

ANZSOG

EXECUTIVE  
MASTER  
OF PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION

Academic  
Program  
Review  
2021

PART THREE:  
SUSTAINABILITY AND  
FUTURE DIRECTION

Australia &  
New Zealand  
School of  
Government

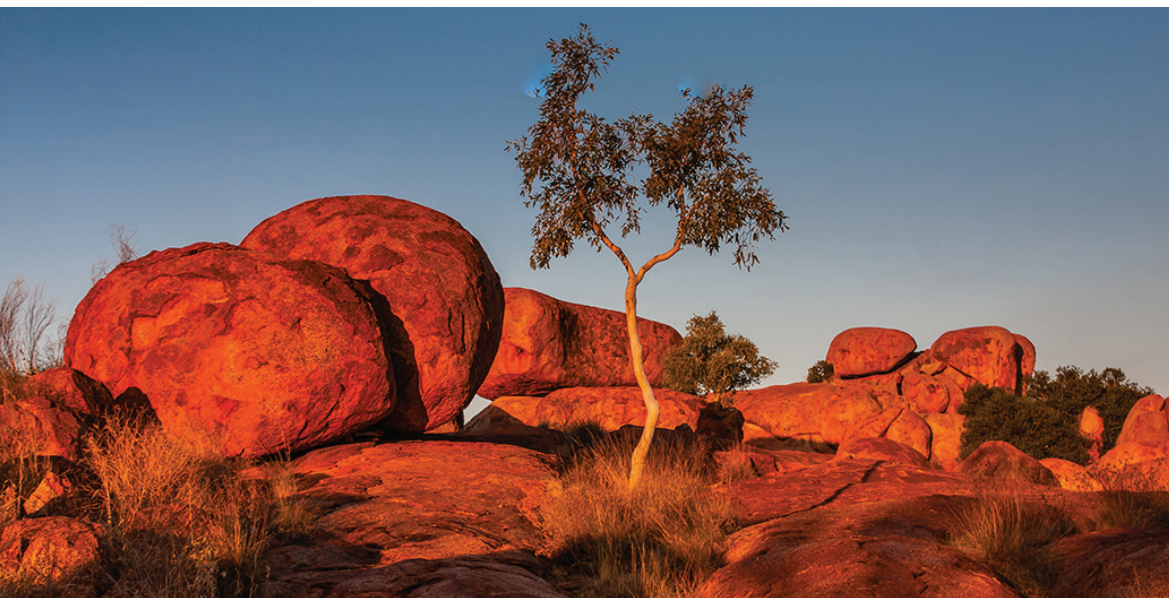


# PART THREE: SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE DIRECTION

## The Sustainability of the EMPA Program and Possible Future Strategic Directions for ANZSOG

ANZSOG works for our government owners and with our partner universities to lift the quality of public sector leadership across Australia and New Zealand. Our work inspires and connects people across agencies, sectors, jurisdictions and nations.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Peoples of Australia, and Māori as tangata whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand.



**Cover:** Clare Beech  
EMPA Class of 2019  
Executive Director  
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# PANEL MEMBERS, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ANZSOG SECRETARIAT

## Panel Members



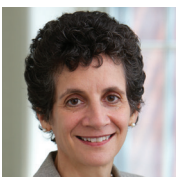
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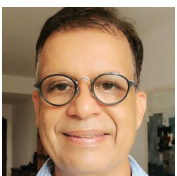
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## Terms of Reference

In reviewing the EMPA, the Panel was guided by the following Terms of Reference:

1. **Program Quality** –  
Academic quality of the EMPA and academic standards attained by graduates.
2. **Strategic Alignment and Value** –  
Strategic positioning and contribution of the EMPA to ANZSOG's mission of strengthening the quality of public sector leadership in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes consideration of outcomes and value for owner governments, partner universities and students.
3. **Sustainability** –  
Sustainability of the EMPA program and possible future strategic directions. This includes consideration of the future focus, delivery, governance and business model of the program.

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# INTRODUCTION

Part Three of the EMPA Academic Program Review (APR) report considers the sustainability of the EMPA program and possible future strategic directions. This includes consideration of the delivery, governance and business model underpinning the program. The APR has found that the EMPA is a high quality executive Masters program that is aligned with the strategic priorities of owner governments. The Review Panel has concluded that the EMPA delivers significant value to students, alumni and their agencies, and that there exist significant opportunities to provide greater value and benefit for partner universities. Since its inception almost 20 years ago, the EMPA has made an important contribution to the enhancement of the leadership expertise and capability of the public sectors of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Despite the evident quality of the EMPA and strong stakeholder support, the program is faced with several sustainability challenges which ANZSOG will need to examine and address in the coming years.

Many aspects of the sustainability challenges identified by the APR extend beyond the scope of this EMPA review. Some matters are being considered by the ANZSOG Review conducted by Professor Jane den Hollander AO and Ms Kerri Hartland for the ANZSOG Board; others may be new ideas yet to be considered. Nevertheless, given the centrality of the EMPA to the ANZSOG mission, the Review Panel thought it appropriate to make some broad observations about the sustainability challenges facing the program. Our objectives are to draw on the evidence and insights gained from the work of the APR and identify issues and options for ANZSOG to consider as part of its ongoing strategic review and planning processes. These sustainability challenges fall into four categories:

1. **Scale and Financial Sustainability:** ANZSOG should think strategically about the EMPA funding model given the small size of the EMPA student cohort; the shifting modes of delivery and associated costs of learning and teaching; and the growing financial pressures across the university sector in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The financial return to universities conferring the EMPA is marginal and current pricing and student volume associated with the EMPA may threaten the future viability of the program.
2. **University Partnerships:** The complexity of ANZSOG's relationships with its partner universities is heightened by the declining focus of the higher education sector on public administration as a discrete discipline, and the location of public policy and public management scholars across a diversity of academic fields. Options beyond the EMPA may need to be considered to sustain the value and benefit generated through university partnerships.
3. **Faculty and Stewardship of the Discipline:** The task of locating suitable expert and emerging scholars to contribute to the EMPA is complicated by the diminishing number of traditional public management scholars in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and the associated decline in public administration teaching in the region's universities. This has implications for the academic sustainability of the EMPA. ANZSOG's ongoing contribution to the stewardship of the public administration discipline, and its leadership in applying other relevant academic expertise to the EMPA, warrants consideration and forward planning.
4. **Support from Owner Governments:** The distinctive value of the EMPA for governments must be clearly articulated in order to help sustain their ongoing commitment to sponsor students in the program. This is particularly important given the constraints on public sector resources and the competitive nature of the executive education market. Comparative analysis of program pricing suggests the degree is very competitively priced in the context of the higher education sector. However, the program is considered by some public sector agencies as requiring a significant and costly investment. This is a constraint on growth and participation, particularly for smaller jurisdictions. Further work is needed on how to engage and build government commitment to ANZSOG's executive education programs.

