higher budgets, it is worth noting that Australia is competitive in attracting the current number of high quality applicants in a competitive global market as supported by the recent OECD publication ‘Education at a Glance 2009’.
**Efficiency:**
The IPRS program was brought under the umbrella of Research Block Grants within the DIISR portfolio in 2008. No ASL was assigned to the IPRS program, however at the moment 1 full ASL has been utilised from the Funding and Data section to the IPRS program.

The IPRS program was designed to be a low cost model. The department determines new IPRS allocations annually in accordance with the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008. Universities are responsible for their own application, selection and offer processes and policies. The annual cost of the program is $20 million and is distributed among 40 Australian universities. The IPRS only covers tuition fees and health care cover for the successful students.

The IPRS program has some effect on the international student market in that it is seen as a prestigious scholarship (competitive merit based) established to attract high quality international postgraduate research students. There is global competition to attract international students and Australia needs to remain competitive in this market. The IPRS program is a long established scholarship program with a good reputation and is seen as a flagship program for the internationalisation of the Australian higher education sector.

International postgraduate research students already provide tangible benefits to research collaboration and linkages as well as high quality research outputs for universities. IPRS only provides tuition fees and health care cover and not a living stipend, although most of the students receive a living allowance from their university. It would not be reasonable to recoup this investment by the government as only a proportion of the full costs invested in these students are funded by the government. A benefit of IPRS is that a significant proportion of students become permanent residents and as a result contribute to Australia’s research workforce supply.

**Integration:**
The IPRS program is predominantly the responsibility of DIISR. However, the data collection on international postgraduate research students is the responsibility of DEEWR and DIAC. Currently a MOU is in place between DIISR and DEEWR to allow for sharing of particular data. In terms of other government international scholarships on offer, a comparative analysis in chapter 3 was completed and it was found that while the IPRS program has some commonalities with other international scholarship programs it is foremost a scholarship that addresses a niche area.

**Performance Assessment:**
The last full evaluation of the program took place in 1996. Since then two evaluations have taken place in 2001 and 2006 but these only assessed the funding allocation and financial management of the program. The evaluation team has not been able to determine if all recommendations from the 1996 review have been implemented. Due to the lack of data, which became evident during the current evaluation, it was recognised that a range of key performance areas were not able to be examined fully. Different agencies collecting data for different purposes, government changes, changes in portfolio responsibilities and other external influences, have all contributed to data gaps on the program. Furthermore, while individual universities collect data on students, it was mentioned that data collection through means of establishment of an IPRS Alumni was...
an area for possible future improvement. For data collection to be more effective, the evaluation has recommended that the department and universities continue and enhance data collection for future monitoring and evaluation of the program. The evaluation also recommended that the IPRS program is evaluated in three years time.

It should be noted that the IPRS program is part of the Research Block Audit program. By accepting government funding on a yearly basis, universities accept the grant conditions. The methodology used for the current evaluation of the IPRS program is consistent with the methodology used in the evaluation in 1996.

**Strategic Policy Alignment**
The IPRS program clearly aligns with the Government’s strategic policy agenda. By attracting high quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength, the IPRS program contributes to the Australian Government’s research performance agenda and investment in higher education research.

**Summary of Key Findings**

In summary, the case studies and student survey results demonstrate that the IPRS program is effective and meetings its policy objectives. Overall, the results demonstrate:

- strong support for the IPRS program to continue;
- strong support for APAs to opened to IPRS students;
- that IPRS students see the scholarship as very prestigious;
- that the IPRS program is viewed as a key lever for universities to attract international students;
- that IPRS students achieve positive outcomes from their participation in the program including good completion rates, positive research outputs and positive post study outcomes;
- that in general the allocated funds do not cover the full cost of tuition fees for IPRS students, with universities meeting the cost differential; and
- that the IPRS program guidelines could be more flexible to encourage a wider range of potential IPRS students to participate in the program.

Areas for improvement were identified both from the university and student perspective. Recommendations for action in response to the issues raised by university stakeholders and students are set out in the final chapter.
5. Conclusion

The examination of the IPRS program has enabled the evaluation to conclude that the IPRS program is currently fully effective in meeting its stated objectives. However, considering the program has been in existence since 1990, some adjustments are worth specific consideration. The review supports that the program objectives continue to be met and that the outcomes of the program contribute significantly to current government policy.

The evaluation found some areas for further consideration in relation to the administration of the program, the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008 and specific performance indicators as a basis for adjustment to the program to improve future monitoring and evaluation of the program.

A significant outcome from the evaluation is the substantiation that high quality calibre students are attracted to Australian universities through this scholarship program. The competitive program attracts students who have higher completion rates and produce more publications than any other student cohort. Following the completion of their studies, international students who leave Australia build international research relationships and establish important network between Australian universities and research focussed institutions around the world. It also provides opportunities to strengthen diplomatic relations. Those students who remain in Australia contribute significantly to our research workforce and provide ‘a pipeline of talent for future academic staff for Australian universities’.

In terms of the profile of the IPRS program, the evaluation found that more awareness needs to be raised with regard to the long term benefits of the program. Not only is the IPRS program prestigious and highly competitive, but the significant outputs from the program need to be documented and promoted to ensure Australia remains competitive in the global international market.

The findings also presented a strong case for opening APAs to IPRS students. The overwhelming response from the sector confirmed that this option would be very well received under the condition that it did not disadvantage domestic students. Given the doubling of the number of APA places by 2012 the option presents itself to open a certain number of APAs to IPRS recipients without negatively impacting on the number of scholarships currently accessible to domestic students.

The IPRS program is important in that it plays a role for providing a platform for increasing Australia’s long term productivity within the research workforce and innovation base. It has a role to play in positioning Australia more competitively in what is considered to be a growing global market.

Based on the findings from the evaluation, the following recommendations are grouped into three themes, policy framework, efficient delivery and roles and responsibilities. The purpose of the recommendations is to enhance the current program objectives and make an even more contribution to make a significant contribution to current government policy in the area of higher education research.
The high quality of IPRS recipients and the excellent research outputs that they produce all contribute to a high level of effectiveness in the program.

**Recommendations**

*Policy framework*

**Recommendation 1**
Recommend that Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) be made available to International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) recipients from 2011. Further consultations with the higher education sector would be required prior to this occurring with specific consideration given to a phased approach of the opening of APAs.

**Recommendation 2:**
Recommend that universities ensure that top quality students are attracted and placed in identified areas of research strength within each institution consistent with the emphasis being placed by the Government on research excellence, and investigate how this might be facilitated through the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) and university compacts initiatives.

**Recommendation 3:**
Recommend that consideration be given to extending the IPRS PhD candidature from a period of three years to three and a half years. This is consistent with the recommendations made by the Government’s response to the House of Representative’s inquiry into research training and research workforce issues “Building Australia’s Research Capacity” and should be explored further as part of the Research Workforce Strategy.

*Efficient delivery*

**Recommendation 4:**
Recommend that the Department and universities continue to enhance and maintain student data related to IPRS recipients in order to provide information for regular monitoring of the program and its objectives.

**Recommendation 5:**
Recommend that universities continue to extend best practice principles across the sector in relation to international students and enhance existing opportunities for IPRS recipients to integrate into university life and the community as well as continue to provide support services.

**Recommendation 6:**
Given its unique and specialised position within the suite of Government scholarships it is recommend that Government agencies and universities continue to market IPRS scholarships through a variety of fora to ensure the best international students are attracted to study within Australia.
Roles and Responsibilities

**Recommendation 7:**
Recommend that relevant Government agencies led by DIISR and including, DEEWR, DIAC, AusAid, Defence and DFAT consider increasing flexibility within the IPRS program guidelines to remove limitations and impediments around eligibility in order to ensure that the best quality international students are able to access the program. In this context the Government should give specific consideration to the IPRS program as a pathway for HDR students including in the context of the research training system.

**Recommendation 8:**
Recommend that the existing KPIs for the IPRS program are considered further to include an outcomes focus, and that as part of the continued monitoring of the efficiency of the program that the IPRS program be evaluated in three years time.
Appendix A

Terms of Reference

The International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) evaluation will:

1. Examine the current performance of the program in meeting its objective to support research excellence and underpin research effort within Australia by attracting top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in Australian Higher Education Providers.

2. Identify any known trends in research workforce participation by IPRS recipients within Australia and identify their collaboration and ongoing participation with Australian research following completion of their scholarship.

3. Develop options to improve the IPRS program to better meet its objectives.

The evaluation will also examine ways in which the IPRS program could be integrated and aligned with Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs), including whether APAs should be opened up to eligible IPRS recipients in future years (from 2011 onwards).

Based on the above, the evaluation will produce a report on the outcomes and findings, and present options for possible enhancements to or refocusing of the IPRS program.
Appendix B

Project Advisory Committee Members and Technical Working Group

Dr Jasonne Grabher  Group of Eight (Go8)
Professor Maxwell King  Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDOGS)
Dr Alex Maroya  Universities Australia (UA)
Professor Helene Marsh  Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRUA)
Professor Ross Milbourne  Australian Technology Network (ATN)
Mr Nigel Palmer  Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA)

Reference Group Members

Representative from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)
Representatives from the Department of Education, Employment, Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
Representatives from the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR)
Appendix C

International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) Program Evaluation Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies Questions

Background:
1 Outline your understanding of the current IPRS program:
   1.1. What works well currently?
   1.2. What could be improved?
2 What benefits or outcomes does the IPRS program bring to your university?
3 Outline your role within the university’s responsibilities to the IPRS program.
4 Outline how the IPRS scheme operates in your university (at a strategic level). i.e. what expenses are covered by the scholarship?
5 How are IPRS scholarship applications assessed? (quality, qualifications, skill set/expertise).
6 Does your university provide other support to IPRS students?
   6.1. What is the form of this (e.g. subsidy, supplementation or stipend support)?
   6.2. How long has this been in force in the institution?
   6.3. How is it funded and reported?

Appropriateness (To what extent are program outcomes relevant to policy objectives?):
7 Do you believe the Government should invest in this program (and continue to)?
8 Are there other approaches that would achieve a better result?
9 Are there other countries/jurisdictions that lead the way in attracting and engaging leading international postgraduate research students? (- to identify improved program models)
10 Is there a net benefit to the Australian research community as a result of the program? Outline these.
11 Are there any unintended consequences or secondary benefits of the program?
12 Does the IPRS program meet a gap in providing higher degree research support for international students?

Effectiveness (Has the program performance (outputs) been in line with objectives and expectations?):
13 How does the program support research excellence and underpin research effort within Australia?
13.1. How is this measured?

14 Have completion rates of research projects been satisfactory?

15 Is the research undertaken of a suitable and consistent quality?

15.1. How is this demonstrated/measured?

16 Is the IPRS program working effectively together with other Research Grant funding programs (eg. Australian Postgraduate Awards)?

16.1. Do you see merit in opening the Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs) to IPRS recipients?

17 How does the IPRS program align with other programs from other agencies (ie. DEEWR’s Endeavour program) or state governments?

**Efficiency (Can the same level of output be achieved with less input?):**

18 Identify the key processes and controls of the IPRS?

18.1. Do they operate effectively?

18.2. Could any be streamlined?

19 From your perspective, do the benefits of IPRS program outweigh the cost of running the program (including additional support provided to IPRS students and administrative cost) for your university?

20 Could the program be managed more efficiently: by your university; or by DIISR?

Please feel free to make any further comments that will lead to an understanding of what the IPRS scheme has achieved within your institution.
Appendix D

International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) Program
Evaluation Researcher/Supervisor of IPRS Student Questions

Background:
1. Outline your understanding of the current IPRS program:
   1.1. What works well currently?
   1.2. What could be improved?
2. From your perspective, what benefits does the IPRS program bring to your university?
3. Outline your role and responsibilities in relation to the IPRS program.
4. Outline how the IPRS program operates in your University?
5. What is the process that IPRS applicants have to follow?
   5.1. Please describe how your institution recruits and selects students for the IPRS award.
       - Recruitment process
       - Selection process (i.e. quality, qualifications, skill set/expertise)
   5.2. How are the students English language skills assessed?
   5.3. How does the University promote the scheme?

Appropriateness (To what extent are program outcomes relevant to policy objectives?):
6. Are there other approaches that would achieve a better result?
7. Are you aware of other countries/jurisdictions that lead the way in attracting and engaging leading international postgraduate research students (to identify improved program models)?
8. Are there any unintended consequences or secondary benefits of the IPRS program? Does it provide an opportunity for future collaboration?

Effectiveness (Has the program performance (outputs) been in line with objectives and expectations?):
9. How does the program support research excellence and underpin research effort within Australia?
10. Have completion rates of IPRS scholarship recipients been satisfactory?
    10.1. Is the research undertaken of a suitable and consistent quality?
    10.2. How are research projects defined, does the student work on a research project within a research group?
10.3. How is this demonstrated/measured? (i.e. Publications)

11. How much time do you spend on the supervision of IPRS students?

12. If an extension is required to finish the study, what are the reasons for the delay?

13. Following the completion of their degree, are you aware of the student’s career destination?

   13.1. If yes, could you indicate what this may be.

14. Is the IPRS working effectively together with other Research Grant funding programs (eg. Australian Postgraduate Awards)?

