

Audit report of the 2023–24
annual performance statements

Department of Foreign Affairs and
Trade



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT on the 2023–24 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

To the Minister for Finance

Conclusion

In my opinion the 2023–24 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT):

- present fairly DFAT's performance in achieving its purpose for the year ended 30 June 2024; and
- are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act).

Audit criteria

In order to assess whether DFAT's annual performance statements complied with Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the PGPA Act, I applied the following criteria:

- whether DFAT's key activities, performance measures and specified targets are appropriate to measure and assess the entity's performance in achieving its purposes;
- whether the performance statements are prepared based upon appropriate records that properly record and explain the entity's performance; and
- whether the annual performance statements present fairly DFAT's performance in achieving the entity's purposes in the reporting period.

Accountable Authority's responsibilities

As the Accountable Authority of DFAT, the Secretary is responsible under the PGPA Act for:

- the preparation of annual performance statements that accurately present DFAT's performance in the reporting period and comply with the requirements of the PGPA Act and any requirements prescribed by the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (the Rule);
- keeping records about DFAT's performance as required by the PGPA Act; and
- establishing internal controls that the Accountable Authority determines are appropriate to enable the preparation of annual performance statements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statements

My responsibility is to conduct a reasonable assurance engagement to express an independent opinion on DFAT's annual performance statements.

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which include the relevant Standard on Assurance Engagements (ASAE) 3000 *Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information* issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

I plan and perform my procedures to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the annual performance statements of DFAT present fairly DFAT's performance in achieving its purposes and comply, in all material respects, with the PGPA Act and Rule.

The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures depend on my judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, in the annual performance statements. In making these risk assessments, I obtain an understanding of internal controls relevant to the preparation of the annual performance statements in order to design procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my conclusion.

Independence and quality control

I have complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements, and applied Auditing Standard ASQM 1 *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Reports and Other Financial Information, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements* in undertaking this assurance engagement.

Inherent limitations

Because of the inherent limitations of an assurance engagement, it is possible that fraud, error or non-compliance may occur and not be detected. An assurance engagement is not designed to detect all instances of non-compliance of the annual performance statements with the PGPA Act and the Rule as it is not performed continuously throughout the period and the assurance procedures performed are undertaken on a test basis. The reasonable assurance conclusion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Australian National Audit Office



Carla Jago
Acting Deputy Auditor-General
Delegate of the Auditor-General
Canberra

13 September 2024

Annual performance statements

Statement of preparation

I, Jan Adams, as the accountable authority of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, present the department's 2023–24 annual performance statements, as required under paragraph 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

In my opinion, these annual performance statements accurately present the department's performance and comply with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

In accordance with section 16F of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014, these statements report on our performance in the year ended 30 June 2024, assessed against the purpose, key activities and performance measures published in our Corporate Plan 2023–24 and the relevant part of the Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Adams', with a stylized, cursive script.




Jan Adams AO PSM
Secretary

13 September 2024

Our purpose, outcomes and key activities

The purpose of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is to make Australia stronger, safer and more prosperous, to provide timely and responsive consular and passport services, and to ensure a secure Australian Government presence overseas. As set out in the DFAT Corporate Plan 2023–24, we achieve our purpose by delivering our 3 outcomes and 6 key activities (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: DFAT’s outcomes and key activities, 2023–24

<p>OUTCOME</p> 	<p>PORTFOLIO BUDGET STATEMENTS 2023–24</p> <p>The advancement of Australia’s international strategic, security and economic interests, including through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement on Australian Government foreign, trade and international development policy priorities</p>
<p>KEY ACTIVITY</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Negotiate and advocate internationally and provide international policy advice</p>
<p>KEY ACTIVITY</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Deliver international development and humanitarian assistance</p>
<p>KEY ACTIVITY</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Advocate within multilateral institutions</p>
<p>OUTCOME</p> 	<p>PORTFOLIO BUDGET STATEMENTS 2023–24</p> <p>The protection and welfare of Australians abroad and access to secure international travel documentation through timely and responsive travel advice and consular and passport services in Australia and overseas</p>
<p>KEY ACTIVITY</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Deliver consular services</p>
<p>KEY ACTIVITY</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Deliver passport services</p>
<p>OUTCOME</p> 	<p>PORTFOLIO BUDGET STATEMENTS 2023–24</p> <p>A secure Australian Government presence overseas through the provision of security services and information and communications technology infrastructure, and the management of the Commonwealth’s overseas property estate</p>
<p>KEY ACTIVITY</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Manage the Australian Government’s overseas network</p>

Snapshot of our performance

The department's annual performance statements report on the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. The statements provide a clear read of our performance over the financial year against the performance measures and targets outlined in the DFAT Corporate Plan 2023–24 and the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2023–24.² For this reporting period, we applied 3 ratings when assessing our performance:

- **Achieved:** We achieved the goals we set out to achieve.
- **Partially achieved:** We achieved less than the majority of the goals we set out to achieve.
- **Not achieved:** We did not achieve our goal.