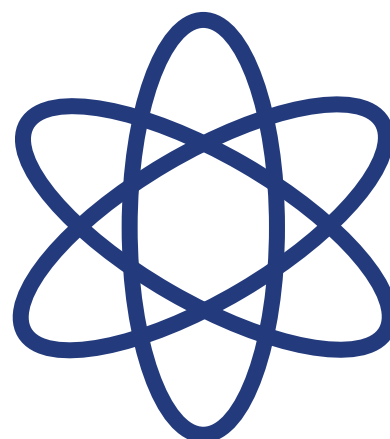
Each of these sustainability challenges is discussed in more detail below. The final section of Part Three of the APR Report covers other important sustainability issues such as the need for deeper engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand, and delivery options as the pandemic continues.

The Review Panel believes that ANZSOG and the EMPA play an important stewardship role in public sector education; in teaching innovative and ethical public sector leadership; and in the application of contemporary public administration research. The Panel therefore concludes that there is a growing case for collaboration and resource sharing across the Australian and New Zealand university sectors to ensure the continued delivery of high quality public sector leadership and administration programs into the future. ANZSOG's approach to the facilitation of such collaboration will be critical to the long-term sustainability of the EMPA.



**'We trust that the review has affirmed the value of the EMPA and has provided practical suggestions which will ensure it continues to provide world-leading public leadership training in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand for decades to come.'**

- Professor Richard Eccleston, Chair of the EMPA Review Panel



# 1. SCALE AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Initiatives designed to address the issues of scale and financial sustainability require the careful calibration of several trade-offs, given differing stakeholder perceptions of the EMPA. For example, increasing EMPA pricing may provoke a negative reaction from agencies, many which already consider sponsorship of students a significant and expensive investment. Similarly, increasing enrolments to grow revenue may have a countervailing impact on the quality and learning experience of students. It is important to note that the Review Panel did not undertake a detailed financial analysis of the EMPA. Rather, observations regarding financial sustainability are based on comments and feedback from ANZSOG executive staff; evidence collected during the Review process; and the general knowledge and understanding of Panel members regarding the viability and sustainability of academic programs. The following discussion aims to explore the tensions associated with the issue of scale and financial sustainability and includes several ideas and options for consideration.

## Student Numbers

The ANZSOG EMPA is delivered to a small but stable executive cohort of approximately 100 students per annum. The program is designed for mid-career public servants identified as emerging leaders. All students are nominated and sponsored by their government employers. While there is no explicit cap on student enrolments, marketing and recruitment effort tends to target an annual intake within the range of 100 to 110 students. Expanding the cohort significantly would likely impact on the distinctive delivery model; may require an adjustment to the seniority and calibre of the student cohort; and could undermine the program's overall value proposition. The Review Panel does not recommend that ANZSOG look to dramatically increase annual enrolments in the EMPA, although consideration might be given to a marginal increase in annual enrolment targets to around 130 or 140 students. Some EMPA Subject Leaders outlined pedagogical disadvantages of increasing class and cohort sizes, such as a fundamental change to the learning and teaching experience; limiting the interactive elements of teaching; and complicating the networking opportunities and cohort experience of students. These potential pedagogical downsides should be weighed against the financial benefits of increased enrolments.

An alternative approach is to retain the current cohort size and consider a mid-year intake. This would require scheduling considerations, such as the possibility of repeating first-year subjects each year to accommodate the growth and management of concurrent cohorts. Another option would be to offer a slower three- or four-year completion schedule for students. The mix of different completion rates may permit the concurrent management of higher volumes of enrolments (and income). These new approaches to cohort enrolment will require modelling to estimate the impact on subject scheduling and the required regularity of delivery.

ANZSOG may also consider establishing a new program aligned to, and leveraging the significant expertise and resources of, the EMPA. For example, a one-year Graduate Certificate for early career public servants could potentially be delivered at scale with existing partner universities. Such a model may increase revenue, enhance the value of the ANZSOG relationship with partner universities and provide greater teaching opportunities for emerging public policy and administration scholars. Such a program may also address the need to admit a higher number of Indigenous students and students from diverse backgrounds who may not meet the current criteria of admission to the mid-career EMPA. Careful design of an early career program, including consideration of entry criteria, will help ensure that a shorter and less costly program complements rather than detracts from the existing EMPA market. Developing such a program would also allow for more diverse offerings for government owners and their public sector staff.

Noting the above, the Review Panel has found that the ongoing disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a small number of students choosing to extend their program of study beyond the expected two years, to three or four years. ANZSOG is now observing an increasing number of students deferring their studies or minimising their study load, so they are better able to manage their increasing work responsibilities in the public service and the challenges of working from home and other COVID related disruptions such as home schooling. In response to this changing environment and considering the above discussion, ANZSOG may consider:

- > **Increasing the annual intake** of EMPA students by around 20 to 40%;
- > Providing an **option for students to extend the duration of their study plan** from two years to a maximum of four years;
- > **Expanding the pool of potential EMPA students** to include more junior public servants who may be better positioned than their more senior colleagues to juggle study and work during the pandemic over a two-year period;
- > Commencing a **mid-year enrolment process** to increase the number of concurrent student cohorts without necessarily increasing the size of each cohort; and/or
- > Developing an additional and appropriately targeted **early career postgraduate program** for agency staff of less seniority and experience than those accepted into the EMPA.