**Efficiency (Can the same level of output be achieved with less input?):**

15. Could the program be managed more efficiently: by your university; or by DIISR?

16. Are you aware of any difficulties encountered by your IPRS students during their scholarship? (e.g. language, independence, assimilation).

Please feel free to make any further comments that will lead to an understanding of what the IPRS scheme has achieved within your institution.
Appendix E

International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) Program
Evaluation Administration staff Questions

Background:
1. Outline your understanding of the current IPRS program:
   1.1. What works well currently?
   1.2. What could be improved?
2. From your perspective, what benefits does the IPRS program bring to your university?
3. Outline your role within the University in relation to management and delivery of the IPRS program.

Process questions:
4. Outline how the IPRS program operates in your University?
5. What is the process that IPRS applicants have to follow?
   5.1. Please describe how your institution recruits and selects students for the IPRS award.
       - Recruitment process
       - Selection process (i.e., quality, qualifications, skill set/expertise)
       If the answer needs to refer to any University guidelines or publicity material, please forward the information to Daphne McKenzie, KPMG at dmckenzie@kpmg.com.au, telephone: 02 6248 1153
   5.2. How are the students English language skills assessed?
   5.3. How does the University promote the scheme?
6. What is the estimated time it takes for an applicant to be accepted?
7. What is the acceptance rate and how does it compare to the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarship?
8. How are IPRS scholarship applications assessed?
9. Does the University collect data on completion rates, and completion times separately for IPRS students. If so, what are your university’s IPRS completion rates within the 2 year (Masters) or 3 year (PhD) window of funding, if this data is available.
10. Does the University collect data on IPRS students who obtain permanent residence during their candidature? (If Yes, is there comparative data for other International/Domestic data).
11. What is the withdrawal rate from the program by students (if any), or early termination rate by university (if any), and what are the main reasons?
12. How are IPRS scholarship holders paid? What is the weekly or fortnightly IPRS allowance your university provides to IPRS recipients?

13. Does your university provide any additional financial assistance to IPRS recipients?
   13.1 If yes, how much extra financial support?

14. In what ways does your university try to help IPRS recipients integrate into the university or wider community?
   14.1 If so, what are common or effective ways in which this is done?

15. Does your university provide any non financial assistance (e.g. assistance in finding accommodation)?

16. Does your university provide assistance to IPRS recipients in trying to gain part time or casual work relevant to their field of research study?

17. Does your university provide assistance to IPRS recipients in trying to gain work in Australia after completion of their research or study?
   17.1 If so, what are common or effective ways in which this is done?

18. Do you think the current administrative arrangements for the IRPS program are suitable in terms of effectiveness and efficiency?
   18.1 If not, do you have any suggestions that may lead to an improvement?

Please feel free to make any further comments that will lead to an understanding of what the IPRS scheme has achieved within your institution.
Appendix F

Survey Questions for International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Students

12 November 2009

IPRS Student Survey

Purpose
Through the International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research provides universities with funding to pay tuition fees and health coverage for scholarship holders and their families.

The Department is conducting an evaluation of the IPRS program. As part of this evaluation, the Department is interested in finding out more about both current and past IPRS students and about their experiences while studying at an Australian university.

You have been randomly selected to take part in this study.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. You may choose not to participate at any time.

The information collected from this survey will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purposes of evaluating the IPRS program.

The Department will not provide an individual’s responses to their university or any other person or group outside the Department, except for KPMG who is working with the Department on this Evaluation. Publications using survey information will not identify individual answers. The information will be kept secure and protected from access from outside the Department.

We would appreciate your response by: Monday 23 November 2009

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Daphne McKenzie, KPMG on 02 6248 1153 or iprs-survey@kpmg.com.au.
## Survey Questions

### Your background

1. **What age group are you in?**
   - □ 20-25
   - □ 26-30
   - □ 31-35
   - □ 36-40
   - □ 41 and older

2. **What is your family situation while receiving an IPRS scholarship?**
   - □ Single
   - □ Married, living with family
   - □ Married, not living with family

3. **What country are you a citizen of while receiving an IPRS scholarship?**

4. **What language do you speak at home?**
   - □ English only
   - □ Another language only
   - □ English and other languages

### Your IPRS profile

5. **Are you currently an IPRS recipient?**
   - □ Yes (if Yes, go to Question 6)
   - □ No (if No, go to Question 12)

### Questions for Current IPRS recipients (do not answer if not applicable)

6. **How long have you been receiving an IPRS Scholarship**
   - □ I am in my first year
   - □ I am in my second/third years (PhD only)
   - □ I am in my final year
   - □ I will be asking to extend
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. How much longer do you think you will need to finish your studies?</td>
<td>________ months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are you studying for your:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Research Doctorate (PhD)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Masters by Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Which of these categories best describe your field of research?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mathematical Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Physical Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Chemical Sciences</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Earth Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Environmental Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Biological Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences</td>
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<td>□ Information and Computing Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Engineering</td>
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<td>□ Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Medical and Health Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Built Environment and Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Economics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Studies in Human Society</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Psychology and Cognitive Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Law and Legal Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Studies in Creative Arts and Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Language, Communication and Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ History and Archaeology</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Philosophy and Religious Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Have you contributed to any publications for your university while</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Yes, as a co-author:</td>
<td>(number of) publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Yes, as the sole author:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
undertaking your IPRS scholarship?  
(number of) publications  
☐ No  
☐ In progress:  
(number of) publications

11. (a) After completion of your Higher Degree by Research qualification, do you have immediate plans to:  
(Choose one that applies)

☐ Stay in Australia  
☐ Return to my home country  
☐ Go to another country

(b) After completion of your Higher Degree by Research qualification, do you have longer terms plans to:  
(Choose one that applies)

☐ Work at an Australian university and continue my current research  
☐ Work at a university in my home country and continue my current research  
☐ Work in an Australian research organisation and continue my current research  
☐ Work in a government/private research organisation in my home country and continue my current research  
☐ Do further study  
☐ Do something else not related to research  
☐ Other:

(Current IPRS recipients, please continue to Question 20)

Questions for Past IPRS recipients (do not answer if not applicable)

12. As an IPRS recipient, were you studying for your:  
☐ Research Doctorate (PhD)  
☐ Masters by Research

13. In what year did you complete your IPRS scholarship?
14. How many months did it take for you to complete your studies as an IPRS recipient? 

__________months

15. If you withdrew from the IPRS program, what were the main reasons for your decision?

- Family reasons
- Health issue(s)
- Financial difficulty
- Better offer from another university
- Change of area of research not supported by IPRS
- Other:
16. Which of these categories best describe your field of research

- [ ] Mathematical Sciences
- [ ] Physical Sciences
- [ ] Chemical Sciences
- [ ] Earth Sciences
- [ ] Environmental Sciences
- [ ] Biological Sciences
- [ ] Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences
- [ ] Information and Computing Sciences
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Technology
- [ ] Medical and Health Sciences
- [ ] Built Environment and Design
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Economics
- [ ] Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services
- [ ] Studies in Human Society
- [ ] Psychology and Cognitive Sciences
- [ ] Law and Legal Studies
- [ ] Studies in Creative Arts and Writing
- [ ] Language, Communication and Culture
- [ ] History and Archaeology
- [ ] Philosophy and Religious Studies

17. Did you contribute to any publications for your Australian university while undertaking your IPRS scholarship?

- [ ] Yes, as a co-author: (number of) publications
- [ ] Yes, as the sole author: (number of) publications
- [ ] No
- [ ] In progress: (number of) publications
18. If you have left Australia, do you still have research links in Australia with:

- Researchers
- My former University
- Another University
- Working collaborations
- No links
- I am still in Australia and have research links in Australia
- Other:

19. If you have left Australia, what were the main reasons for your decision?

- Family reasons
- Unable to obtain appropriate visa
- Lack of job opportunity in my area of research
- Uncompetitive salary
- Other:

**Awareness of the IPRS process**

20. How did you initially hear about IPRS scholarship?

- From an Australian researcher
- Through my work/studies in my home country
- From an Australian university website
- From an Australian government website
- Other:

21. How did you apply for your IPRS scholarship?

- Assisted by an Australian researcher
- Assisted by a university or researcher in my home country
- Applied myself
- Other:
22. How difficult was it for you to get a visa to come to Australia to start your IPRS research?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IPRS support and benefits**

23. As an IPRS recipient, what has been (or for Past IPRS recipients, what was) your (main) source of income while studying in Australia? (You may select more than one)

- A payment from my university in Australia
- A stipend/living allowance (please specify the amount of the stipend, if possible e.g. the amount provided per week, fortnight, month or year):
  - $ per
- A payment from a university in my home country
- A payment from the government in my home country
- I work part-time
- My family supports me
- Own personal funds
- Other:
24. As an IPRS recipient, would you be (or for Past IPRS recipients, would you have been) able to continue with your current study in the absence of the IPRS program?

- Yes, I have adequate financial support from other sources
- Yes, I'll just have to secure additional support through other means
- No, I will need to apply for another university in Australia that offers better financial support
- No, I will need to apply for a university in another country that offers better financial support
- No, I have no other alternative options
- Other:

25. Does (or for Past IPRS recipients did) your university in Australia provide you with any of the following support in addition to the IPRS (please select all that apply):

- A payment to help you move to Australia
- A payment to help with your living costs
- Part-time work to help with your living costs
- Subsidised accommodation
- A stipend/living allowance (please specify the amount of the stipend, if possible e.g. the amount provided per week, fortnight, month or year): $ per
- Other:

26. If you are currently working in a paid role is this work (or for Past IPRS recipients if you were working in a paid role), was this work:

- Related to your area of research
- Related to a different area of research
- Not related to research at all
27. Did you bring your spouse/partner/children with you?

- Yes
- No
- They had work/study commitments they could not leave
- They could not work in Australia
- We could not afford for them to come

28. If you did bring your family with you, how important was the IPRS payment of your family’s health care costs in making the decision to bring them to Australia?

- Very important
- Important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

29. (a). How satisfied are you (or for Past IPRS recipients, how satisfied were you) with the IPRS program?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

(b). If you are not satisfied with the IPRS program, please provide detailed comments and improvement suggestions:

30. (a). How satisfied are you (or for Past IPRS recipients, how satisfied were you) with the level of financial support you received from your university in addition to IPRS benefits?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

(b). If you are not satisfied with the above, please provide detailed comments and improvement suggestions:

31. Are you aware that the IPRS program is funded by the Australian government?

- Yes
- No
Overall comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please provide comments for the following:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. Are there any other general comments or suggestions you would like to make?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Are there any other international postgraduate research scholarships or support programs you are aware of (e.g. programs offered by another university, another Australian state or territory, or another country)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey is now complete. We appreciate your time.

Please return this survey to KPMG by email to: [iprs-survey@kpmg.com.au](mailto:iprs-survey@kpmg.com.au).
Student Survey Responses

Q1: What age group are you in?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q2: What is your family situation while receiving IPRS

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q3: What country are you a citizen of while receiving an IPRS scholarship?

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q4: What language do you speak at home?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q5: Are you currently an IPRS recipient?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q6: How long have you been receiving and IPRS scholarship?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q7: How much longer do you think you will need to finish your studies? (Months)
Q8: Are you studying for PhD/Masters

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q9: Which of these categories best describe your field of research?

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q10: Have you contributed to any publications for your university while undertaking your IPRS scholarship?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q11a: After completion of your Higher Degree by Research qualification, do you have immediate plans to?

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q11b: After completion of your Higher Degree by Research qualification, do you have longer terms plans to?

- Work at an Australian university and continue my current research
- Work at a university in my home country and continue my current research
- Work in an Australian research organisation and continue my current research
- Work in a government/private research organisation in my home country and continue my current research
- Do further study
- Do something else not related to research
- Other

Sourced KPMG 2009

(Current IPRS recipients, please continue to Question 20)

Questions for Past IPRS recipients (do not answer if not applicable)

PAST IPRS: Q12: As an IPRS recipient, were you studying for your?

- Masters by Research
- Research Doctorate (PhD)

Sourced KPMG 2009
PAST IPRS: Q13: In what year did you complete your IPRS scholarship?

Sourced KPMG 2009

PAST IPRS: Q14. How many months did it take for you to complete your studies as an IPRS recipient?

Sourced KPMG 2009
PAST IPRS: Q15: If you withdrew from the IPRS program, what were the main reasons for your decision?

- Family reasons (n=5)
- Health issue (n=4)
- Financial difficulty (n=2)
- Better offer from another university (n=1)
- Other (n=3)

Sourced KPMG 2009
PAST IPRS: Q16: Which of these categories best describe your field of research?