In 2023–24, we assessed our performance against our purpose using 13 performance measures across our 3 outcomes and 6 key activities. The department achieved 8 of the 13 measures, partially achieved 4 measures and did not achieve one.

A summary of our performance results against the 13 measures and associated targets is shown in Table 2.1 on pages 18–20. A detailed assessment of our performance and analysis for individual measures and targets is on pages 23–74.

² We amended the wording from 'planned performance result' to 'target' in 2023–24.

Summary of performance results

Table 2.1 summarises our performance results in 2023–24 against the 13 performance measures for our 3 outcomes and 6 key activities.

Table 2.1: Summary of performance results, by outcome and key activity, 2023–24

Outcome 1	
The advancement of Australia’s international strategic, security and economic interests, including through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement on Australian Government foreign, trade and international development policy priorities	
Key activity 1: Negotiate and advocate internationally and provide international policy advice	
Measure 1: DFAT’s diplomatic efforts support favourable foreign affairs and trade policy outcomes for Australia	Partially achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target: Case studies demonstrate performance 	Partially achieved
Measure 2: DFAT’s ministers are satisfied with the advice and support provided by the department	Not achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target: Maintain satisfaction levels above 85 per cent 	Not achieved
Measure 3: Increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability	Partially achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target: 8,000 Australian university undergraduates complete a New Colombo Plan program in the Indo-Pacific region in 2023–24¹ Target: Diversity measures for First Nations, disability and regional/remote students are equal to or greater than in the broader Australian university undergraduate cohort – First Nations: 2.1 per cent; disability: 11.4 per cent; and regional/remote: 18.0 per cent¹ 	Substantially achieved ² Not achieved
Measure 4: Australia’s standing in the region is enhanced through DFAT’s public diplomacy	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target: Effectiveness of DFAT’s public diplomacy through a case study into increasing Australia’s standing in the region through sport or foundations, councils and institutes 	Achieved
Measure 5: Australia’s treaty obligations are met under Australia’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target: All International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reporting obligations are met and IAEA inspections supported to demonstrate Australia’s compliance with its obligations 	Achieved

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued): Summary of performance results, by outcome and key activity, 2023–24

Key activity 2: Deliver international development and humanitarian assistance	
Measure 6: The development program is effective, efficient and responsive	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: At least 85 per cent of investments are assessed as satisfactory on both effectiveness and efficiency criteria in the investment monitoring reports process¹ 	Achieved
Key activity 3: Advocate within multilateral institutions	
Measure 7: Australia's payments to multilateral development organisations generate collective action on issues impacting Australia	Partially achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: Mandatory payments to multilateral development institutions are paid on time 	Partially achieved
Measure 8: International organisations reflect Australian interests and values when addressing global challenges	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: Australia leads at least one activity per year involving a senior government representative in or related to a relevant multilateral forum for each of the 5 focus areas: UN reform, World Trade Organization reform, First Nations, peace and security, and human rights¹ 	Achieved
Outcome 2	
The protection and welfare of Australians abroad and access to secure international travel documentation through timely and responsive travel advice and consular and passport services in Australia and overseas	
Key activity 4: Deliver consular services	
Measure 9: Australians have access to consular information and services, including in times of crisis	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: 100 per cent of travel advisories reviewed biannually for posts in a volatile risk environment and where there are elevated Australian interests; 100 per cent of travel advisories reviewed annually for all other posts 	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: No more than 2 occurrences of unplanned Consular Emergency Centre telephony outages greater than 5 minutes per financial year 	Achieved

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued): Summary of performance results, by priority, 2023–24

Key activity 5: Deliver passport services	
Measure 10: Australian passports are processed efficiently	Partially achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: 95 per cent of routine passports processed within 10 business days • Target: 98 per cent of priority passports processed within 2 business days 	<p>Not achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>
Measure 11: Customers are satisfied with passport services	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: 85 per cent satisfaction rate overall from customer surveys 	Achieved
Outcome 3	
A secure Australian Government presence overseas through the provision of security services and information and communications technology infrastructure, and the management of the Commonwealth’s overseas property estate	
Key activity 6: Manage the Australian Government’s overseas network	
Measure 12: Australian Government staff, information and assets overseas are protected through appropriate risk-focused security measures	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: DFAT achieves the set security performance standards across a majority of its posts in the areas of compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents¹ 	Achieved
Measure 13: The overseas property estate is effectively maintained and fit for purpose	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: At least 80 per cent satisfaction rating with the performance of the outsourced property services provider and the Overseas Property Office • Target: Annual reinvestment in the DFAT portfolio of a minimum of 2 per cent of the building asset value • Target: At least 90 per cent of the owned property estate planned and preventative maintenance program is complete 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>

¹ Targets were revised during the reporting period. Refer to Table 2.2 on pages 21–22 for details of the revisions.