## Costs of Delivery and Price of the Degree

As ANZSOG responds to the ongoing disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that the delivery mode of the EMPA will continue to evolve. The Review Panel has noted the need to retain expertise in, and leverage resources developed for, online delivery and, where possible, blend this with face-to-face delivery. Many students favour face-to-face delivery because of the highly valued networking benefits and the personalised approach to teaching. The demand to stay abreast of new teaching methodologies using online and blended approaches may require some investment in new learning and teaching technology and the employment or engagement of educational technologists. The return of some face-to-face learning will also bring additional costs to program operations, particularly where online modes are retained in a blended model of delivery. Given that the EMPA is a relatively inexpensive executive education program relative to comparable programs in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally, regular pricing reviews are important to ensure full cost recovery is maintained. Appropriate pricing will help ensure adequate revenue streams to sustain the continuous developments and investments required to maintain a world class program.





## Beyond Existing Pricing Constraints

Public sector agencies, especially those in smaller jurisdictions, have limited resources dedicated to the learning and development of their staff. Some agencies have noted that the EMPA is considered a substantial investment which benefits only a small number of staff. This is particularly so in smaller jurisdictions such as Tasmania, Northern Territory and South Australia. There may be value in investigating whether co-contribution is an option for students enrolled in the program via salary sacrifice or tax concessions for self-funding work-related education expenses. This would require consultations with public service commissions and human resources departments across jurisdictions.

Finally, there may be value in exploring how international students could access the EMPA, either through full fee payment arrangements with a partner university, or via sponsorship programs administered by Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand national agencies such as the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) or the equivalent Australian Department (DFAT). Given the divergent needs and experiences of public servants working in the Indo-Pacific region, ANZSOG could consider creating a separate international stream of the EMPA to allow Subject Leaders to tailor the program to meet their needs and preferences.

Noting the above discussion, the Review Panel suggests that ANZSOG may consider:

- Establishing a **regular and formal pricing review of the EMPA** that takes into account shifts in delivery costs and program maintenance, and also considers comparative pricing of similar programs across Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally;
- Considering (in collaboration with public sector agencies) options for **student co-payment of program fees**;
- Exploring options for the expansion of sponsored **student enrolments from countries outside Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand** (particularly in the Indo-Pacific region), noting program adjustments that may be required to accommodate the inclusion of international students.



## 2. UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

ANZSOG's relationship with its partner universities is critically important for several reasons. Since ANZSOG is not a registered higher education provider, it cannot confer a degree. In addition, the conferring universities offer a range of elective subjects which complement the core subjects delivered by ANZSOG. In the spirit of scholarly collaboration, ANZSOG also engages with academics and researchers across the network of its University Partners in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand as well as internationally. ANZSOG staff participate in research projects and academic conferences with colleagues employed by University Partners, and many ANZSOG researchers are affiliated with University Partners through fellowships or other honorary appointments. These associations facilitate ANZSOG's contributions to research in public administration and public policy.

At universities across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, the focus on public sector management as a discrete academic discipline is diminishing. High profile Masters programs in public administration have been discontinued in recent years; for example, the Master of Public Administration at The University of Sydney ended in 2020 and the Master of Public Administration at the Melbourne School of Government is phasing out from 2021. This has implications for the ANZSOG business model by complicating the strategic alignment between ANZSOG and its University Partners in areas of shared interest and research expertise.

Recently, ANZSOG has launched new initiatives designed to increase the value proposition for universities (while seeking to minimise additional administrative burdens). For example, in 2021 an access initiative was developed in partnership with Monash University. Known as the Monash Pathway program, this new offering is designed for senior public servants who do not have an undergraduate degree (a usual requirement of entry into a Masters degree program). The program provides study skills and research skills support and, on successful completion, results in the award of a Graduate Certificate which is then accepted as permitting entry into the EMPA through Monash. The 2021 cohort of students all successfully completed the program and gained entry to the EMPA in 2022. This new collaborative initiative generated revenue for the partner university via additional student enrolments, while also increasing the accessibility of the EMPA by creating an entry option for students with no prior degree. For ANZSOG's smaller University Partners, initiatives such as alternative entry programs and an early career graduate program present opportunities to broaden and deepen relationships with ANZSOG.

Recently, EMPA Subject Leaders have led innovative collaborations with partner universities, delivering new microcredential courses. For example, Professor Ross Guest delivered the first iteration of the microcredential workshop *Making better decisions with economic thinking: Public sector economics for managers* at Griffith University in 2021. This fully online course was delivered in eight sessions over four weeks. Successful students are eligible to apply for credit transfer into postgraduate programs within the Griffith University Business School. The microcredential benefits both Griffith University and ANZSOG. For Griffith, it is an opportunity to tap into a new segment of the higher education market: professional development offerings for public sector employees with the benefit of joint branding with ANZSOG. For ANZSOG, the microcredential expands the range of education offerings available to public sector agencies, builds on the teaching and research expertise embedded in the EMPA program, and links the offering to other established university programs which may be of benefit for students.

The Review Panel believes that ANZSOG should continue to carefully assess the costs and benefits of investing in alternative educational products such as microcredentials and other programs that have broader appeal across the public sector. It is also important to ensure a demonstrable level of alignment and coherence across microcredentials, providing greater opportunity for stacking into a larger program or award in public administration. The Panel is also cognisant that the EMPA remains the intellectual core of the organisation's teaching in public administration.

The Review Panel believes that ANZSOG and the EMPA play an important stewardship role in shaping the leadership and management of public sector innovation, ensuring ethical leadership, and conducting timely and practical research in public policy and administration. As university public administration programs contract or are reshaped there is a growing case for collaboration and resource sharing across the Australian and New Zealand university sectors to ensure the continued delivery of high quality public sector leadership and training programs into the future.