- Medical and Health Sciences
- Biological Sciences
- Studies in Human Society
- Engineering
- Earth Sciences
- Information and Computing Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Language, Communication and Culture
- Economics
- Mathematical Sciences
- Education
- Physical Sciences
- Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services
- Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences
- Chemical Sciences
- Philosophy and Religious Studies
- History and Archaeology
- Studies in Creative Arts and Writing
- Psychology and Cognitive Sciences
- Built Environment and Design

Sourced KPMG 2009
PAST IPRS: Q17: Did you contribute to any publications for your Australian university while undertaking your IPRS scholarship?

Sourced KPMG 2009

PAST IPRS: Q17a: Number of publications contributed to while undertaking your IPRS scholarship?

Sourced KPMG 2009
PAST IPRS: Q18. If you have left Australia, do you still have research links in Australia with?

Sourced KPMG 2009

PAST IPRS: Q19: If you have left Australia, what were the main reasons for your decision?

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q20: How did you initially hear about IPRS scholarship?

- From an Australian researcher: 40%
- Through my work/studies in my home country: 10%
- From an Australian university website: 35%
- From an Australian government website: 5%
- Other: 10%

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q21: How did you apply for your IPRS scholarship?

- Assisted by an Australian researcher: 60%
- Assisted by a university or researcher in my home country: 10%
- Applied myself: 30%
- Other: 0%

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q22: How difficult was it for you to get a visa to come to Australia to start your IPRS research?

[Bar chart showing difficulty levels of obtaining a visa.]

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q23: As an IPRS recipient, what has been (or for Past IPRS recipients, what was) your (main) source of income while studying in Australia? (You may select more than one)

[Bar chart showing sources of income.]

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q24: Able to continue with your current study in the absence of the IPRS program?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q25a: Does (or for Past IPRS recipients did) your university in Australia provide you with any of the following support in addition to the IPRS (please select all that apply)?

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q26: If you are currently working in a paid role is this work (or for Past IPRS recipients if you were working in a paid role), was this work?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q27: Did you bring your spouse/partner/children with you?

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q28. If you did bring your family with you, how important was the IPRS payment of your family’s health care costs in making the decision to bring them to Australia?

![Bar chart showing percentage responses to the importance of IPRS payment for family health care costs.]

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q29a: How satisfied are you (or for Past IPRS recipients, how satisfied were you) with the IPRS program?

![Bar chart showing percentage responses to satisfaction with the IPRS program.]

Sourced KPMG 2009
Q30a: How satisfied are you (or for Past IPRS recipients, how satisfied were you) with the level of financial support you received from your university in addition to IPRS benefits?

Sourced KPMG 2009

Q31: Are you aware that the IPRS program is funded by the Australian government?

Sourced KPMG 2009
Appendix H

List of Participating Universities

- Curtin University of Technology
- La Trobe University
- Macquarie University
- Queensland University of Technology
- University of Melbourne
- University of Newcastle
- University of Queensland
- University of Tasmania
Appendix I

University Case Studies

Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Higher Education Provider</th>
<th>Curtin University of Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding provided by IPRS</td>
<td>$456,808 in 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$446,897 in 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of key findings

- IPRS is in line with Government policy and the internationalisation of research.
- The primary value of IPRS resides in its high ‘brand recognition’. It attracts high quality candidates, develops capacity for potential future workforce needs of the university and builds research relationships.
- IPRS students have high completion rates as there is a strong drive by these high quality students to finish on time as there is no financial support after the research period allowed under IPRS.
- Many IPRS students find suitable jobs in Australia and continue in their field of research after the completion of their study.
- IPRS students generally need extensions as permitted under the program guidelines to complete their research which is largely a result of events beyond their control related to their research.
- The IPRS funding should be expanded to cover both full tuition fees and a stipend or living allowance.
- A better integration option might be to relax the APA program guidelines so that there is some flexibility for the universities to manage scholarship funding, e.g. allow universities to convert up to 20% of APA funding to IPRS.

Situation / background

Curtin University of Technology (“Curtin”) is Western Australia’s largest university with around 40,000 students attending a total of 16 campuses including Sydney, Singapore and Malaysia. Of these, about 17,000 are offshore and onshore international students, and almost 2,000 are research students.

Curtin’s vision is to be an international leader shaping the future through its graduates and research, and positioned among the top 20 universities in Asia by 2020. Curtin is a member of the Australian Technology Network of Universities, an alliance of five of the most innovative and enterprising universities in Australia.

In Curtin, IPRS is available to any international student (excluding New Zealand) wishing to undertake a Higher Degree by Research (HDR). Applications to IPRS open on 1 June and close on 31 August each year. The IPRS applications are assessed as part of the international postgraduate research admission process which takes a merit-based three-stage approach involving assessments at the department, faculty and university levels.

In addition to the standard tuition fee and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) benefits offered under IPRS, Curtin also awards all successful IPRS applicants the Curtin University Postgraduate Scholarship.

1 Curtin University of Technology website: http://about.curtin.edu.au/vision-mission-and-values.cfm
(CUPS) which provides a tax-free stipend in line with the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) annual living allowance level⁴.

The IPRS is a highly competitive program in Curtin. Of the 190 applications received in 2009, only five was awarded IPRS; this is compared to 6 scholarship awarded in 2008 out of 176 applications.

In addition to IPRS, Curtin also offers scholarships in eight other programs to international postgraduate research students from various funding sources including the Commonwealth, private and industry sponsorships. Among them is the Curtin International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (CIPRS) which is assessed and awarded through the same application round as IPRS. CIPRS offers a course tuition fee scholarship and a living allowance similar to that of the combined benefits of IPRS and CUPS offered to IPRS students⁵.

From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding for Curtin⁶: 6.84% (or $457,000) in 2008 and 8.06% (or $455,000) in 2007. In comparison, APA represented 36.0% (or $2,405,000) and 41.6% (or $2,347,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively.

### What worked well

** Appropriateness -** The Dean of Graduate Studies (the Dean) believes that IPRS is in line with Government policy and the internationalisation of research. It is also in line with best practice in supporting students and universities and is akin to a partnership program where both the Government and the university make a contribution towards the program outcome.

The primary value of IPRS resides in its high ‘brand recognition’. It attracts high quality candidates, develops capacity for workforce needs of the university and builds research relationships. This view is echoed by the researcher/IPRS student supervisor representative (the supervisor), who recognises that IPRS has long been regarded as a prestigious award by international students and as such IPRS is a great way to attract international talent.

As a secondary benefit, Curtin is able to leverage off the IPRS application process to select good candidates to support its other scholarship programs. Both IPRS and CIPRS are largely merit based with strategic research alignment considerations. As such recipients of these scholarships form a high quality talent pool which provides Curtin the opportunity to recruit for future research academics. IPRS also enables Curtin to network with other international universities, encourages international research collaboration and enhances connection with Asia-Pacific universities. Some past students occupy high positions in their home countries upon return and serve as ambassadors for Australia and Curtin.

** Effectiveness -** Both the Dean and the supervisor comment on the high completion rate of IPRS students that there is a strong drive by these high quality students to finish on time as there is no financial support after the research period allowed under IPRS. The supervisor notes that most IPRS students are able to find suitable jobs in Australia and continue in their field of research after the completion of their study. One of his recent IPRS students completed the doctoral research study in two years and nine months and is now a research fellow with Curtin.

** Efficiency -** The Dean appreciates the level of autonomy that the IPRS program offers to individual universities to assess students and leverage off the IPRS reputation to attract students for other research and scholarship programs. In contrast, the applicants for the Endeavour Awards are pooled which may put Curtin at a relatively disadvantaged position compared to larger universities in Sydney and Melbourne.

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⁵ Ibid.

## Significant issues

**Appropriateness** - It is the consensus of all three representatives that the current IPRS funding is very limited and offers too few number of awards. In addition, the current IPRS funding level only covers approximately two thirds of the actual tuition fee resulting in funding gaps that have to be filled by Curtin. IPRS also does not come with a stipend or living allowance, which makes it difficult for international students to live on, even with the additional financial support provided by Curtin.

The Dean expresses his concern over the deficiency in Australia to attract and retain early career Research Fellows. Over the last five years, there has been a limited pool of quality research students and fellows available for recruitment into Postdoctoral positions, especially in developed countries where there is strong competition globally. The Dean gives the example of Canada which has a strong Research Fellowship program. The supervisor also points out that universities in Hong Kong and Singapore are well funded to offer very competitive scholarships and financial support as well as permanent residency visas to good candidates. Some of these universities even send out head-hunters to developing countries such as China to recruit top students.

**Effectiveness** - Both the Dean and the supervisor acknowledge that IPRS students generally need extensions as permitted under the program guidelines to complete their research which is largely a result of events beyond their control, e.g., equipment delays, low participant response rate for research projects.

**Efficiency** - The supervisor and the administrative representative make the observation that English language is challenging for some students from non-English speaking background. There is higher English competency requirement as a result of the changes in student visa language requirement in recent times. This has resulted in the loss of good candidates in some instances to other developed countries such as the U.S. Given the high quality of IPRS candidates, many of them have the ability to improve their language skills in an English speaking environment if they are given the opportunity.

## Possible improvements

**Appropriateness** - It is the consensus view of all three representatives that the IPRS funding should be expanded to cover both tuition fees and a stipend or living allowance. The representatives are also in support of the possibility of opening up APA to IPRS. However, the Dean emphasises that a full integration of APA and IPRS may lose the benefits of attracting top students to the IPRS as a result of the perceived lessening in its competitiveness. Such full integration may also diminish the opportunities for domestic students which is likely to have a long-term effect on the industry especially when it is already difficult to attract domestic students to postgraduate research studies. A better integration option might be to relax the APA program guidelines so that there is more flexibility for the universities to manage scholarship funding, e.g., allow universities to convert up to 20% of APA funding to IPRS.

**Efficiency** - The Dean points out that Curtin is likely to streamline its application process so that each school only puts forward a selected number of top candidates for assessing IPRS compared to the current process of assessing all candidates.
**Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program**

**Case Study 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Higher Education Provider</th>
<th>University of Queensland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding provided by IPRS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,603,698 in 2008</td>
<td>$1,627,228 in 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of key findings**

- IPRS is a strategically important program for higher education that attracts candidates of excellent quality and a significant investment for future Australian research. In addition, many of the graduates go onto hold very significant roles in their home-countries that “they become ambassadors for Australia”. In addition, IPRS also supports the pipeline of talent for future academic staff for Australian universities.

- The current IPRS funding is very limited and offers too few number of awards. In UQ, the current IPRS funding level only covers approximately 55-60% of the actual tuition fee. There is a need for the Government to make the IPRS more attractive to international talent by giving its recipients a stipend equivalent to the award for Australian RHD candidates. A desirable outcome may be for IPRS applicants to be allowed to apply for APAs by relaxing the current rules.

- IPRS students are generally unable to complete their research within the initial three-year completion period as a result of common research delays. There is a scope to extend the completion time to minimise the risk of students having to return home to finish writing up the thesis.

- Some of the language in the IPRS program guidelines is dated and the APAs wording is more modern.

**Situation / background**

The University of Queensland (UQ) is Queensland’s oldest University and has around 40,512 students attending a total of 5 main campuses many other training locations across Queensland. UQ has a population of 7,108 International students, of which 2,756 are undertaking postgraduate by research studies. UQ’s mission is to enable its students and staff to learn, discover and positively influence society and fulfil their aspirations and encourage widespread engagement within state, national and international communities. UQ is a founder of the Australian Group of Eight Universities committed to world-class education and also a member of Universitas 21, an international network of 21 leading research-intensive universities in 13 countries.

In UQ, IPRS applicants are required to meet a range of eligibility requirements, one of which is to undertake a research project in an area of research strength at UQ. The IPRS applications are assessed over three stages. The relevant schools complete the initial admission and scholarship assessment and make recommendation to the Research Higher Degrees (RHD) Unit. The RHD Unit assesses the application and the school’s recommendation to ensure compliance with UQ policy and procedure, and prepares a recommendation for consideration by the Dean, UQ Graduate School who makes the formal decision. UQ typically offers 28-31 IPRS awards each year out of 700-800 applications.

In addition to standard tuition fees and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) benefits, UQ also offers IPRS recipients the University of Queensland Research Scholarship (UQRS) which provides a living allowance in line with the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA). UQ also offers a range of other scholarships to international RHD students covering tuition fees, living costs and/or research costs. Among

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Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study 2

these scholarships is the University of Queensland International Research Tuition Awards (UQIRTA) which covers full cost of tuition fees.

From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding: 8.2% (or $1,385,000) in 2008 and 9.8% (or $1,533,000) in 2007. In comparison, APA represented 51.2% (or $8,677,000) and 55.1% (or $8,635,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively.