² For measure 3, ‘substantially achieved’ means we met at least 80 per cent (that is, at least 6,400 NCP program completions) of the target of 8,000 completions.

Revised performance targets

During 2023–24, we revised performance information published in the DFAT Corporate Plan 2023–24. The revisions relate to the published targets for performance measures 3, 6, 8 and 12. Details of the revisions are provided in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Summary of revisions to DFAT’s performance targets during 2023–24

Measure 3: Increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability	
Reason for change: We updated the targets to better reflect student participation rates and the intent and performance of the New Colombo Plan (NCP).	
Published targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Australian university undergraduates who complete an NCP program in the Indo-Pacific region • Diversity of Australian university undergraduates who complete an NCP program in the Indo-Pacific region
Revised targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,000 Australian university undergraduates complete an NCP program in the Indo-Pacific region in 2023–24 • Diversity measures for First Nations, disability and regional/remote students are equal to or greater than in the broader Australian university undergraduate cohort – First Nations: 2.1 per cent; disability: 11.4 per cent; and regional/remote: 18.0 per cent
Measure 6: The development program is effective, efficient and responsive	
Reason for change: The revised target better reflects the intent and performance of the development program. We continue to track the previous targets through the Tier 3 indicators in Australia’s International Development Performance and Delivery Framework, and report the results annually in the Performance of Australian Development Cooperation report.	
Published targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 85 per cent of investments are assessed as satisfactory on both effectiveness and efficiency criteria in the investment monitoring reporting process • At least 80 per cent of investments are effective in addressing gender equality • At least 70 per cent of completed investments are assessed as satisfactory on both effectiveness and efficiency criteria in the final investment monitoring reporting process
Revised target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 85 per cent of investments are assessed as satisfactory on both effectiveness and efficiency criteria in the investment monitoring reports process

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued): Summary of revisions to DFAT’s performance targets during 2023–24

Measure 8: International organisations reflect Australian interests and values when addressing global challenges

Reason for change: We refined the target wording to improve clarity of intent.

Published target • At least one Australian-led activity per year involving a senior government representative in or related to a relevant multilateral forum on UN reform, World Trade Organization reform, First Nations, peace and security, and human rights

Revised target • Australia leads at least one activity per year involving a senior government representative in or related to a relevant multilateral forum for each of the 5 focus areas: UN reform, World Trade Organization reform, First Nations, peace and security, and human rights

Measure 12: Australian Government staff, information and assets overseas are protected through appropriate risk-focused security measures

Reason for change: The revised target aims to provide a more effective metric for consistently assessing the security performance across DFAT’s diverse overseas network. This forms part of a new capability established within the department that enables an effective and direct metric for informing the allocation of resources and funding to security at Australian posts. The revised target and methodology better reflect the overall intent of the program of work.

Published target • DFAT meets or exceeds the Australian Government protective security standards across governance, personnel, physical and information security

Revised target • DFAT achieves the set security performance standards across a majority of its posts in the areas of compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents



Australian Government ministers, including Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio minister the Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for International Development and the Pacific (back centre), with Australia Awards Women’s Leadership Initiative participants from 7 Pacific countries, at Parliament House, Canberra, in February 2024. Credit: Emily Hanna/DFAT.

Performance results for Outcome 1

Outcome 1: The advancement of Australia’s international strategic, security and economic interests, including through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement on Australian Government foreign, trade and international development policy priorities

Key activity 1: Negotiate and advocate internationally and provide international policy advice

Measure 1: DFAT’s diplomatic efforts support favourable foreign affairs and trade policy outcomes for Australia

Overall performance	Partially achieved
Target and result	Case studies demonstrate performance Partially achieved
Methodology	To evidence achievement of favourable outcomes in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia’s relationship with China • expanding the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme • implementing Australia’s Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with India • providing support to Ukraine • climate change and energy transition • Australia’s Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040
Data sources	A range of internal and external sources, including trade data, cables, meeting minutes and internal records
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 33 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 20
Measure type	Qualitative, effectiveness
Result explained	While case studies demonstrate that diplomatic efforts have supported favourable foreign affairs and trade policy outcomes, not all targets have been achieved. We therefore rate this measure as ‘partially achieved’.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **‘partially achieved’**. We achieved the intended favourable outcomes that we set out to achieve in 3 of the 6 case studies.