One such collaborative possibility would be to offer EMPA ‘specialisations’ with particular universities. For example, where a university has expertise in a particular area of public administration (such as environmental regulation, international governance, behavioural science, or crisis management), EMPA students could enrol in that institution and undertake all three of their elective subjects in that area of specialisation. This would allow students greater flexibility in enrolment (which is recommended in Part One of this report). It would also allow universities to capitalise on the demand for specialised training for senior executives in the public service, which is indicated, for example, by the significant in-house training offered by Defence and Foreign Affairs. This option would allow students to graduate with a degree more focused on a specialisation and potentially more aligned to their individual career paths.

Noting the above evidence, the Review Panel commends ANZSOG for the range of collaborative work it already has in place with partner universities and encourages the development of further educational offerings to complement, build on or strategically feed into the EMPA. These supplementary activities will help ensure the sustainability of ANZSOG’s partnerships with universities and strengthen their teaching into the EMPA.



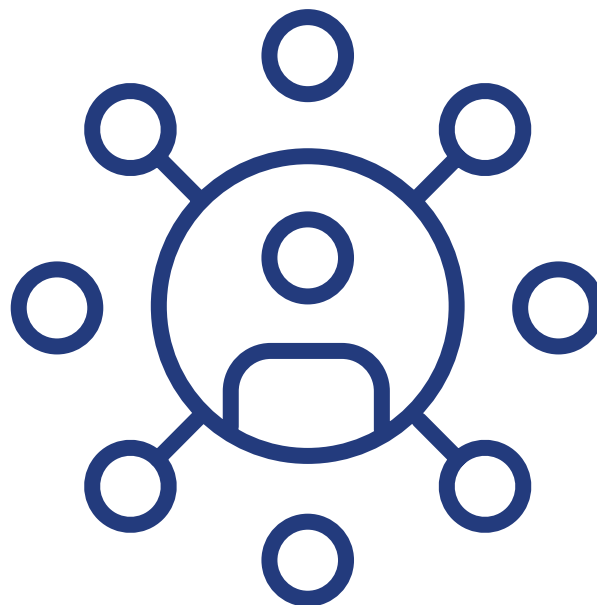
### 3. FACULTY AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE DISCIPLINE

The EMPA is sustained by a committed and dynamic team of scholars who share an interest in how their discipline connects and contributes to the shaping of expertise in public administration and public policy. Without the Subject Leaders' academic expertise, commitment and depth of experience, the quality of the EMPA would be greatly diminished. In teaching, Subject Leaders draw on specialised knowledge of their disciplinary fields, their extensive connections with practitioners and other scholars, and their superior capacity for critical analysis. One of the challenges to ANZSOG's contract teaching model is the limited number of public administration academics across the Australian and New Zealand university sectors with the requisite skills and experience that are expected of faculty teaching into the EMPA. This is particularly the case in less popular disciplines such as public sector finance and public sector regulation, law and governance.

One of ANZSOG's future challenges will be to continue to support the disciplines of public administration and public policy. The decline of schools of government and postgraduate programs in public administration across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand has implications for the sustainability of ANZSOG's academic faculty. The Review Panel is aware that the structure of the academic discipline of public administration is changing. Specialisation is increasingly common, and the discipline is now constituted by a diverse group of scholars focused on specific policy sub-systems or domains, such as social policy and environmental regulation. The Panel recognises that the university sector has primary responsibility for the development and maintenance of scholarly disciplines. Nevertheless, ANZSOG's primary interest in and dependence on the discipline of public administration suggest it may be strategic to leverage the organisation's influence within the Australian and New Zealand contexts to assist with scholarly development and faculty succession planning. Noting the importance of academic staffing and succession planning for the EMPA, the Review Panel encourages ANZSOG to consider how it might draw on the expertise of Subject Leaders and work in collaboration with partner universities to supplement their work in sustaining the public administration and public policy scholarly communities.

- The Review Panel encourages ANZSOG to reaffirm its position as a steward of the discipline and to adapt its faculty recruitment and development strategies to align with the academic shift from broader to more specialised expertise in public administration and policy.

ANZSOG can play a coordinating role for the discipline, assembling diverse sources of expertise relevant to the practice and understanding of public administration. Using the existing structure of the EMPA as a scaffold to hold together the diverse yet complementary insights of scholars from outside what has been traditionally dubbed 'public administration', ANZSOG can ensure that the program coalesces as a specialised yet cohesive and future-focused executive training program. Several possibilities ANZSOG may consider for confirming its role in the stewardship of the public administration scholarly community are outlined below.



## STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ANZSOG'S ACADEMIC WORKFORCE

- **Mentoring emerging faculty:** Current Subject Leaders could be tasked with mentoring and co-teaching with emerging public policy/administration scholars, to build capability and prepare them to teach into EMPA core subject areas;
- **Working through ANZSOG scholarly networks:** ANZSOG could make more strategic use of its existing research and teaching networks, such as the '*Policy Institutes Panel for ANZSOG Research*'. These could be drawn on to identify potential or emerging scholars to be mentored by EMPA faculty;
- **Scouting for emerging talent** in the applied public policy institutes and graduate schools of partner universities as well as at relevant conferences with a core focus on public administration and policy (e.g. the Australia and New Zealand Public Policy Network Conference or the Australian Political Science Association Conference);
- **PhD scholarships and postdoctoral appointments:** ANZSOG could work with partner universities and government agencies to develop research projects, offer PhD scholarships or postdoctoral appointments. This would support new entrants into the discipline, raise broader awareness of ANZSOG's work and provide opportunities for early career researchers to build their publication track record and develop their scholarly expertise. The creation of these opportunities would also expand the pool of potential subject leaders and strengthen public administration scholarship in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand;
- **Globalising the faculty:** In recognition that the EMPA faculty has already become significantly internationalised, ANZSOG may consider proactive advertising and recruitment activities that target expert faculty from outside Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Increasing Indigenous Representation in EMPA Faculty

Across the higher education sector, calls for the employment of greater numbers of Indigenous scholars are growing. In addition, survey data collected for the APR reveal that many students and alumni wish to see an increase in the contributions made by Indigenous scholars and policy practitioners to the EMPA. In response, ANZSOG may wish to consider strategies for cultivating Indigenous public administration/policy scholars in collaboration with partner universities. For example, Griffith University has offered to assist given that it has strong connections to Indigenous public administration experts working in government agencies and academia. The Review Panel encourages ANZSOG to explore such opportunities to increase Indigenous leadership and partnerships within the public administration scholarly community. With this in mind, the Review Panel suggests that:

- ANZSOG recruit Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori faculty to lead and/or co-deliver EMPA core subjects and other major education programs offered by ANZSOG.