What worked well

**Appropriateness** - In the recent edition of UQ News (October 2009) the Vice Chancellor, Professor Paul Greenfield, views IPRS as “a program that benefits Australia as well as the students’ countries of origin”. He also points out that “two senior staff who now drive discovery policy at UQ came to Australia on these scholarships [IPRS]”, referring to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Dean of UQ Graduate School of UQ (the Dean).

The Dean, who himself is a previous IPRS recipient, sees IPRS as a strategically important program for higher education that attracts candidates of excellent quality and a significant investment for future Australian research. In addition, many of the graduates go on to very significant roles in their home-countries and “become ambassadors for Australia”. While not a UQ graduate, a good example of an international RHD student is the new Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr. Marty Natalegawa who completed his PhD study at the Australian National University (ANU). In addition, IPRS also supports the pipeline of talent for future academic staff for Australian universities.

The Dean’s view is shared by the researcher /IPRS supervisor representative (the supervisor), who comments that the IPRS is a great scheme which reflects the Government’s strong international focus, as can be seen on the world stage in recent years. There is a huge call on international students, IPRS is a great way of attracting great students whose research is of very high quality and regularly result in very high impact outcomes and publications. This often leads to job opportunities for students in Australia after graduation. Even when students go on to work overseas, this provides significant collaboration benefits in the broader global research community.

The Administrative representative summarises the short-term benefits of IPRS as strengthening research and training, and the long-term benefits as attracting the best people and especially when many of them stay in Australia after graduation, they contribute to continued research collaboration and innovation.

**Effectiveness** - In highlighting the strong quality of the candidates and exceptional outcomes they achieve, the Dean makes reference to an IPRS destination analysis undertaken by the ANU. Of the 206 IPRS students included in the ANU analysis, approximately 60% stay in Australia and 40% go into overseas roles, e.g. higher education, Government administration and Defence. A recent brief survey conducted by UQ analyses responses from 30 graduates from the past two years shows similar statistics that approximately 47% of IPRS graduates stay in Australia and 53% move overseas.

The Administrative representative comments on the competitiveness of IPRS in UQ. IPRS applicants are assessed against 15 criteria and they must have outstanding ratings in every category to be considered. The supervisor gave the example of his school that only five scholarships are offered out of 180 applications.

All three representatives also point out the high completion rates of IPRS students, which are much higher than other student groups. UQ is a research intensive university and as such monitors the research output closely. An annual progress report is provided for each student. The students are quite supportive as it is a good point at which to plan for the next year and take stock of progress. The IPRS recipients are elite

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Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study 2

students and are more proactive in requesting support and research training. There are rarely any problems with the outputs or the students generally.

The Administrative representative comments that many IPRS students do not live on campus as they are more mature and many have families. Integration is supported by individual schools and the university also help them students undertake tutoring as casual work to generate additional income.

Significant issues

*Appropriateness* – It is the consensus view of all three representatives that the current IPRS funding is very limited and offers too few number of awards. In addition, the current IPRS funding level only covers approximately 55-60% of the actual tuition fee resulting in funding gaps that have to be filled by UQ. In order to make the IPRS more attractive to high quality candidates, UQ offers additional financial support including a living allowance and individual schools may provide additional top-ups if budget permits.

How to attract high quality talent is a hot topic across the world and the competition for the best possible candidates is very strong. Each country has its own similar scheme but some countries often have significantly greater levels of funding. For example, in the US there is significant private sector funding for both graduate and postgraduate levels, and the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) has had a significant impact. IPRS is a prestigious scholarship and universities need to look after IPRS students. They are future ambassadors for Australia and universities should be ‘showing them off’. For many candidates if they are not adequately supported they will go elsewhere. It is very important for the universities’ reputation to attract these students, as is the quality of their research and outcomes. When universities attract good candidates, good outcomes are achieved by the students and this in turn reflects well on the universities.

*Effectiveness* - No IPRS students complete their research in three years and the average time of completion is approximately 3.5-4 years. The delays are due to regular research issues. For example, one student’s progress was delayed by a year when salt water pools with shark eggs where incorrectly pumped with freshwater killing the eggs. It is also time consuming for examiners to assess a thesis, the process generally takes about eight weeks to complete and there are very often additional updates required.

*Efficiency* - The research delays sometimes result in visa extension issues. The supervisor comments that three of his students have missed out on Australian job offers due to visa issues.

Possible improvement

*Appropriateness* - All three representatives emphasised the need to increase IPRS funding. The recent edition of UQ News (October 2009) notes that “UQ and its Group of Eight partners are urging the government to implement a proposal in the 2009–10 Federal Budget, to make the IPRS more attractive to international talent by giving its recipients a stipend equivalent to the award for Australian RHD candidates”. A desirable outcome may be for IPRS applicants to be allowed to apply for APAs by relaxing the current rules.

*Effectiveness* – The completion time (which is generally less than other countries) should be extended to minimise the risk of students having to return home to finish writing up the thesis.

*Efficiency* – The Administrative representative points out that some of the language in the IPRS program guidelines is dated and the APAs wording is more modern.

The supervisor suggests that it would be useful for UQ to have more regular IPRS application rounds with a view to better aligning with Northern Hemisphere scholarship timings. In addition, there is a scope to address the consistency issue as each school currently has its own way of administering the program and ranking students.
**Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program**

**Case Study #3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Higher Education Provider</th>
<th>University of Newcastle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Funding provided by IPRS**

- $432,677 in 2008
- $418,201 in 2007

**Summary of key findings:**

- IPRS is very important for the global research environment and all countries recognise the importance of exchange of research. As a secondary benefit, IPRS provides a good source for future academics and researchers and this is a mechanism for renewal in the sector.

- The University of Newcastle (UoN) is known for its Engineering and Health Faculties due to strong industry presence and support in the region. UoN is able to draw upon its partnerships with key industry players and regional communities to generate funding to support its research activities.

- IPRS students are outstanding international students and are generally of higher quality than domestic students and international students on other schemes (e.g. AusAid).

- All representatives emphasise that UoN receives hundreds of applications each year and there is a need to at least double the existing IPRS funding.

- The representatives also support the integration of IPRS with APA as Australia needs good people.

- The administrative representative’s feedback is that sometimes it has been hard to get definitive advice from the Department in interpreting the program guidelines as they are principles based.

- To enable universities to award scholarships on a timelier basis, there is a scope for the Department to bring forward the IPRS funding allocations timetable. This would allow more time for IPRS students to make relevant arrangements to commence their studies on time.

**Situation / background:**

The UoN is the 9th ranked university in Australia for publicly funded research. UoN has 30,340 students, including 6,772 international students from 80 countries, attending two main campuses in Newcastle and the Central Coast, as well as an off-shore campus in Singapore.

UoN’s vision is to build regional solutions for a sustainable future, and continue to be an innovator to enhance its reputation as a leading research university in the world; it is currently ranked as one of the world’s top 100 universities for engineering/technology and computer sciences bringing together business and research through its partnership with Newcastle Innovation, the commercial branch of the UoN.

In UoN, IPRS (or referred to as Endeavour IPRS on UoN website) is available to any international student (excluding New Zealand and Australian permanent residents) wishing to undertake a research higher degree (RHD). Applications are accepted between 1 January and 31 August each year. The IPRS applications are assessed based on academic merit with considerations to research strength or areas of research in line with the strategic directions of UoN.

In addition to the standard tuition fee and Overseas Students Health Care (OSHC) benefits offered under IPRS. The UoN also awards IPRS recipients a University of Newcastle Research Scholarship (UNRS) which provides a living allowance, a relocation allowance and a thesis allowance. UoN also provides each RHD student a laptop to assist them with their studies.

In addition to IPRS, UoN offers other scholarships to international RHD students. The three key

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Case Study #3

Scholarships are the University of Newcastle International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (UNIPRS), the University of Newcastle Postgraduate Research Scholarship (UNRS External), and the Australian Postgraduate Award Industry (APAI). The UNIPRS is funded by the University and includes tuition fees, a living allowance and a payment of OSHC. The UNRS External is funded from external sources (e.g., research grants) and is open to both international and domestic students. The UNRS offers a living allowance, and may also offer relocation and thesis allowances. APAI is awarded as part of an Australian Research Council grant which is available to domestic students, and international students for projects commencing in 2009. APAI provides a living allowance and may also include relocation and thesis allowances.

From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding for UoN: 5.7% (or $450,000) in 2008 and 6.6% (or $419,000) in 2007. In comparison, APAI represents 30.4% (or $2,389,000) and 35.8% (or $2,268,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively.

What worked well

Propriateness – The Dean of Graduate Studies (the Dean) states that IPRS is very important for the global research environment and all countries recognise the importance of exchange of research. Approximately one third of the UoN IPRS graduates choose to pursue their research in Australia. Of those who return to their home-countries, some occupy high positions with government or research institutes. Among those graduates is the former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Manpower and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts of the Singapore Government.

As a secondary benefit, IPRS provides a good source for future academics and researchers which is a mechanism for renewal in the sector. This is of particular importance to UoN where the average age of academics is 54.

The Dean’s view is supported by the two researchers / IPRS student supervisor representatives (the supervisors) who believe IPRS is a very good program that attracts very capable people to research programs. As a secondary benefit, IPRS exposes students from different background to Australian culture.

UoN is known for its Engineering Faculty due to its historical heritage with the University of Sydney Engineering Faculty and strong mining industry presence and support in the region from large corporations such as BHP.

The Faculty of Health has also grown significantly in the last four years, benefited from its strategic relationship with the Hunter New England Health (HNEH) which is the largest employer in the region. UoN has partnered with HNEH and the community to form the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) which has brought in over $100 million in community donations to support medical research. The University uses the evidence-based model (McMaster) other than just Grade Point Average (GPA) to effectively select high quality students.

The UoN Research Division gives individual schools the opportunities to jointly fund (50/50) a number of scholarships including UNRS. This allows a greater number of students to be supported by the Engineering and Health Faculties who have better financial funding from the industries and communities.

Effectiveness – IPRS is a highly competitive program. UoN received 294 applications in 2008 and only around 7-8 scholarships are awarded each year. IPRS students are outstanding international students and are generally of higher quality than domestic students. International students come under other schemes (e.g., AusAid) are also not as good IPRS students.

The drop out rates for IPRS students are very low, with timely completion rates. Compared to IPRS, APAI students have higher drop out rates and UoN lost eight APA students in the first semester.

Efficiency – UoN’s recent restructures consolidate separate scholarship administration functions and this

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13 Ibid.
The amounts disclosed in the UoN Financial Statements reflect accrual accounting principle and as such may differ from actual amounts allocated by DIISR.
**Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program**

**Case Study #3**

Model is working well. IPRS is managed in the same way as other scholarships including APAI, UNIPRS and UNRS External.

### Significant Issues

**Appropriateness** – Even with the additional living allowance provided by the university, some students still find it difficult to manage, especially for those who are accompanied by their families, which represent approximately half of the IPRS student population. Some schools may decide to top-up the allowance in special circumstances.

The number of scholarships awarded under IPRS are also limited which are around seven to eight each year, compared to 60-70 scholarships awarded to international students under APAI and University Funds.

**Effectiveness** – The supervisor’s comment that initial research period of three years permitted under the guidelines is not sufficient for PhD students who generally take 3.5-4 years to complete their research. This is especially the case for experimental research projects which often experience delays (e.g. equipment not arrived, move labs).

**Efficiency** – Currently the applications close at the end of August and offers are made in mid December when funding allocation is announced by DIISR. This timing is difficult for students to make relevant arrangements (e.g. visa) in order to commence their studies the following January.

### Possible Improvements

**Appropriateness** – All representatives emphasise that UoN receives hundreds of applications each year and there is a need to at least double the existing IPRS funding. Other countries such as China and Europe become more competitive in recent years.

The representatives also support the integration of IPRS with APA as Australia needs good people. The supervisors are of the view that the best candidate should be selected for an APA regardless of their nationality.

**Effectiveness** - The administrative representative’s feedback is that sometimes it has been hard to get definitive advice from the Department in interpreting the program guidelines as they are principles based.

**Efficiency** – To enable universities to award scholarships more timely, there is a scope for the Department to bring forward the IPRS funding allocations timetable. This would allow more time for IPRS students to make relevant arrangements to commence their studies on time.
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program
Case Study #4

Name of Higher Education Provider
The University of Melbourne

Funding provided by IPRS
$2,107,496 in 2008
$2,105,352 in 2007

Summary of key findings
- The IPRS is the single best scheme in delivering high quality research outcomes. The IPRS program should be seen as seed investment funding for future research. IPRS is an umbrella scheme and it is highly prestigious, allowing other scholarships to leverage off it.
- As a secondary benefit, IPRS contributes to the strengthening of inter-country relations.
- IPRS students complete faster and deliver better results. The return of investment is very high due to the quality of the students who often demonstrate better academic quality than domestic students in terms of completion rates and publication frequency.
- More scholarships should be provided under IPRS because ‘there are first-rate international students we could attract who will surely contribute to Australia and our ability to collaborate internationally’.
- IPRS should provide sufficient support to students including both full tuition fees and a living stipend especially for those who are accompanied by family members.
- The internal application ranking process could be improved to ensure consistency.