The 6 case studies were chosen prior to the publication of the Corporate Plan 2023–24 to demonstrate performance against this measure, representing a cross-section of departmental priorities.

Foreign policy and trade outcomes are inherently hard to predict and are influenced by a range of factors outside of the department’s control. Yet the work of the department is critical to protecting Australia’s international interests to support our national security and prosperity.

Delivering favourable outcomes in foreign and trade policy requires the careful balancing of long-term strategy with short-term tactical delivery, making judgements about what entry points to pursue in a dynamic and at times unpredictable context, and then making the most of these entry points with influential, impactful work. This work is multifaceted, summarised under the term ‘diplomatic efforts’.

‘Diplomatic efforts’ are defined broadly and include:

- geopolitical and economic analysis
- relationship management and representation with foreign governments and stakeholders
- management of events, meetings and dignitary visits that enable representation of Australian interests
- whole-of-government coordination and domestic stakeholder engagement to ensure Australia’s interests are represented consistently and holistically across government
- engagement in international and multilateral forums such as the United Nations, the International Court of Justice and the World Trade Organization
- protocol services for foreign dignitaries
- reputational risk management
- soft power activities such as public diplomacy and media engagement
- financial management of programs and partnerships
- core business of the public service – such as ministerial briefing and ministerial correspondence.

A core part of DFAT’s work is responding to international crises that impact Australians or Australia’s interests. In any given year, staff from across the department are drawn from their day-to-day work to provide surge support on crisis response. This work includes policy, logistical, coordination, humanitarian and consular work – requiring contributions in skills from across the department, including in policy specialist areas. While there is planning each year for anticipated consular and humanitarian response resource requirements, the scale of requirements is impossible to predict with certainty.

Our Hamas–Israel crisis response directly utilised the skills of more than 558 officers across Canberra and our overseas missions who surged into crisis-related roles.³ This included the deployment of 64 officers to overseas locations, 211 officers assisting a whole-of-government response out of the DFAT crisis centre and 24 officers deployed to the internal Israel–Gaza Taskforce. Officers supported the operations that facilitated the departure of Australians from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories; managed 3,288 crisis registrations; issued 34 updates to the Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories Smartraveller travel advice; held 35 interdepartmental emergency taskforce meetings chaired by DFAT; produced 21 statements on Australia’s position on the crisis to UN agencies or the Human Rights Council; processed over 30,000 pieces of ministerial correspondence; answered 687 media inquiries; handled over 7,700 calls from the Australian public; and released 33 sets of whole-of-government talking points. These figures are for the period from 7 October 2023 to 30 June 2024; the department has continued to manage many aspects of Australia’s response into 2024–25.

As a consequence, resourcing across all areas of the department was impacted, including in the 6 areas chosen in advance as case studies for performance measure 1. In some cases, foreign policy and trade policy outcomes needed to be reorientated as a result. All case studies should be read with this context in mind.



The Hon Tim Watts MP, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, accompanied by Azza Basha, from the Australian Embassy, Doha, in Souq Waqif, Doha, in December 2023 as part of a trip to the Middle East supporting the Australian Government’s sustained diplomatic engagement in the region. Credit: DFAT.

³ This figure does not include the numbers of staff who worked indirectly on the Hamas–Israel crisis response as part of their direct work – for example, in parliamentary and multilateral engagement.



Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for Trade, talking to local media about Australia–Peru trade relations on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting in Arequipa, Peru, in May 2024. Credit: Jose Sotomayor.

Case studies

The following 6 case studies demonstrate our performance in supporting favourable foreign affairs and trade policy outcomes for Australia during 2023–24.

Case study 1: Resolve trade impediments with China

China is Australia’s largest two-way trading partner, accounting for 27 per cent of Australia’s goods and services trade with the world in 2023.⁴ The bilateral relationship had been deteriorating for several years by 2020, when China began imposing trade impediments targeting a wide range of Australian exports to China. The measures included the imposition of trade remedy measures (anti-dumping and countervailing duties) on Australian barley and bottled wine, as well as informal and technical measures on live rock lobster, red meat and oaten hay. These measures had an immediate and significant effect on Australian producers.