## 4. SUPPORT FROM OWNER GOVERNMENTS

The ongoing sustainability of the EMPA depends on the continued involvement and support of government agencies. At a basic level, enrolments are a measure of government support for the program – an indication that agencies value the program and that it addresses the professional development needs of emerging executive staff. As discussed in Part Two of this Report, the onus is on ANZSOG to ensure, and articulate, the value of the program to agencies. Broader engagement with government partners would enhance sustainability at multiple levels, increasing awareness of the program and ensuring its alignment with agency needs. More specifically, the Panel notes the importance for ANZSOG of developing relationships with key people at the appropriate level of seniority (those who are responsible for nominating and sponsoring staff) across a range of public sector organisations. This opens channels through which the value of the program can be maximised and articulated to agencies.

Greater engagement with agencies may heighten ANZSOG's understanding of the evolving learning and development needs of public sector workforces across agencies and across jurisdictions. The Panel reviewed EMPA enrolments by jurisdiction, as a proportion of total enrolments and relative to the size of each jurisdiction (refer to Appendices A and B for data and analysis). It was concluded that, each year, typically between 65% and 80% of enrolments are from the Victorian, New South Wales and Commonwealth governments collectively. Conversely, some jurisdictions, including Western Australia, South Australia and New Zealand (and to a lesser extent, Tasmania and Queensland) are underrepresented in EMPA enrolments relative to their population sizes. Indeed, not all jurisdictions are represented every year; for example, there have been cohorts with no students from South Australia and/or Tasmania (refer Appendix A).

Enrolments in the EMPA need not necessarily be directly proportional to the relative size of each jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the EMPA is a multi-jurisdictional program and on principle senior public servants from all of ANZSOG's 10 owner governments should be represented. The risk of declining enrolments from some jurisdictions poses a challenge to the program's central mission of increasing the quality of public sector education across all ANZSOG's owner governments. Given ANZSOG's mandate, it is especially problematic if entire jurisdictions become disengaged.

As mentioned above, it is also important to consider the diversity of public sector organisations from which EMPA enrolments are sought. Sustainability of the program depends not simply on the number of students but on the breadth of participation across agencies engaged in public administration in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. This contributes to the impact of the program, with students bringing a range of workplace skills and experiences to the classroom, and maximises opportunities for networking. This reflects ANZSOG's goal to do work that 'inspires and connects people across agencies, sectors and jurisdictions'<sup>1</sup>. It also reflects the core principles of diversity and inclusion which are central to ANZSOG's mission and the missions of its owner governments<sup>2</sup>.

- The Panel encourages ANZSOG to explore ways of maintaining **broad and diverse participation** in terms of jurisdictions, agencies and individuals. Maintaining significant diversity of jurisdictions (particularly smaller ones such as Aotearoa New Zealand, Tasmania and South Australia), public sector organisations (e.g. smaller agencies such as national parks, botanic gardens, local governments) and individual public servants (e.g. people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people), enriches the program and ensures it delivers a robust and valuable learning (and networking) experience.

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1 Home | ANZSOG

2 See Diversity and inclusion | Australian Public Service Commission and Gender representation in the Public Service | Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission.

## 5. OTHER STRATEGIC AND SUSTAINABILITY CONCERNS

### Working with Owner Governments to increase Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori Enrolments

While the importance of increasing First Nations content and student enrolments in the EMPA is outlined in earlier parts of this report, the connection of this issue to sustainability is worth noting. As reported, a relatively small proportion of EMPA students identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and/or Māori (between ~3–6% of total EMPA enrolments). Indigenous enrolments in the EMPA are somewhat constrained by the small pool of senior and mid-career Indigenous public servants who can be nominated to undertake the program. The number of Indigenous public servants is increasing at the Australian Commonwealth Government level; however, they are concentrated at the more junior employment levels. In 2021, more than 60% of Indigenous employees in the APS worked at APS level 4 or below, and only 11.7% were employed at the level of Executive Leader or higher<sup>3</sup>. In the Northern Territory, where Indigenous people make up 31% of the population, only 6% of senior staff in the NT public service is Indigenous<sup>4</sup>. In comparison, the *Te Kawa Mataaho* (New Zealand Public Service Commission) reported in 2021 that its *Te Pae Turuki* (Public Service Leaders Group) was 16.2% Māori<sup>5</sup>.

The Australian Government has set itself a goal of increasing Indigenous employment to 3% at the Senior Executive Service level by 2024. The New Zealand Government is also committed to increasing Indigenous employment in the public service. Its *Public Service Act (2020)* sets out the 'requirements on public service employers to operate an employment policy that recognises the aims, aspirations and employment requirements of Māori, and the need for greater involvement of Māori in the public service'<sup>6</sup>.

- › To ensure that it is addressing the priorities and perspectives of this growing cohort of Indigenous public servants, ANZSOG should work with its owner governments to **develop strategies for enrolling more Indigenous students to the EMPA**. This may include options such as establishing an Early Career Executive Public Administration Program at the graduate certificate level, actively promoting the Monash Pathway Program and, with the support of governments, expanding scholarship opportunities for First Peoples.