Situation / background
The University of Melbourne (UoM) is Victoria’s largest university, Australia’s top ranking university and the 20th ranking university internationally. UoM has the largest totals of Research Higher Degree (RHD) student load (3,141) and RHD completions (729) among Australian universities. In addition, the numbers of APA (178) and Endeavour IPRS (37) are also the highest nationally. There are around 44,500 students attending its Victorian and regional campuses. Of these, about 11,000 are international students.

UoM has the vision and long term goal to be one of the finest universities in the world. UoM seeks to be highly regarded in research and research training, learning and teaching and knowledge transfer. UoM is a member of the Australian Group of Eight universities, and a member of Universitas 21, which is an international network of the top 21 research universities in the world.

UoM awards 38 IPRS annually. Applications to IPRS close on 31 August each year. The IPRS applications are assessed based on academic merit and research potential first by individual schools then by the Graduate Research Scholarships Committee (GRSC).

In addition to the standard tuition fee and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) benefits offered under IPRS, UoM usually awards all successful IPRS applicants the Melbourne International Research Scholarships (MIRS) which provides a living allowance, relocation grant, a thesis allowance and paid leave. There are 220 new MIRS awarded annually, 100 of which are to international students.

In addition to IPRS, UoM also offers several other scholarships to international RHD students from various funding sources including the Commonwealth, private and industry sponsorships. Among them is the

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16 UoM strategy: http://growingesteem.unimelb.edu.au/about
17 MIRS: http://cms.services.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships/pgrad/international/available/mirs
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study #4

Melbourne International Fee Remission Scholarships (MIFRS) which covers full tuition fees only. UoM awards 150 MIFRS each year.\(^\text{18}\)

From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding for UoM: 12.5% (or $2,107,000) in 2008 and 13.5% (or $2,179,000) in 2007. In comparison, APA represented 66.0% (or $11,154,000) and 67.8% (or $10,931,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively.\(^\text{19}\)

What worked well

**Appropriateness** – The DVC-R views the IPRS as the single best scheme in delivering high quality research outcomes. He believes that the IPRS program should be seen as seed investment funding for future research. IPRS is an umbrella scheme and it is highly prestigious, allowing other scholarships to leverage off it. Only the top students receive IPRS and there is a hierarchy which is well understood by students and universities. As a secondary benefit, IPRS contributes to the strengthening of inter-country relations. A number of previous IPRS students are now holding significant roles in various foreign Governments, and have strong ties to Australia.

**Effectiveness** - UoM requires IPRS student supervisors to provide annual progress reports for their students including key performance indicators (e.g. work rate, being pro-active). In addition, UoM tests the students early to ensure risks are managed and to provide support or intervene if needed.

IPRS students complete faster and deliver better results. The return of investment is very high due to the quality of the students who often demonstrate better academic quality than domestic students in terms of completion rates and publication frequency. IPRS students complete their studies on time which usually take around 3.5 years.

UoM’s internal statistics show that the cut-off scholarship score for IPRS award in 2006-2009 is around 88.9% - 90.5%, compared to cut-off scores of 81.4% - 83.3% for APA students in the same period. In UoM a score of 85% is rare and 87% is exceptional. In terms of completion rates, IPRS students’ completion rates in 2000 – 2002 were 89%, compared to 76% for APA students and 77% for MIRS students. With regard to publication rates, over the three year period 2006-2008, 58% of international students publish whereas 31% of local students do. Although UoM does not collect publication data for IPRS recipients specifically, given their calibre it is highly unlikely that the IPRS cohort would not follow this trend.

In a recent UoM internal survey of 52 IPRS student supervisors (the supervisors), 34.6% of the supervisors say their IPRS students are ‘one of my very best students’ and 36.5% say their IPRS students are ‘better than the majority of students I have supervised’. In addition, 71.2% of the IPRS graduates continue to work in Australia and 69.2% of the graduates continue to collaborate with their IPRS supervisors. The overwhelming majority of the supervisors (88.5%) believe IPRS is of ‘great benefit’ to Australian research.

Significant issues

**Appropriateness** – The current IPRS funding is limited and as a result, many talented applicants are not able to get IPRS. UoM funds 38 scholarships annually out of approximately 600 applications, compared to 180 scholarships awarded under APA. In addition, IPRS does not provide a stipend living allowance. In some cases, the current level of stipend (in line with APA) provided by UoM is not sufficient to support IPRS students and their families.

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\(^\text{18}\) MIFRS: [http://cms.services.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships/pgrad/international/available/mifrs](http://cms.services.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships/pgrad/international/available/mifrs)

\(^\text{19}\) 2008 UoM Annual report Note 2(c): [http://www.unimelb.edu.au/publications/docs/UNIM_AR_Final_2.pdf](http://www.unimelb.edu.au/publications/docs/UNIM_AR_Final_2.pdf) The amounts disclosed in the UN Financial Statements reflect accrual accounting principle and as such may differ from actual amounts allocated by DIISR.
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study #4

Other countries use their postgraduate research as a significant attractor for universities and enjoy significant downstream effects. They also make the visa requirements very easy for students to stay after graduation. In particular, the European system support their students very generously. UK and US strongly support postgraduate research and there is a significant level of funding provided. This is through private sector support, but there are also a number of very strong public universities, e.g. University of California, Berkley where there is also significant funding provided by the Government.

Possible improvements

Appropriateness – The representatives’ view of expanding the IPRS funding is echoed by those IPRS student supervisors who participated in a recent UoM internal survey. These IPRS student supervisors believe that:

- More scholarships should be provided under IPRS because ‘there are first-rate international students we could attract who will surely contribute to Australia and our ability to collaborate internationally’; and
- IPRS should provide sufficient support to students including both full tuition fees and a living stipend especially for those who are accompanied by family members.

In addition, the representatives also support the opening of APA to IPRS candidates.

Effectiveness – Many of the IPRS student supervisors surveyed by UoM suggest that the internal application ranking process could be improved to ensure consistency. The current ranking system is mainly focused on undergraduate scores instead of previous research experience. In addition, some high quality students from top universities with different marking systems may be disadvantaged under the existing ranking system. Some supervisors believe more attention should be given to students from non-English speaking background to improve their English writing skills.
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study #5

Name of Higher Education Provider
Queensland University of Technology

Funding provided by IPRS
$448,341 in 2008
$418,201 in 2007

Summary of key findings

- IPRS is part of Queensland University of Technology (QUT)’s future workforce strategy and research students are very important to improving QUT’s research productivity.
- There is currently a move on the Government’s part to make international postgraduate students part of the mainstream of Australia’s research efforts.
- IPRS can also be seen as one way of giving something back to the foreign countries feeding into the Australian Higher education industry which contributes $13 billion a year to the Australian economy.
- Benefits of IPRS include quality research outputs and publications, as well as contributions to international research.
- If IPRS ceases, any self-funded replacement programs would lack the authority and prominence associated with the IPRS program.
- Government to Government cooperation models, allow funds to be leveraged to a greater degree.
- The future research workforce will be partly drawn from overseas and as such expanding IPRS would allow universities to target strategic requirements of Australian research.
- There seems to be demand for the CTS – funded Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation offered by the QUT from IPRS students. CTS courses could be completed while students are undertaking their PhD studies which would add value to the sector.
- A number of nationally-funded schemes such as the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) and scholarships provided by funding agencies such as the Australian Research Council (ARC), National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) as well as CSIRO and RDC funded scholarships link research to nationally determined priorities, IPRS could link into these areas of focus to ensure greater alignment of research effort.
- A handbook for IPRS students would be useful. In addition, earlier allocations of scholarships by the Department would also allow universities to confirm scholarship offerings to candidates on a more timely basis.
- It may be useful for the Department to outline better practice in managing the program or provide guidelines of care (in relation to students). As a result, universities will be able to provide more support to the program in return.

Situation / background

QUT is a leading Australian university with an applied emphasis in courses and research. QUT has around 40,000 students attending its three campuses in Brisbane, including 6,700 international students from over 90 countries.

It is QUT’s vision to undertake high-impact research and development in selected areas, at the highest international standards, reinforcing our applied emphasis and securing significant commercial and practical outcomes.

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Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study #5

In QUT, applications to IPRS close on 30 September each year. The IPRS applications are assessed as part of the QUT annual scholarship round process. In addition to the standard tuition fee and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) benefits offered under IPRS, QUT also offer IPRS recipients the QUT Postgraduate Research Award (QUTPRA) which provides a tax-free stipend in line with the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) annual living allowance level, a thesis allowance and paid leave. QUTPRA is funded by QUT’S research budget.

In addition to IPRS, QUT also offers other scholarships to international postgraduate research students from various funding sources including the Commonwealth, private and industry sponsorships. Among them is a one year QUT Masters Scholarship (QMS) which is available for international students completing a Master by Research degree in QUT. QMS offers an annual stipend and a thesis allowance. QMS is also funded by QUT’s research budget.

From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding for QUT: 5.5% (or $448,000) in 2008 and 5.6% (or $421,000) in 2007. In comparison, APA represents 26.7% (or $2,350,000) and 29.0% (or $2,197,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively.

What worked well

Appropriateness – The Dean of Graduate Studies (the Dean) believes that it is the Government’s policy to make international postgraduate students part of the mainstream of Australia’s research efforts. This is partly due to an inadequate supply of PhD students and a limited pool of students domestically. IPRS is part of QUT’s future workforce strategy and research students are very important to improving QUT’s research productivity. QUT has a growing research program and research is important to its strategic direction.

IPRS can also be seen as one way of giving something back to foreign counties feeding into the Australian Higher education industry which contributes $13 billion a year to the Australian economy.

Benefits of IPRS include quality research outputs and publications, as well as contributions to international research. Many students go on to hold prominent positions not only in Australia but also overseas, strengthening inter-country connections.

If IPRS ceases, universities are likely to find alternative funding attempt to partially fill in the gap. However, any self-funded replacement programs would lack the authority and prominence associated with the IPRS program. In addition, whilst universities need to target specific international student markets and areas of research strength, IPRS scholarships should continue to be awarded across a range of universities.

In addition to IPRS, QUT also enters into other arrangements such as the China Scholarship Council (CSC) Award, a program jointly funded by QUT and CSC for eligible Chinese postgraduate research students studying in one of the eleven specified priority areas. Under the funding model, QUT provides waiver of tuition fees whilst CSC provides a living allowance, a return airfare to Australia and visa application fees. This model allows funds to be leveraged to a greater degree. QUT currently has among the largest number of CSC scholars at Australian universities.

The supervisors also make reference to programs in other countries. Germany which operates a very different system that offers tuition fee waiver but does not have scholarships. There is also no tuition fee charged in Italy which also offers double PhD.

Effectiveness – The two researchers / IPRS student supervisors (the supervisors) notice that there is a very high level of commitment from international students, especially when they are not from English speaking background and are a long way from home. IPRS students cause the least problems compared to other

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22 QUT International Scholarships: [http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/future/scholarships/Annual_round_awards.jsp#IPRS](http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/future/scholarships/Annual_round_awards.jsp#IPRS)

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Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

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student groups.

QUT has a policy of being selective with a focus on research concentration. There are two layers of scoring of applicants including quality and strategic fit, and academic merit.

**Efficiency** – The Dean and supervisors point out that QUT has recently brought IPRS into the centralised and mainstream annual round of scholarships. This has resulted in better quality and more consistent benchmarking of students i.e. a better base to assess student eligible for scholarships.

In addition to common support programs available to international students, QUT offers a Research Advancement Program for International Doctoral (and Masters) students (RAPID). This involves a bridging program which is delivered through face-to-face sessions, over four weeks. Plus a Doorway to Research program which is a new online orientation program for students prior to their arrival.

Furthermore, QUT has just employed a senior Professor as Director, International Graduate Research, who is supported by two administrative staff, to provide better pastoral care to international research students.

### Significant issues

**Appropriateness** – All representatives comment on the inadequacy of IPRS funding which only covers tuition fees and OSHC. The administrative representatives point out that there is a $5,000 per annum shortfall per student for the tuition fee coverage. The level of funding also limits the number of scholarships that QUT can offer. QUT currently offers nine scholarships out of approximately 250 applicants.

**Efficiency** The administrative representatives comment that it is difficult to find information about the scheme and deadline requirements from the Government website. Although visa is generally not a problem initially, extensions can cause difficulty for some students.

### Possible improvements

**Appropriateness** – All representatives suggest that IPRS should be expanded. The Dean comments that future research workforce is partly drawn from overseas and as such expanding IPRS would allow universities to target strategic requirements of Australian research.