The combined duties of 80.5 per cent on imports of Australian barley, and the suspension of 2 exporters, effectively stopped exports of Australian barley to China in late 2020. Exports of bottled wine to China fell 99 per cent in 2022 compared with 2019, from \$1.12 billion to \$16 million,⁵ after China imposed tariffs ranging from 116.2 per cent to 218.4 per cent, varying according to exporter. In response to these measures, the Australian Government initiated disputes at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2020 (barley) and 2021 (bottled wine). The resolution of these types of disputes is complex and multi-year.

⁴ DFAT, *Australia’s trade in goods and services 2023*, DFAT website, May 2024.

⁵ DFAT, *Trade statistical pivot tables*, DFAT website, accessed 28 August 2024.

Intended favourable outcome

During 2023–24, DFAT aimed to achieve the favourable outcome of **resolving the trade impediments on Australian barley, bottled wine, lobster, red meat and oaten hay through diplomatic efforts**, including continued dispute resolution through the World Trade Organization.

Result

We consider the favourable outcome to be **partially achieved**. The positive impact on Australian trade has been marked. All trade impediments on barley and wine were lifted in 2023–24, without compromising any of Australia’s core interests or values. Australia exported \$2 billion of barley to China in the 9 months following the lifting of trade impediments in early August 2023. Following the lifting of duties on Australian bottled wine in March 2024, Australia exported \$376 million of wine to China in the period April to June 2024. Beyond barley and wine, in 2023–24, a number of oaten hay export establishments were re-registered and suspensions on some red meat establishments were lifted.

DFAT worked closely with partner agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), on the more technical aspects of the trade impediments, including sanitary and phytosanitary issues. Technical discussions between DAFF and China’s Customs Agency on these issues recommenced during 2023–24, though there are no predetermined timeframes for resolution. Technical discussions to resolve sanitary and phytosanitary issues take time and require engagement from both sides. It is encouraging that China has resumed engagement on these issues.

Analysis

The department, through its diplomatic efforts, directed Australia’s broader strategy to resolve the trade impediments, and also led directly on policy advocacy coordination and engagement in the WTO.

The department drew on every available opportunity to press for the resolution of the WTO disputes, at senior official and ministerial level, in Australia and China, and in the margins of international events. This included briefings to the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Trade and Tourism Minister and other Australian ministers so they could raise trade impediments in all engagements with their Chinese counterparts. DAFF was responsible for leading discussions on the technical aspects of market access and export conditions. Work also included coordinating a consistent communications approach across the Australian Government, negotiating directly with Chinese authorities, raising concerns in WTO committees, litigating WTO dispute settlement proceedings, and liaising closely with domestic industry stakeholders to explain the government’s approach and build support for it.

Case study 2: Climate change and energy transition

DFAT’s role is to provide advice to government on international climate issues to advance our foreign policy, economic and development interests internationally. These interests are diverse, requiring the department to undertake a range of climate-related policy and program work. This work includes strengthening trade and investment across green economy sectors, integrating climate considerations into Australia’s international development program, and working with regional and multilateral organisations to shape international policy settings and agreements. This case study was selected as DFAT leads on climate financing as a core part of the climate change and energy transition agenda across government. The case study focuses on DFAT meeting government objectives to increase access to climate financing in the Pacific, while supporting Pacific priorities on climate management. The department is implementing this in line with government-endorsed policies and directions as outlined in *Australia’s International Development Policy*⁶ and the *Development Finance Review*.⁷

Intended favourable outcome

During 2023–24, DFAT aimed to achieve the favourable outcome of **increasing access to climate financing in the Pacific in ways that respond to Pacific priorities**. This outcome was selected because the relevant policy area is led by DFAT.

Result

We consider the favourable outcome to be **achieved**. The department’s efforts across numerous regional and multilateral forums led to an increase in climate financing to the Pacific, and these efforts were combined with the provision of technical advisers to support ministries to access the finance. Total climate financing data will be available in February 2025. Our success in shaping multilateral language and bank engagement to deliver favourable outcomes for Australia and the Pacific indicates that the department’s foundational work meant we were well positioned to be influential when opportunities arose.

⁶ DFAT, *Australia’s International Development Policy*, DFAT website, August 2023.

⁷ DFAT, *Development Finance Review*, DFAT website, August 2023.

Analysis

In 2023–24, DFAT’s diplomatic efforts in multilateral engagement, direct financing, and country support and development programming⁸ contributed to improvements in climate finance access for the Pacific.⁹

The department drew on longstanding relationships with multilateral banks to shape access requirements for the Pacific and improve the overall proportion of climate initiatives for the Pacific. For example, we worked with Pacific island countries to secure an additional \$533 million in grants from the Asian Development Bank, and an allocation of US\$436 million from the Asian Development Fund for adaptation and disaster risk reduction that will benefit Pacific small island developing states.