<sup>3</sup> APS Employment Database (2021) 'APS employees by Indigenous status and agency size' <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/aps.employment.databse/viz/APSEDii-IndigenousStatusbyAgencySize/Indigenous>

<sup>4</sup> As part of the 'Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2021 – 2025', the NT Government has committed to achieving a target of 10% Aboriginal employment in senior positions <https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/aboriginal-employment/aboriginal-employment-in-the-ntps>

<sup>5</sup> *Te Kawa Mataaho* | New Zealand Public Service Commission (2021) 'Senior Leader Composition' <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/workforce-data/senior-leadership/senior-leader-composition/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Public-Service-Reform/Factsheet-3.pdf>

## First Peoples Public Administration: Expanding ANZSOG's Conceptual Foundations

Since its inception, ANZSOG has been inspired and organised around 'Public Value', a conceptual understanding and approach to public administration developed by Harvard Professor Mark Moore. As was outlined in Part Two, data gathered during this Review demonstrated that students and alumni found Public Value to be a useful ethical touchstone and a practical framework for shaping and explaining the work they perform in the public sector. On the other hand, some of ANZSOG's partner universities, and some panel members, expressed a view that the EMPA could further extend the Public Value framework to also give attention to Indigenous perspectives and ways of doing public administration.

To a significant extent the alignment of these perspectives is already emerging in the design and content of the subject Delivering Public Value (DPV). This is evident by the strong representation and contribution of Indigenous leaders and practitioners to the teaching program of the subject.

- › The Review Panel believes that ANZSOG should consider **the possibility of making First Peoples approaches to public administration central to the EMPA**. Such a focus on Indigenous priorities for public administration would not only differentiate the EMPA from other public policy and administration offerings across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand but would also respond to a growing need for public sector organisations to engage productively and respectfully with Indigenous peoples, and to understand Indigenous perspectives<sup>7</sup>.

By embracing Indigenous values for public administration and considering how this further connects and creates public value, the EMPA would be firmly grounded in the unique values and knowledge systems of the antipodes. In particular, New Zealand academics and government experts can play a significant role in shaping the intellectual and applied approaches of this leading idea. This would enhance the focus on New Zealand-specific content within the program, an issue discussed further below.

## Deeper Engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand: Reaching Beyond Wellington

Although ANZSOG is a collaboration between the governments of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, the Review Panel heard that the content of the EMPA is largely focused on Australia. There were several calls (from both Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand students) for greater focus on Aotearoa New Zealand examples. Naturally, the student cohort is predominantly Australian, although Aotearoa New Zealand enrolments are not disproportionately low (see Appendix A below for a detailed cohort analysis). Aotearoa New Zealand students, while being very positive about the relevance and value of the program, saw an opportunity to enhance the cross-jurisdictional learning of the EMPA by drawing on insights and innovations specific to Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly in areas that remain underdeveloped in Australia such as issues of Treaty (Te Tiriti o Waitangi). Strengthening engagement with other universities in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as the University of Auckland the University of Canterbury, may also assist with broadening academic input and assist with growing the number of New Zealand students outside the Wellington region (the location of ANZSOG's partner university in Aotearoa New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington / Te Herenga Waka).

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<sup>7</sup> The New Zealand Public Service Act (2020) holds all Public Service leaders accountable for their capability to engage with Māori and understand Māori perspectives. In Australia, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) sets as its first priority reform the strengthening and establishment of formal relationships and shared decision-making between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



## Connecting with Alumni

Part One of the Review identified EMPA alumni as a rich source of practitioner insight and contemporary policy expertise. Alumni can also have a significant impact on the sustainability of the program, by raising the profile and awareness of the EMPA; nominating and sponsoring staff into the program; and facilitating the development of strong relationships with senior leaders within public sector agencies. The Review Panel recognises the work ANZSOG has undertaken in supporting the Alumni Advisory Council and encourages the facilitation of greater alumni engagement in the EMPA.

## Delivering the EMPA: The Impact of COVID-19 and Beyond

Given the possibility that COVID-19 continues to periodically disrupt international and regional travel and prevent large in-person gatherings, ANZSOG should develop strategies to mitigate the associated health risks and educational disruptions, safeguarding the wellbeing of staff and students and preserving the academic quality and cohort experience of the EMPA. This is recognised as a particular challenge for a multijurisdictional program that has as one of its major attractions the capacity to embed students into a valuable network of peers across the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand public sectors.

It will be important for ANZSOG to continue to explore and adapt teaching modes to ensure the program remains attractive to students, accommodating different learning styles and interests. There are many possibilities for mixed mode, hybrid or blended delivery, which combine diverse elements of face-to-face, online, simultaneous and asynchronous learning and teaching. The advantages and challenges of various possible models and their implications for program sustainability are discussed below:

- › **Fully online delivery of some or all subjects:** ANZSOG could continue with fully online delivery for some or all subjects, but this would undermine the significant networking and cohort-building benefits of the EMPA. The attractiveness of this model may also diminish given that universities across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand are returning to face-to-face teaching. EMPA students attending residential or face-to-face classes for elective subjects at their enrolling universities when completing electives may expect similar approaches to teaching from ANZSOG.
- › **Return to face-to-face delivery:** Recent feedback suggests that this would be the preferred option for a majority of current EMPA students. However, the unpredictable emergence of travel restrictions and quarantine requirements across Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions make the return to face-to-face teaching challenging in the short to medium term. The following models present hybrid versions of how face-to-face teaching might be configured.
- › **Hybrid simultaneous delivery:** This would involve most students attending face-to-face with some students joining via a video call if they are unable to attend in person. However, several Subject Leaders have expressed a reticence to simultaneously teach a mix of online and face-to-face students, arguing that in addition to being technologically complex, it would deliver a sub-optimal learning experience for both online and face-to-face cohorts. Nevertheless, if technological enhancements allowed for less cumbersome and more natural interactions among the online and offline students and the Subject Leader, this option might mitigate some of the logistical challenges associated with other teaching modes.