QUT as a larger university (like many other universities) has not been good at mobilising its alumni and it is usually left to individual supervisors to support future collaboration, the lack of a framework to make this a systemic process is being addressed as a result of recent reviews of its International and Research Divisions.

The Dean and supervisors are very supportive of opening up APA to IPRS students which would show national recognition of the importance of international talent pool.

The Dean also points out that the Commercialisation Training Scheme (CTS) is currently not available to IPRS and there is a high level of interest in the Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation course offered collaboratively by QUT and its ATN partners to a national cohort. CTS programs can be undertaken through short courses or on-line. As such, courses like these could be completed while students are undertaking their PhD studies which would add value to the sector.

The Dean indicated that a number of nationally-funded schemes such as the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) and scholarships provided by funding agencies such as the Australian Research Council (ARC), National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) as well as CSIRO and RDC funded scholarships link research to nationally determined priorities, IPRS could link into these areas of focus to ensure greater alignment of research effort.

**Efficiency** - The administrative representatives suggest that a handbook for IPRS students would be useful. In addition, earlier allocations of funding by the Department would also allow universities to confirm scholarship offerings to candidates on a timelier basis.

The administrative representatives highlight the issue that some students may apply for permanent residency
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

Case Study #5

but may not have received it when the application round closes. As such they are assessed as international students for IPRS purpose. The IPRS program guidelines should be amended to address this issue.

It may be useful for the Department to outline better practice in managing the program or provide guidelines of care (in relation to students). As a result, universities will be able to provide more support to the program in return.
### Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

#### Case Study #6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Higher Education Provider</th>
<th>La Trobe University</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding provided by IPRS</td>
<td>$367,902 in 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$395,413 in 2007</td>
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#### Summary of key findings

- The net benefits of IPRS are economical (contribution to international research), academic (collaboration) and political (inter-government relations).
- High calibre students are sought after by universities and IPRS is a mechanism to attract them. IPRS generates good investment return in relation to research output and long-term benefits, the IPRS ‘brand’ supports this.
- There is potential to target Latin American students to study and research in Australia as there is less of a language barrier as compared to Asian students.
- An international academic colleague (of the Dean, Graduate Studies) has indicated that they believe that their students are ‘short changed’ by coming to Australia to undertake postgraduate research due to the level of support received (e.g. facilities and funding).
- IPRS should be expanded to provide more scholarships and more financial support, e.g. a stipend, especially for students who are accompanied by families and have difficulty living on the allowance.
- It would be good to open up APA to IPRS. Scholarship awards should be blind to international or domestic and aim at choosing the best.
- The program should provide 3.5-4 years of Government support. A stipend to cover the entire study period not just the initial three years would be useful.
- The current English language tests are not always useful or reflect accurately of applicants’ actual language ability.
- The Department could improve the timing when funding allocation is determined.

#### Situation / background

La Trobe University (La Trobe) is one of Victoria’s top three universities, with around 26,000 students attending its seven Victorian campuses, and one in Sydney CBD. Of these, about 3,500 are international students. La Trobe’s vision is to continue to enhance its profile nationally and internationally and to achieve wide recognition for delivering socially responsible, inclusive, relevant and radical learning, teaching and research.

La Trobe has strong international partnership in teaching, research and exchange links with over 250 institutions across more than 40 countries. La Trobe is a member of the International Network of Universities (INU), which comprises ten universities from eight countries. The INU helps each member university to achieve its own international mission by sharing opportunities and encouraging Global Citizenship.

In La Trobe, IPRS (referred to as Endeavour IPRS on La Trobe website) is available to international Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students. Applications to IPRS close on 30 September each year. The IPRS applications are assessed based on academic merit by the Faculty and Higher Degrees Committee.

In addition to the standard tuition fee and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) benefits offered under

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25 La Trobe Our History: [http://www.latrobe.edu.au/about/history](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/about/history)
27 International Network Universities: [http://www.inunis.net/](http://www.inunis.net/)
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program

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IPRS, La Trobe also awards successful IPRS applicants the La Trobe University Postgraduate Research Scholarships (LTUPRS), which provides a tax-free stipend living allowance in line with the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) annual living allowance level. In addition to IPRS, La Trobe also offers other scholarships to international HDR students from funding sources including the Commonwealth, private and industry sponsorships. These include the La Trobe University Fee Remission Research Scholarship (LTUFRRS) which is designed to cover tuition fees. There is also a Postgraduate Research Scholarships for Mexican students provided by El Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia (CONACyT).

From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding for La Trobe: 7.2% (or $486,000) in 2008 and 6.8% or ($403,000) in 2007. In comparison, APA represents 29.6% (or $1,995,000) and 35.1% (or $2,078,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively.

What worked well

Appropriateness – The Dean of Graduate Studies (the Dean) is new to the role and he is bringing a strong focus to postgraduate research which is very important in building and re-focussing the university and its reputation. The Dean comments that the key benefits of IPRS are to build research capabilities and culture of the university. There are also a range of benefits that are intangible but valuable, e.g. inter-country relations through graduates on prominent positions with foreign Governments. The researcher / IPRS student supervisor representative (the supervisor) suggests that as a secondary benefit, IPRS is highly regarded and it supports strengthened collaborative research. The Dean summarises the net benefits of IPRS as economical (contribution to international research), academic (collaboration) and political (inter-government relations).

The supervisor notes that there is a high level of awareness/promotion of IPRS in the major universities. High calibre students are sought after by universities and IPRS is a mechanism to attract them. IPRS generates good investment return in relation to research output and long-term benefits. La Trobe aims to strategically position research in line with plan and areas of strength for the university. Although there are few IPRS recipients, they are of higher quality. Unless universities help develop them professionally and provide adequate pastoral care and support, there is a chance they may go elsewhere.

The Dean’s view is that there is a potential to target Latin American students to study and research in Australia as there is less of a language barrier as compared to Asian students. In La Trobe’s case, there is a Postgraduate Research Scholarships for Mexican students provided by CONACyT.

The supervisor believes that whether the IPRS funding is there or not, the university would likely find alternative ways to support outstanding candidates. But there would be a strong need to ensure the attraction to high quality candidates remains in the absence of the IPRS branding.

Effectiveness – The Dean comments on a recent internal review of quality which has identified seven areas of strength to enable resources to be targeted. In addition, La Trobe makes eleven support commitments to postgraduate students e.g. facilities, equipment.

The supervisor points out that milestone reports are provided for each student every six months. There is a Research Panel that reviews IPRS student progress and there must be one panel member who has not emotionally invested in the student to provide a more objective view.

Efficiency – The supervisor states that La Trobe encourages IPRS students to work in tutoring capacity in early part of research to gain good experience and increase their income.

28 La Trobe scholarships: http://www.latrobe.edu.au/international/fees/scholarships/research
29 Ibid.
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program
Case Study #6

Significant issues

Appropriateness - The Dean comments that one of his international colleagues believe that their students are ‘short changed’ by coming to Australia to undertake postgraduate research due to the level of support received (e.g. facilities and funding).

Efficiency – The supervisor and administrative representative point out that language and cultural issues are the main issues faced by IPRS students. Many students undertake an 8-12 week language course prior to moving to Australia. There have been a couple of examples where IPRS students that bring their family have experienced financial difficulties.

Possible improvements

Appropriateness – It is the consensus view of all representatives that IPRS should be expanded to provide more scholarships and more financial support, e.g. a stipend, especially for students who are accompanied by families and have difficulty living on the allowance.

The Dean and the supervisor believe it would be good to open up APA to IPRS as scholarship awards should be blind to international or domestic and aim at choosing the best.

The average completion time for IPRS students in La Trobe is 3.5 years which is a tight timeframe. The initial study period of three years is too short, especially for science research. In comparison, a PhD research in the U.S. may take up to seven years to complete. The program should provide 3.5-4 years of Government support. A stipend to cover the entire study period not just the initial three years would be useful.

Effectiveness – The supervisor notices that the current English language tests are not always useful or reflect accurately the applicants’ actual language abilities.

Efficiency – The administrative representative comments that the current arrangements work quite well however the Department could improve the timing when funding allocation is determined.
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program
Case Study #7

Name of Higher Education Provider: Macquarie University

Funding provided by IPRS:
- $348,428 in 2008
- $331,691 in 2007

Summary of key findings:

- Government policy has seen better recognition (through DEEWR and DIISR) of the importance of postgraduate research, e.g. via the increase in APAs.
- The Dean did not agree that IPRS scholarships attract students to universities due to their status and prestige. IPRS could be abolished and it is unlikely to affect the number of students applying to study in Australia as long as there is some form of international research scholarship offered by the university. But Universities need the IPRS funding to expand international research student enrolments.
- The key areas of weakness of the program are the way it has been implemented and a lack of funding i.e. it would be better if a living stipend was included, the number of funded scholarships increased, and the average scholarship amount increased to 3.5-4 years funding. There is a need to leverage the funding better through a priority for international research collaborations for EIFRS allocation.
- The formula for allocating IPRS is not strategic but historical - it rewards institutions with more research income, more HDR enrolments-completions and more publications without taking into account the time lag in completions and publications. There should instead be two forms of allocation – by country and research intensive University of international collaboration (e.g. China, top 100 Universities), and by quality of the area of research in Australia (ERA rank 3-5).
- The Commonwealth Government needs to make sure it invests in strategic priority areas which are identified through the Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) priorities.
- There is an IPRS funding gap when the student’s research goes beyond three years and, in practice, the research usually takes 3.5-4 years. The manager HDR is not aware of any visa extension issues with students as this University generally specifies the PhD study is for four years.
- The Dean believes that opening up APAs to IPRS applicants would be detrimental for domestic students - who are already declining in number nationally.
- The DIISR website could be improved to allow easier navigation. It would also be useful for the Department to provide background information for students e.g. rights and responsibilities.

Situation / background

Macquarie University is currently ranked in the top 10 Australian Universities, with around 33,000 students attending its Sydney campus. There are about 8,000 international students, and over 400 of these are research students.

Macquarie’s vision is to become internationally recognised in research, and it aims to rank amongst the top 200 research intensive universities in the world by 2014, and top eight in Australia. Macquarie has a defined strategy. There is a Research Strategic Plan to achieve these goals including at least 80% research active academic staff as part of a pervasive research culture which spans all academic levels.

In Macquarie, IPRS (referred to as Endeavour IPRS on Macquarie website) are available to international students undertaking a Higher Degree by Research (HDR). Applications for IPRS close on 31 August each year. In addition to the standard tuition fee and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) benefits offered under IPRS, Macquarie also awards successful IPRS applicants the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES), which are awarded a tax-free living allowance stipend in

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31 Macquarie Information at a glance: [http://www.mq.edu.au/university/about/glance.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/university/about/glance.html)

line with the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) annual living allowance level, for a maximum of 3.5 years. 
In addition to IPRS, Macquarie also offers a number of other international research scholarships available to international HDR students. Many of these scholarships are managed jointly with international partners including Fudan University in China, the Chilean Government, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia and USA, and the China Scholarship Council (CSC).
From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding for Macquarie: 10.7% (or $373,000) in 2008 and 8.0% (or $250,000) in 2007. In comparison, APA represents 53.4% (or $1,864,000) and 55.5% (or $1,733,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively.

What worked well

Appropriateness – The Dean notes that current Government policy has embodied better recognition (through DEEWR and DIISR) of the importance of postgraduate research. IPRS complements Macquarie’s the University’s strategy for internationalisation. A supervisor highlights that it is difficult to get domestic students in many areas as there is a pull from industry and the scholarships do not provide adequate financial incentives as the scholarships are usually about a third of a middle manager salary.
From the Dean’s perspective, Macquarie’s internationalisation can be demonstrated through the 60+ joint PhD supervision agreements in place with other Universities in Asia, Europe (e.g. France, Germany), as well as the U.S. The collaborative partnership with the China Scholarship Council (CSC) is especially important. With the growth of China there is a significant investment in infrastructure and laboratories which Australia cannot match.
The supervisor drew upon her working experience in the U.S. and comments that, compared to Australia, the U.S. has significant private contributions to universities which also have the backing of various Foundations to support research fellowships (e.g. National Science Foundation).
Effectiveness – The Dean notes that IPRS students, like other international research students, complete their research earlier than domestic students. Their research often leads to academic appointments in other countries.
Progress monitoring processes are in place to ensure successful outcomes. They include formal on-line reporting on each student by the supervisor, Head of the Department and Associate Dean HDR. Students are reviewed annually and supervisors intervene or provide additional support where necessary. In some situations there may be a change of supervisor if the relationship has broken down or the topic field has changed direction.
Macquarie Faculties holds a postgraduate conference annually where all postgraduate students attend to present a seminar, or provide a written report.
Efficiency – The administrative representative is not aware of any visa extension issues with students as Macquarie generally indicates the study is for four years.