In December 2023, Australia pledged to contribute a foundational \$100 million to the Pacific Resilience Facility and DFAT has been actively supporting its design.¹⁰ DFAT has also rejoined the Green Climate Fund.¹¹ Facilitated by DFAT, Australia funded climate finance experts to work with governments in Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to help those countries access more climate financing from the major multilateral funds.

In 2023–24, a key climate finance focus was on recommendation 1 from Australia’s *Development Finance Review* to expand the use of development finance to respond to key development challenges in the Indo-Pacific. We have responded effectively to this recommendation. As set out in *Australia’s International Development Policy*, from 2024–25, at least half of all new country and regional investments valued at over \$3 million will have a climate change objective, with a goal of reaching 80 per cent in 2028–29.

⁸ DFAT, *Good practice note on integrating climate change into development assistance for implementing partners*, DFAT website, section 5, 2021.

⁹ Senator the Hon Penny Wong, the Hon Chris Bowen MP, the Hon Pat Conroy MP and Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister, *Supporting the Pacific family at COP28 to respond to climate change* [joint media release], 8 December 2023.

¹⁰ The Pacific Resilience Facility is overseen by the Pacific Islands Forum, making it a Pacific-owned solution to climate resilience, preparedness and adaptation. See Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat, *Pacific Resilience Facility*, PIF Secretariat website, accessed 28 August 2024.

¹¹ The Green Climate Fund has over US\$15 billion in climate financing projects globally. See homepage of Green Climate Fund website at www.greenclimate.fund, accessed 28 August 2024.

Case study 3: Implementing Australia’s Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with India

The Indian Ocean is a hotly contested geopolitical space. Its shipping and air routes are essential for security, trade and the movement of people, including for Australia’s national security and prosperity. The region faces many challenges – climate change impacts, illegal fishing, transnational crime, and pressure on the multilateral order. The gravest threat in the present period is the potential for sharpening strategic competition to devolve into conflict. Australia has a strong national interest in a peaceful, secure and prosperous Indian Ocean region, where the rules of law are respected, no country dominates and no country is dominated. We share this vision with many of our Indian Ocean neighbours, including the largest – India.

Yet our identity as an Indian Ocean country has not always been well articulated, impacting our ability to project influence in the region. Our engagement with Indian Ocean partners also required a lift to meet the growing strategic imperative. In February 2024, Australia and India, as major regional powers, co-hosted for the first time the Indian Ocean Conference in Perth.

Intended favourable outcomes

During 2023–24, DFAT aimed to achieve the favourable outcomes of **leveraging the Indian Ocean Conference platform to pursue Australia’s policy interests in the Indo-Pacific, including with India**, and **co-delivering a smoothly run conference with a balanced agenda**.

Result

We consider the favourable outcomes to be **achieved**. The co-hosting of the conference sent an important signal of the strength of the Australia–India relationship, and its ability to bring the region together to take forward our shared interests. The number of high-level attendees at the conference enabled comprehensive engagement with bilateral and regional partners across a range of issues. Over 400 delegates attended from 36 countries, including the president of Sri Lanka and 17 foreign ministers, in addition to ambassadors, senior officials and diplomats – an increase of more than 30 per cent on attendance at the previous Indian Ocean Conference.¹² The department supported 27 bilateral meetings for DFAT portfolio ministers, providing opportunities for the Australian Government to discuss and pursue Australia’s interests with numerous Indian Ocean countries.

¹² India Foundation, *6th Indian Ocean Conference 2023* (indianocean.indiafoundation.in/ioc-2023).

Analysis

DFAT staff undertook a diverse range of tasks, including working with the Perth USAsia Centre and the India Foundation, in the development of a conference program that would provide opportunities for senior attendees from around the region to share their perspectives on shared challenges.

As part of this policy work, DFAT staff based in the Indo-Pacific reported internally on issues to inform discussions with partners on key policy issues and program framing. This included an objective to showcase Australian values and interests, including First Nations connections to the Indian Ocean region. Anecdotal feedback from attendees indicated significant appreciation for First Nations elements of the conference program and a new understanding of the depth and length of Australia's First Nations connections to Indian Ocean 'sea country'. The conference also acted as a catalyst for a suite of announcements for low-cost, high-impact practical initiatives that will strengthen regional maritime security and climate change response efforts into the future, totalling \$4.2 million.

DFAT's assessment is that the conference was valued by partner governments, cast Australia in a new light as an active Indian Ocean partner, and signalled our commitment to strategic balance in the region. The assessment indicates that the support provided by the department – logistics, management and venue hire services, developing and supporting Australia's ministerial bilateral program, working closely with the India Foundation on event delivery and oversight, providing protocol and VIP services, and providing ministerial and senior official liaison services to all ministerial delegations – was of the standard expected by other governments. Australia's reputational risk was managed well, and our reputation was in fact enhanced by the smooth delivery of the conference.