- › **Hub and spoke model:** The ongoing impacts of COVID may mean that interjurisdictional travel and the convening of large groups for face-to-face teaching remains constrained. One option for addressing this uncertainty may be to adopt a delivery model that draws on the ‘hub and spoke’ concept. The majority of students would participate in residential, face-to-face subject delivery. This is then supplemented with one or two smaller locations where delivery to a smaller group takes place separately and over a shorter period. At the two ‘spoke’ locations, face-to-face delivery may only be one day and the remainder of the subject would be delivered online. Some of this online delivery may be centred on teaching delivered at the ‘hub’ location. The benefits of this model are that it retains face-to-face and residential delivery in specific locations, and draws on the value of online delivery for locations where travel, large gatherings or face-to-face teaching may be constrained. This is a complex model of delivery given the logistics of aligning the design and deliver of teaching in the ‘hub’ and ‘spoke’ locations. Subject leaders would be engaged for longer teaching periods, repeating some lessons at multiple locations. This model increases the coordination and logistical costs of delivery, but is responsive to the complexity of multijurisdictional delivery and variable COVID restrictions.
- › **Geographic zones:** Similar to the above model, EMPA students could be assembled in several ‘zones’ according to proximity, ability to travel and level of COVID risk. This would allow students to gather face-to-face with others in their regions or nearby. For example, students in NSW could gather with those from the ACT and potentially Victoria. Students from less populous jurisdictions such as the NT and SA could join WA or QLD students, or join online if travel is not possible. The New Zealand cohort could gather in person in Aotearoa New Zealand or travel to join students in one of the east coast Australian zones. Teaching in the separate zones could be conducted simultaneously, delivered by multiple teaching staff. Alternatively, a single Subject Leader could travel between the zones and repeat the course material in each of the zones. This model presents increased costs and effort in logistics, delivery and staffing and is still dependent on the free movement across jurisdictions of the Subject Leader to teach in different locations. For students, this model allows for face-to-face attendance and strengthens networking and place-based delivery.



# CONCLUSION

The EMPA is a high quality program which represents international best practice in executive education. It has been in operation for nearly 20 years and remains highly relevant to the learning and development needs of senior leaders across the public sectors of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The program has been highly adaptive, responding to changing environmental demands. This Review has helped identify future challenges and opportunities, and suggested some innovative ways of strengthening and lifting the quality and sustainability of the program. While the Review Panel has identified a range of issues that may impact on the medium- and long-term viability of the EMPA, the evidence clearly demonstrates that the program is popular, highly valued and shows great potential to retain its world-leading stature. The program does not face an immediate threat, but remaining alert and responding to the emerging issues outlined in this report will be important in ensuring its ongoing sustainability.

Unlike other executive postgraduate programs in public administration, the EMPA operates under a unique and complex multi-jurisdictional and multi-institutional structure. The Review Panel commends ANZSOG for building and sustaining such an innovative and high quality program in a sector where multi-institutional offerings remain extremely limited. These complex multi-institutional arrangements bring a unique richness to the EMPA program that any individual organisation would find difficult to replicate. The unique institutional arrangements also provide opportunities for ANZSOG to build new offerings and strengthen pathways into the EMPA. Continuing to work collaboratively with owner governments and partner universities will be critical to building on and extending the success that ANZSOG has achieved with the EMPA.

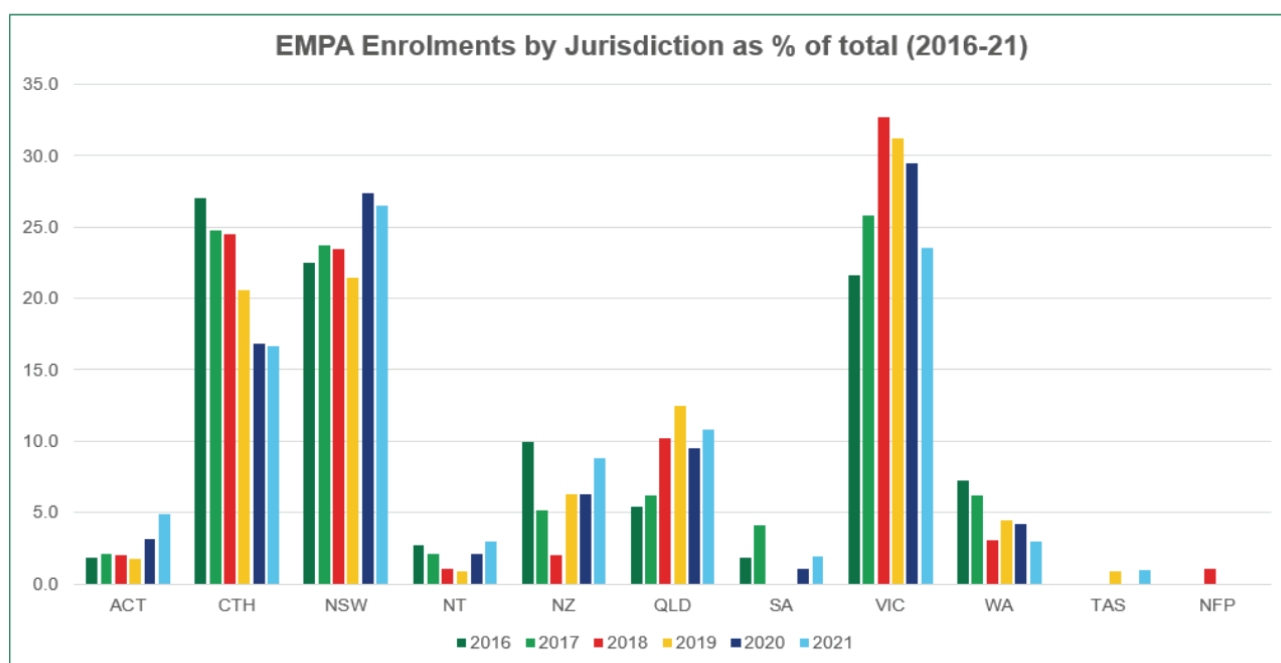


# APPENDIX A

## EMPA ENROLMENTS BY JURISDICTION

The Review Panel considered the distribution of enrolments in the EMPA across jurisdictions. A range of agencies from national, state and territory governments (and occasionally from local governments) sponsor staff to undertake the EMPA. The graph below illustrates recent EMPA enrolment trends across all jurisdictions.

In recent years, the cohort has, unsurprisingly, been dominated by agencies of larger jurisdictions including the Australian, New South Welsh, and Victorian public services. In the past five years these jurisdictions have each contributed between 20% and 33% of students, collectively representing between 65% and 80% of the total student cohort. In 2021, 27 EMPA students were from New South Wales, 24 were from Victoria and 17 from the Australian Public Service (Commonwealth or CTH below). However, student enrolments do not directly reflect the relative size of each jurisdiction.