Significant issues

Appropriateness – From the Dean’s perspective, Australia is ‘underweight’ in terms of IPRS funding. Some countries have higher value scholarships, eg. $35,000 - $40,000, plus more research scholarships funded by Government, e.g. Canada has a strong postgraduate research program and more significant

33 Macquarie Scholarships: http://www.hdr.mq.edu.au/information_about/scholarships
The amounts disclosed in the Financial Statements reflect accrual accounting principle and as such may differ from actual amounts allocated by DIISR.
**Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program**

**Case Study #7**

investment by the Government.

The Dean did not agree that IPRS scholarships attract outstanding students to universities due to their status and prestige. IPRS could be abolished and it is unlikely to affect the number of students applying to study in Australia as long as there is some form of research student scholarship offered by the university. But Universities need the IPRS funding to expand international research student enrolments. The supervisor points out that IPRS has low visibility given its current funding size. Macquarie awards only seven or eight IPRS scholarships each year for approximately 140 applications, representing a very small part of the overall scholarship funding. It is worth noting that there has been a significant increase (in international research enrolments, which have doubled in the last 5 years.

**Effectiveness** – Whilst the supervisor is supportive of IPRS in bringing high quality students to the university, she also highlights the risks associated with international students, especially when in most situations supervisors are not able to meet or interview them before they arrive. There can be significantly more work involved for supervisors if international students have difficulty settling in or experiencing language difficulties.

### Possible improvements

**Appropriateness** - The Dean believes that the key areas of weakness of the program are the way it has been implemented (by an historical formula rather than strategic criteria) and a lack of funding (both the absence of a stipend, and the small number of awards). There is a need to leverage the funding better through international research collaborations such as the CSC awards which entail co-supervision with tuition fees paid by the university and stipend paid by CSC.

The Dean also points out there is an IPRS funding gap when the student’s research goes beyond three years and in practice, the research usually takes 3.5-4 years.

The administrative representative comments that the IPRS is an important program and it would be even better if the living stipend is included.

The Dean considers that the formula for allocating IPRS is not strategic as it rewards institutions with more research income, completions and publications without taking into account the time lags.

**Efficiencies** – The administrative representative suggests that the allocations of IPRS scholarships to Universities could be earlier. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to find information on the DIISR website (e.g. documents within other documents, what are conditions for APA versus IPRS, etc.). It would also be useful for the Department to provide background information for students, eg. rights and responsibilities.
**Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program**

**Case Study #8**

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<th>Name of Higher Education Provider:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Funding provided by IPRS:</td>
<td>$454,692 in 2008</td>
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**Summary of key findings**

- IPRS is very important for the university to improve its international standing; it is a valuable program that provides financial support to good overseas candidates to study in Australia.
- The programs’ secondary benefits are both short and long-term research collaboration.
- One of the benefits of a smaller university is that there is a sense of community and supervisors tend to keep in touch with their students in their future roles.
- The completion rates of IPRS students are much better than other student groups. The visa issue is a big incentive for IPRS students to complete on time. IPRS students usually receive ‘As’ or ‘Bs’ in exams.
- The IPRS program needs to be expanded to include more scholarships. If expanded, IPRS should also provide more funding to cover living allowance.
- The Dean considers opening APA up would be a positive move and given the increase in overall award numbers, this should not affect domestic students greatly. Greater integration of the two programs to cover both tuition and a living allowance, and thus provide combined support of up to $40,000 to $50,000 would also help attracting research talents from a marketing perspective.
- The timing of IPRS funding allocation could be improved. In addition, it would be helpful if the Department could provide telephone number for a designated contact officer for universities to request more direct and consistent advice on the program.

**Situation / background**

The University of Tasmania (UTAS), since merging with The Tasmanian Institute of Technology in 1991, has become the largest university in Tasmania. There are around 22,500 students attending its Hobart, Launceston and Cradle Coast Campuses. Of these, about 2,000 are international students. UTAS’ vision is to be ranked among the top echelon of research-led universities in Australia 35.

In UTAS, IPRS (referred to as Endeavour IPRS on UTAS website) is available to international Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students. Applications to IPRS close in September each year. In addition to the standard tuition fee and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) benefits offered under IPRS, UTAS will also award the successful IPRS applicants the Graduate Research Scholarship (GRS) for the first time in 2010 which provides a tax-free stipend in line with the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) annual living allowance level. A relocation allowance may also be included.

In addition to IPRS, UTAS also offers other scholarships to international HDR students from nominated countries, or undertaking research in nominated fields (e.g. education, epidemiology and population health) 36. Among them is the Menzies Research Institute PhD Scholarship in Medical Research which covers full tuition fees and a living allowance.

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35 UTAS Vision Mission, page 4, 2008 Annual Report:  

36 UTAS scholarships for Research International Students:  
Evaluation of International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) Program
Case Study #8

From a Commonwealth scholarship funding perspective, IPRS represents a relatively small portion of the overall funding for UTAS: 5.4% (or $487,000) in 2008 and 5.2% (or $362,000) in 2007. In comparison, APA represented 25.6% (or $2,287,000) and 31.3% (or $2,167,000) in 2008 and 2007, respectively

What worked well

** Appropriateness – The Dean of Graduate Research (the Dean) views IPRS as very important in supporting the university to improve its international standing. The programs’ secondary benefits are both short and long-term research collaborations. Many IPRS graduates stay in Australia to take up academic or professional roles.

The researcher / IPRS student supervisor (the supervisor) supports the Dean’s view and adds that the benefit of globalisation of research and the international network of researchers and laboratories also flows from the program. From the administrative representative’s perspective, IPRS is a valuable program that provides financial support to good overseas candidates who would otherwise not be able to afford to study in Australia.

One of the benefits of a smaller university is that there is a sense of community and supervisors tend to keep in touch with their students in their future roles.

**Effectiveness –** The Dean states that the completion rates of IPRS students are much better than other student groups. The visa issue is a big incentive for IPRS students to complete on time. The supervisor points out that the completion timing for IPRS students are generally 3.5-4 years and students usually receive ‘As’ or ‘Bs’ in exams. There was only one known non-completion and this was due to very unusual personal circumstances. The Dean refers to a potential incentive program that is being considered by the university to encourage on-time completion. This would involve the student receiving 50% of the unspent scholarship eg. up to $8,000, to finish on time.

The representatives point out that this is the first year that the university will be providing a living allowance to all IPRS recipients to put UTAS in a more competitive position. The living allowance will be funded from the central scholarship pool. In the past, some schools may provide a living allowance to IPRS recipients; otherwise the students have to support themselves.

Significant issues

** Appropriateness –** It was the consensus view of the representatives that the current level of IPRS funding is insufficient. In UTAS, there are around 70-75 applications each this year and only seven-eight awards granted. A number of very good applicants miss out each year due to limited awards available. IPRS also does not provide a living allowance and some applicants have previously turned down offers as a result of a lack of living allowance.

**Effectiveness -** The supervisor points out that she would be hesitant to take on a student before some exposure to them as there are risks with all international students e.g. language or issue of settling into Australia.

Possible improvements

** Appropriateness –** The representatives are of the view that the IPRS program needs to be expanded to include more scholarships. If expanded, IPRS should also provide more funding to cover a living allowance.

The Dean considers opening APA up would be a positive move and given the increase in overall award

numbers, this should not affect domestic students greatly. Greater integration of the two programs to cover both tuition and a living allowance, and thus provide combined support of up to $40,000 to $50,000 would also help attracting research talents from a marketing perspective.

Although APAI is currently available to international students, it is difficult to attract enough students under APAI.

The administrative representative also supports opening up APA to IPRS but with some reservation with regard to handling any significant increasing in APA and IPRS applications under the existing resources.

*Efficiency* - The Dean suggests that the timing of the IPRS funding allocation could be improved. In addition, it would be helpful if the Department could provide telephone number for a designated contact officer for universities to get more direct and consistent advice on the program.

With regard to the UTAS’ internal process, the Dean suggests that it would be more useful to have an open process to receive applications all year round and there is a need to hold some scholarships back to ensure that when good students comes along they will be well supported.
Appendix J

International Comparison

Introduction

Australia has been very successful at international student recruitment over the last 10 years. This has been specifically in undergraduate recruitment from East and South East Asia. However, Australia has not been as successful at the postgraduate research (PGR) level. This relative underperformance is being addressed and more focused strategies for PGR students are emerging.

In 2007, Australian Education International (AEI) reported that there were some 177,760 international students in Australian higher education, representing a 3.8% rise over the previous year, with strong growth in commencements from India, Malaysia and South Korea (up 10.8%, 9.5% and 14.4% respectively). International PGR students totalled about 9,000 or 5% of total enrolment. In 2005, there were approximately 24,000 students following Australian degree programs outside Australia. Some 38% of research students are in science, engineering, social sciences and management-related topics.

The overseas student industry is worth $15.5 billion to Australia and is our third biggest export. Given the significant importance of this industry, it is imperative that Australia is in a position to compete in the international market not only for undergraduate students, but also those international students wishing to undertake a postgraduate research degree.

Ideally, Australia would be able to continue to provide adequate incentives to compete in the international student market with a specific aim of supporting the maintenance and growth of the Australian research workforce.

The 2006 Prime Minister’s Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) Report noted that the majority of Australia’s leading scientists have extensive international networks. However, the PMSEIC report recommended that Australia’s small size and geographic isolation present a significant challenge to its ability to retain and attract high quality skilled workers, and that shortages in science, engineering and technology skills are currently having a detrimental affect on Australia’s research capability. There is increasing competition for talent from the emerging economies of Asia and Eastern Europe which will increase pressure on Australia’s limited source.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that there is a significant amount of Australian skilled workers, research personnel in particular, being lost to emigration, and recommended that Australia ensures there is counterbalance by selecting the best and most relevant skills for its labour market.

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38 The UKs competitive advantage: The market for International Research Students, July 2008, chapter 7.3 p.61.
39 Working Group for the Prime Minister’s Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) Report – 2006
Postgraduate Research Scholarship Opportunities

The international competition for research students is increasing rapidly. There are more countries seeking to expand their research and innovation base by increasing the scale and scope of international collaborations as well as recruiting researchers from other countries (both students and staff). While the UK and USA have been successful in all of these areas over recent years other countries are becoming more competitive through strategic positioning.

A recent report by the OECD ‘Education at a glance 2009’ highlights the role of international/foreign students in research degree programs. They show that in ten out of 18 countries supplying data; international students (i.e. students who travelled to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study) constitute more than 15 per cent of research degree students, including 45.0 per cent in Switzerland, 42.1 per cent in the UK, 23.7 per cent in the USA and 20.8 per cent in Australia. This proportion of Australia in advanced degree programmes exceeds the OECD average of 16.3 per cent. Foreign (i.e. noncitizen) students constitute larger shares of research degree populations, including 31.5 per cent in Australia which is also above the OECD average at 20.4 percent (Table.4 Student mobility and foreign students in tertiary education).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OECD countries</th>
<th>International Students as a percentage of all tertiary enrolment</th>
<th>Foreign Students as a percentage of all tertiary enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced research programmes</td>
<td>Advanced research programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>31.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>m</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>45.7</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>OECD average</td>
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<td>20.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU 19 average</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education at a Glance 2009

However, it is important to note that only 4.1 percent of all international/foreign students in Australia are in research degree programmes while in the USA 15.7 per cent of all international students are in research degree programs, in the UK 11.9 per cent and Switzerland 26.5 per cent. These figures show that Australia needs to remain competitive and continue to provide opportunities to attract international research students to Australia, with schemes like the IPRS.
Table 5

Table 5. Distribution of international and foreign students in tertiary education, by level and type of tertiary education (2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OECD countries</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Tertiary-type B programme</th>
<th>Tertiary-type A programme</th>
<th>Advanced research programme</th>
<th>Total tertiary programme</th>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>90.5</td>
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<td><strong>Partner countries</strong></td>
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<td><strong>OECD countries</strong></td>
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<td>79.0</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>5.1</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner countries</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>29.6</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10.7</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. International students are defined on the basis of their country of residence.
2. Based on the number of registrations, not head-counts.
3. Excludes data for social advancement education.
4. Excludes tertiary-type B programmes.
6. Excludes private institutions.
7. International students are defined on the basis of their country of prior education.
8. Excludes advanced research programmes.
9. Foreign students are defined on the basis of their country of citizenship, these data are not comparable with data on international students and are therefore presented separately in the table and chart.


Please refer to the Reader’s Guide for information concerning the symbols replacing missing data.

Source: Education at a Glance 2009
Canada

Canada is building world-class research capacity by recruiting top-tier doctoral students, both nationally and internationally, who will positively contribute to our economic, social and research-based growth for a prosperous future. To promote this world-class excellence, the Government of Canada has created the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) program. Once in full operation, this program will support 500 international and Canadian doctoral students with highly prestigious scholarships.

The Vanier CGS program reaffirms Canada as a global centre of excellence in research and education. The program supports Canada’s science and technology policy direction, which capitalizes on people, strengthens knowledge and encourages entrepreneurial advantages to build a competitive Canada.