Case study 4: Expanding the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme allows Australian businesses to employ workers from 9 Pacific countries and Timor-Leste to fill gaps in the Australian domestic labour market. The scheme contributes to the economic development of the Pacific and Timor-Leste, while helping the Australian economy, particularly in rural and regional areas. DFAT and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) work in partnership to deliver the scheme. DFAT leads on strategic policy development and implementation and our relationships with PALM scheme countries,¹³ and oversees the Pacific Labour Facility, which manages operational aspects of the scheme within DFAT’s remit. DEWR leads on Australian domestic operational issues.¹⁴

Intended favourable outcome

During 2023–24, DFAT aimed to achieve the favourable outcome of **enhancing development impact, while also addressing country-specific priorities for the PALM scheme through diplomatic engagement.**

Result

We consider the favourable outcome to be **partially achieved**. Research by the Australian National University and the World Bank shows that labour mobility via remittances ‘boosts household spending while workers are abroad’ and overall has a positive impact on workers, households and communities.¹⁵ While some Pacific stakeholders raise concerns about the impact of brain drain of labour mobility, DFAT has responded by embedding skills development in the PALM scheme and supporting partner governments to make sovereign choices about how they want the PALM scheme to operate for them. With additional funding from the 2023–24 Budget, over the next 4 years, 1,500 workers will obtain formal qualifications in important sectors for the region, including aged care. There is strong evidence (see analysis below) of broad satisfaction among partner countries for the PALM scheme. This demonstrates that DFAT’s efforts to address country-specific issues are working and correlates with feedback from governments of the Pacific countries and Timor-Leste indicating that DFAT is actively responding to stakeholder feedback.

¹³ The 10 participating countries are Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

¹⁴ Senator the Hon Penny Wong, the Hon Richard Marles MP, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP and the Hon Pat Conroy MP, *Delivering for a peaceful, prosperous and resilient Pacific* [joint media release], 9 May 2023.

¹⁵ D Doan, M Dornan and R Edwards, *The Gains and Pains of Working Away from Home: The case of Pacific temporary migrant workers in Australia and New Zealand*, World Bank and Australian National University, November 2023.

Analysis

In 2023–24, DFAT delivered the Aged Care Expansion program and a pilot on family accompaniment that helped respond to issues identified by PALM scheme countries.

Under the **Aged Care Expansion** program, DFAT has committed to training 500 PALM scheme workers by June 2024 in the Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing). PALM scheme approved employers, in partnership with registered training organisations, are delivering this training. This ensures PALM scheme workers receive Australian accredited qualifications, which they use on the job while working on the scheme, and can apply to related sectors, such as health care, when they return home. At 30 June 2024, 382 workers had completed their training. We are on track to meet our 500 workers target in October 2024.

The **family accompaniment** is enabling up to 200 long-term PALM scheme workers to reunite with their families in Australia. DFAT’s work included policy development and program design, country consultations, amendments to relevant Australian legislation, whole-of-government coordination, and establishment of governance, consultation and administration mechanisms. Additional support staff both in Australia and in-country were funded to manage the pilot. This has been accompanied by a high level of domestic stakeholder engagement in partnership with DEWR.

DFAT supported the rollout of additional in-country resources and the implementation of tools and databases to track worker recruitment, deployment, training and return to their home country. These measures have improved risk management across the scheme, enhanced worker welfare and delivered positive recruitment outcomes.

Policy dialogue and partnerships informed delivery of the scheme, underpinned by **sustained high-level engagement** with partners. For example, Fiji’s Minister for Employment said that ‘the PALM scheme has been instrumental in promoting bilateral ties under the Vuvale Partnership Agreement between Fiji and Australia’.¹⁶ During 2023–24, DFAT supported visits by ministers and senior representatives from Pacific countries and Timor-Leste that involved discussions on participation in the PALM scheme. DFAT worked closely with regional partners such as the Pacific Islands Forum, New Zealand, the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration to ensure labour mobility activities were coordinated and tailored to each country’s specific labour mobility ambitions. DFAT also supported the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus Implementation Unit to convene the 2023 Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting, which brought together stakeholders from across the Pacific to discuss regional labour mobility issues.

¹⁶ Fijian Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations, *Employment Minister strengthens bilateral relations with Australian counterpart under the PALM scheme* [media release], 29 October 2023.