ACT: Australian Capital Territory, CTH: Commonwealth, NSW: New South Wales, NT: Northern Territory, NZ: Aotearoa-New Zealand, QLD: Queensland, SA: South Australia, VIC: Victoria, WA: Western Australia, TAS: Tasmania, NFP: Not-for-Profit

For example, students from Aotearoa New Zealand have been consistently underrepresented in the EMPA cohort, although their numbers have been steadily increasing since a low point in 2018. Given the size of the New Zealand public sector (approximately 429,500 employees<sup>8</sup> in 2020) one would expect the New Zealand government to contribute more students than, for example, the Victorian government (which had 322,605 employees in 2020<sup>9</sup>).

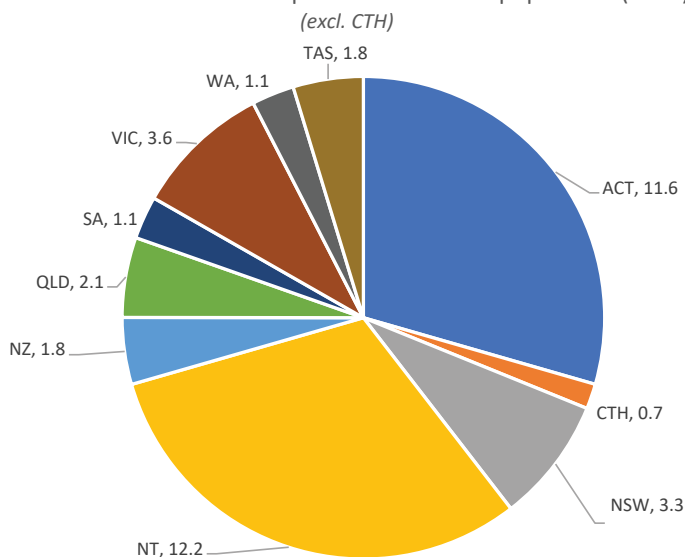
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/workforce-data/public-sector-composition/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://vpssc.vic.gov.au/data-and-research/data-facts-visuals-state-of-the-sector/employee-numbers/>

These are crude measures of public sector employment; however, they are sufficient to illustrate the discrepancy between the participation rates of public servants from Aotearoa New Zealand and those from Australian jurisdictions of a similar size. Similarly, some smaller jurisdictions tend to be underrepresented even on a per capita basis, suggesting there may be structural barriers to increased participation.

The graph below compares EMPA enrolments across jurisdictions in 2021 on a per capita basis. It indicates that some jurisdictions have less representation in EMPA enrolments in proportion to their populations. Western Australia and South Australia had the lowest number of enrolments per million head of population (1.1 each). Aotearoa New Zealand (1.8), Tasmania (1.8) and Queensland (2.1) have slightly higher representation in the EMPA, followed by New South Wales (3.3) and Victoria (3.6). The Australian Capital Territory (11.6) and the Northern Territory (12.2) have the highest number of enrolments per million head of population (although in absolute terms this means only 5 and 3 students respectively).

Number of EMPA students per million head of population (2021)

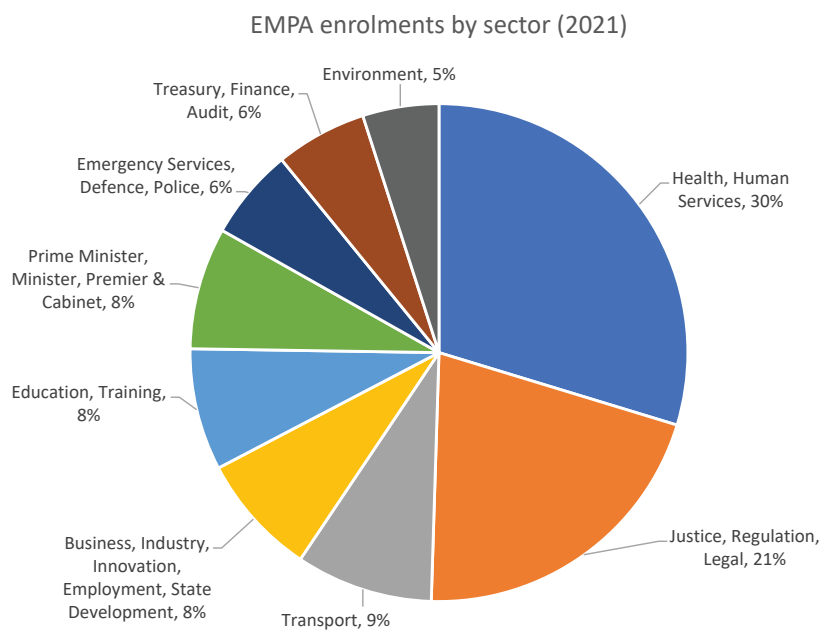


This analysis highlights both the relative size of the jurisdictions from which EMPA students are drawn, and the jurisdictions in which ANZSOG may consider exploring in more depth the factors driving the nomination and sponsoring of emerging public sector leaders. The proportions of EMPA enrolments across jurisdictions need not precisely mirror the relative size of those jurisdictions. Moreover, the comparison is somewhat limited given the small number of enrolments relative to population size (93 students from Australian jurisdictions in 2021, and a population of almost 25.7 million people). Nevertheless, this data is suggestive of the factors ANZSOG may consider in reviewing and seeking to reinforce sustainability of the program going forward.

# APPENDIX B

## EMPA ENROLMENTS BY SECTOR

Reviewing EMPA enrolments by sector may be useful in considering sustainability of the program. The graph below shows that about half (51%) of EMPA students in 2021 worked in the health and human/social services sectors, or the justice, regulation and legal sectors. This is unsurprising given the large size of the workforces in these sectors across jurisdictions. One third (33%) of students came from either transport; business, industry, innovation, employment and state development; education and training; or Prime Minister's/Premier's departments. Smaller numbers came from each of emergency services, defence and police; treasury, finance and audit; and the environment sector.





## Find out more

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