The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) program is designed to attract and retain world-class doctoral students by offering them a significant financial award to assist them during their studies at Canadian universities. Vanier Scholars demonstrate leadership skills and a high standard of scholarly achievement in the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and engineering, and health-related fields. Canadian and international students are eligible to be nominated for a Vanier Scholarship, which is valued at $50,000 per year for up to three years.

The Vanier CGS program reaffirms Canada as a global centre of excellence in research and education.

The scholarships are administered by Canada's three federal granting agencies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

The Vanier CGS program aims to attract and retain world-class doctoral students by supporting students who demonstrate both leadership skills and a high standard of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and engineering, and health. Canadian and international students are eligible to be nominated for a Vanier CGS.

Students wishing to apply for a Vanier CGS must do so through the Canadian university to which they are applying for doctoral studies. Based on their allocations, universities will forward a limited number of nominations to the appropriate federal research granting agency—CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC.

Review Process

University review
The scholarship liaison officer at each eligible Canadian university is responsible for coordinating the university review of their selected candidates and forwarding nominations for Vanier CGSs to the appropriate federal research granting agencies in accordance with the university’s allocation.
Once submitted to the appropriate agency, Vanier scholarship nominations are evaluated by a peer review selection committee at the agency, and, if recommended by the committee, are then reviewed by the Vanier Selection Board as outlined below.

**Vanier Peer Review Committees**
All nominations will undergo a peer review evaluation by one of three agency-specific interdisciplinary Vanier Peer Review committees. Each interdisciplinary selection committee will recommend to the Vanier Selection Board the top 70 most meritorious candidates (for a total of 210 candidates between all three granting agencies) based on the nominees’ academic and research potential, as well as their leadership skills.

**Vanier Selection Board**
The Vanier Selection Board will make final recommendations for Vanier CGSs based on the board’s assessment of the leadership abilities of the candidates put forward by the three granting agencies' peer review committees. The Selection Board also oversees the program’s process and results to ensure that the program achieves its objectives.

Each year, the Selection Board will select 166 to 167 awardees (for a total of 500 active awards after the initial three years) from the total of 210 nominated candidates submitted by the three federal granting agencies.

**United Kingdom (UK)**
There are several UK government schemes aimed at increasing the participation of international postgraduate students (including postgraduate research students).

*The Chevening Scholarships programme* is funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the United Kingdom and administered by the British Council. The programme offers outstanding graduates and young professionals the opportunity to study at UK universities. The objective of Chevening Scholarships is to build a network of contacts the UK, who will be future leaders in their countries. The awards are made for one year's formal study for a postgraduate qualification or for a shorter period of not less than three months to pursue private study or research at a university or similar institution in the UK. The programme provides nearly 2,400 scholarships each year for postgraduate students or researchers from over 130 countries. The scholarship includes coverage of all tuition fees, a monthly stipend, book allowance and other additional allowances. The approximate value of Chevening Scholarships is £20,000 each (approximately $A36,500).

*The objective of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)* is to assist Commonwealth students and academics of high intellectual calibre for study or research for postgraduate degrees in other Commonwealth countries. Candidates should have graduated with a first degree (Bachelor's degree) or equivalent qualification with at least upper second-class Honours, or a Master's degree, and are expected to make significant contribution to their own countries on their return from studying abroad. Awards may vary in length from one to three years, and normally cover the cost of travel, tuition fees, living expenses (of up to £915 per month (or $A1,670 per month)), and additional allowances for study related costs. Allowances may also be paid towards the cost of an accompanying spouse and/or children. The total monetary value of this scholarship is unspecified.
The objective of the Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme (ORSAS) is to ensure a continued supply of high quality research students to UK universities. The awards meet the difference between the home and overseas level of tuition fees only and up to 850 new awards are offered each year. For postgraduate students of outstanding merit and research potential, liable to pay the higher fees chargeable to overseas students. Recipients must be research students intending full-time study for a higher degree. Academic merit and research potential are the sole criteria governing the selection of candidates. However, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) will not be able to fund ORSAS after 2009. This change applies to England and Wales only; other UK Funding bodies have yet to make a decision about the future of the ORSAS awards in Scotland, and Northern Ireland. ORSAS awards the difference between the tuition fee for a domestic (UK) postgraduate student, and the fee chargeable to an international postgraduate student. ORSAS do not cover living expenses. The monetary value of an ORSAS award varies depending on the (domestic and international) fees of the individual institutions. Using the example of the University of Edinburgh, the tuition fees incurred by a domestic PhD is up to £3,400 ($A6,000), whereas the cost incurred by an international PhD student is up to £23,300 ($A42,500); therefore the monetary value of an ORSAS award would be around $A36,500.

The DFID Shared Scholarship Scheme (DFIDSSS) is jointly funded by the Department for International Development and certain UK universities, and helps postgraduate students of high academic calibre in developing Commonwealth countries. Candidates must be from a developing Commonwealth country intending to study a subject of developmental relevance, otherwise unable to pay for their studies and outside the scope of existing support schemes. Students are nominated by their own governments when a specific training requirement arises. Awards are available for a maximum of two years. From the available budget on approximately 200 DFIDSSS awards can be allocated per year. The scholarship includes the student’s full cost of study, including return airfare, maintenance and thesis allowance. The average value of a DFIDSSS award is £20,000 ($A36,500).

United States (US)

The US is experiencing a continuing in international scholars, including postdoctoral scholars for research. In 2006, this year they have reached record numbers. The numbers took a slight drop in 2002 after 9/11. However, aside from this drop, the trend line has been increasing41. [1]

The Fulbright Scholarship Program is the major international education exchange program sponsored by the United States government. Fulbright Program was established in 1946 by the U.S. Congress to enable the government of the United States to ‘increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries’. The U.S. government is continuing to make that investment in a Fulbright program. It has provided talented international students with the opportunity to study, teach, and conduct research. Many foreign Fulbright grantees are early-career professionals who return to their home countries to take up leadership positions at universities or in government service.

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Approximately 1,650 new awards are awarded to foreign graduate students for support at U.S. universities, and some 1,300 renewal awards are also made annually. Furthermore, the International Fulbright Science and Technology Award, a component of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program, is for doctoral study at prestigious U.S. institutions in science, technology, or engineering for up to 40 outstanding foreign students.

Fulbright Postgraduate Scholarships are available to Australian citizens to engage in 8 to 12 months of research relevant to an Australian PhD; or to undertake study for an American higher degree or its equivalent. Fulbright funding is for the first 12 months only and applicants must demonstrate they have sufficient additional funds to support themselves and any dependants during their stay in the U.S. Fulbright scholarships support one academic year, applicants are able to extend their stay but without funding from the Fulbright Commission. Postgraduates can remain in the U.S. for up to one year following their Fulbright program, under ‘academic training’ to undertake work in their field in the U.S. The monetary value of a Fulbright Foreign Student Program scholarship includes a stipend of US$2,281 per month for a maximum of 12 months, an establishment allowance of US$2000, and a travel entitlement of A$4,985.

**Singapore**

In 2004, the Singapore Government announced its plan to increase its R&D expenditure from 2.25% of GDP in 2004 to 3% by 2010. As part of this plan, the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) Academic Research Fund (AcRF) was set up to support research in Singapore universities. This amount nearly tripled to a total sum of about $1.4billion for five years starting from financial year 2006.

From this, MOE set aside $250million for the establishment of Research Centres of Excellence (RCEs) to fund programs that will generate research of global impact. RCEs are co-funded by the National Research Foundation, which provided another $500million, with a combined total of $750million.

The two main universities in Singapore are the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), who are considered autonomous, receive substantial government funding. (Note, the dollar amounts are provided on the assumption they are in Singapore dollars.)

Postgraduate research scholarships currently available at NUS and NTU to international students include (Note: Current exchange rate is one Singapore dollar = $0.80 Australian dollars):

**NUS Research Scholarship (NUS)** includes a monthly stipend and a full tuition fee subsidy. For a Masters/Graduate Program the monthly stipend is $1,500. For a PhD program the monthly stipend for International Students is $2,000. In the PhD program, students may be eligible for an additional stipend of up to $500 per month upon passing the PhD qualifying examination, which is normally held 12 to 18 months after registration of candidature.
The Scholarship is tenable for an initial one year and, subject to the student’s satisfactory progress, renewable annually up to a maximum of 1-2.5 years for Masters candidates and 3-4 years for PhD candidates, as determined by the University.

The selection of candidates takes place twice a year, in time for the start of the semesters in August and January.

Lee Kong Chian Graduate Scholarship (NUS) includes a monthly stipend of $3,300; tuition, examination fees and other approved fees; an annual book allowance of $500; a one-off air travel allowance of 2 return tickets of up to $4,000 (only for overseas students subject to a maximum of $2,000 per ticket); and a one-off laptop allowance of $1,500.

The award is tenable for one year in the first instance; but subject to the student’s satisfactory progress, it may be renewed annually. The maximum period of award is 4 years. The selection of candidates takes place once a year, in time for the start of the academic year in August. Up to 5 new Scholarships are given each year.

President Graduate Fellowships (NUS) for international students includes a monthly stipend of $3,000; tuition fees; a one-off air travel allowance for 1 one-way ticket of up to $750; and a one-off settling allowance of $1,000.

The award is tenable for an initial one year and, subject to the student’s satisfactory progress, renewable annually up to a maximum of 4 years. The selection of candidates takes place twice a year, in time for the start of the semesters in August and January.

Singapore-MIT Alliance (SMA) Graduate Fellowship at SMART (NUS) includes a monthly stipend of $3,200; tuition fees; and scholarship allowance of up to $12,000 to help cover the expenses associated with a six-month research residency at MIT.

The award is tenable for one year in the first instance; but subject to the student’s satisfactory progress, it may be renewed annually. The maximum period of award is four years. The selection of candidates takes place twice a year, in time for the start of the semesters in August and January.

NTU Research Scholarship (NTU) for international students includes a monthly stipend of $2,000. In addition, the award also covers the annual tuition fee and the annual computer fee. For students who pass the PhD Qualifying Examination/Confirmation, the stipend may be increased to $2,500, subject to good performance in research and the attainment of required standards for courses taken.

The scholarships are tenable for one year in the first instance and are renewable annually, subject to satisfactory progress. The maximum duration of the award is four years. Renewal of scholarship is subject to satisfactory periodic review.

Singapore Millennium Scholarship (NTU) provides a PhD candidate $4,000 per month for up to 4 years; Postdoctoral candidate $6,000 per month for up to 2 years; and Clinician Scientists $8,000 per month for up to 2 years. The award does not provide for any other costs (i.e. enrolment or course fees, settling-in allowances or any other expenses). A special travel allowance of up to $2,000 may be provided to assist international students to cover one-way economy air travel to Singapore.
An approach to best practices is for more than one intake a year for postgraduate students. This is consistent with views, and current practices, by several stakeholders who participated in the IPRS evaluation.

**Summary**

Australian universities overall are aiming to increase their international competitiveness in attracting and retaining international research students. To achieve this there is a need to address and develop strategies, especially with countries within the global research network.

Essentially, research students contribute significantly to the Australian economy, not only by the production of new knowledge during their studies, but also by becoming the next generation of academics and innovators, therefore it is essential to foster research excellence, and to build a stronger, more diverse research learning environment here in Australian Universities.
Appendix K

Graphs and Tables

Graph 1: Country of Origin of IPRS Students against all international students for 2008 Enrolments.
Graph 3: Length of time taken to complete course, IPRS students against all HDR students.
Graph 4: Length of time taken to complete course by field of study, IPRS students against all HDR students.
Graph 5: Postgraduate Research Visas – Offshore applications.
Graph 6: Postgraduate Research Visas – Onshore applications.
Graph 7: Length of time taken to complete course, IPRS students against all HDR students.
Graph 8: Current IPRS student.
Graph 9: Respondent by degree.
Graph 10: Age group of respondent to IPRS survey, all IPRS students enrolled in 2008 and all HDR students enrolled in 2008.
Graph 11: Sector groupings of respondent to IPRS survey and all IPRS students enrolled in 2008.
Graph 12: Satisfaction with IPRS Program.
Graph 13: Value of stipend.
Graph 14: Satisfaction with level of financial support received from university.
Graph 15: Stipend value by family status.
Graph 16: Sources of income to supplement stipend.
Graph 17: Part time work related to research.
Graph 18: Scholarship value by family status.
Graph 19: Contributed to publications while undertaking IPRS.
Graph 20: Number of publications.
Table 1: Completion rates of University of Melbourne students 2000-2002
Table 2: Completion rates of Queensland University of Technology 2004-2009
Table 3: Time Period from Expiry of Scholarship to Submission of the Thesis for Assessment – University of Queensland
Table 4: Student Mobility and Foreign Students in Advanced Research Programmes
Table 5: Distribution of international and foreign students in tertiary education, by level and type of tertiary education (2007)
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