Case study 5: Implementing *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*

Australia's trade and investment relations with Southeast Asia have not kept pace with the region's economic growth over the past 20 years. By 2040, Southeast Asia, as an economic bloc, is projected to be the fourth-largest economy in the world. In order to position Australia to maximise the benefit of our economic ties to the region, we must increase and diversify our economic activity. *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, prepared by Australia's Special Envoy for Southeast Asia, outlines opportunities for Australia to leverage the region's economic growth and provides recommendations to boost two-way trade and investment.¹⁷

Intended favourable outcomes

In 2023–24, DFAT aimed to achieve the favourable outcomes of **establishing a governance framework for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations in *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040***, and **implementing several key recommendations** prioritised by the Commonwealth's strategy implementation taskforce co-chaired by DFAT and the Treasury – specifically:

- supporting Export Finance Australia's establishment of the Southeast Asia Investment Financing Facility (SEAIFF)
- appointing 'business champions' to 10 countries covered in the strategy
- deploying investment deal teams to 9 posts
- commencing the design of a pilot internship program for young professionals.

Result

We consider the favourable outcomes to be **partially achieved**. The \$2 billion SEAIFF has been established, business champions for the 10 markets covered in the strategy were appointed, and all 9 DFAT investment deal team officers have been deployed across Southeast Asia. A governance framework supporting the implementation is also now in place. Progress on the young professionals internship program has been slower than initially planned.

¹⁷ N Moore, *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, DFAT website, September 2023.

Analysis

During 2023–24, DFAT played a lead role, with the Treasury, in driving implementation of Australia’s Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040, including leading government consideration and prioritisation of the strategy’s 75 recommendations. This work required close collaboration with Austrade and Export Finance Australia (EFA) as co-delivery partners. During 2023–24, DFAT worked collaboratively with the Treasury, the Department of Finance and EFA to establish the \$2 billion SEAIFF by supporting enabling legislative changes. DFAT also successfully facilitated the appointment of business champions for the 10 markets covered in the strategy to facilitate greater commercial links between Australia and Southeast Asia. This included contributing to the development of the business champions’ individual engagement plans.

Investment deal team hubs have been established in Jakarta, Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City, with spokes in 6 other cities across Southeast Asia, to facilitate Australian investment in the region. While there were some delays accrediting officers in-country and clarifying the roles of each agency, the investment deal teams are now operating effectively, combining DFAT, Austrade and EFA expertise. DFAT’s work also included logistical and preparatory work to support the expeditious deployment of investment deal team officers, including liaising with host countries. DFAT provided briefings and support to keep ministers updated on progress. Governance arrangements for implementing Australia’s Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040 include a ministerial working group, a Commonwealth implementation taskforce to review operational-level progress, an external advisory group, and interagency working groups for key sectors.

Progress on the young professionals internship program has been slower than planned. DFAT is seeking to procure a supplier that can build on initial consultation work to develop and implement an initial proof of concept by the end of June 2025. The proof of concept will inform the subsequent development of a pilot internship program for young professionals.

Case study 6: Providing support to Ukraine

In response to Russia’s illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Australian Government has committed more than \$1.3 billion in defence, economic and humanitarian assistance, including \$1.1 billion in military support and \$85 million in emergency humanitarian assistance.

Intended favourable outcome

In 2023–24, DFAT aimed to achieve the favourable outcome of maintaining momentum on activities in the face of increasing international ‘war fatigue’ – in particular, **supporting Ukraine to end the war on its own terms, and imposing costs on Russia.**

Result

We consider the favourable outcome to be **achieved**. This is evidenced by the support from Australia and its partners in key UN bodies, including the International Court of Justice, and coordinated by DFAT. Joint statements, community group engagements and speeches undertaken by the Australian Government and its representatives have been sustained and led by DFAT. The result is also evidenced by the increasing number of sanctions and travel bans imposed on Russians in response to the war, and the deliberate reduction of trade with Russia.

Analysis

In response to a rapidly evolving conflict, our diplomatic efforts consisted of a range of planned and unplanned activities over the year. These efforts were delivered in the face of increasing international war fatigue, which can be defined as the protracted, attritional nature of war; the shifts in domestic and international politics, which reduce the capability of senior officials and the public to focus on the war; and issues around the war economy.

Our diplomatic efforts included supporting ministerial advocacy, facilitating bilateral engagement with Ukraine, providing humanitarian support, supporting international action for Russia’s legal accountability, delivering supportive trade measures for Ukraine, and proactive coordination and strong communication with our whole-of-government partners (primarily the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Defence). The department also consistently and actively coordinated with our Five Eyes intelligence partners (Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States), the European Union, NATO and G7 partners to pursue collective action in support of Ukraine and against Russia.

The efforts to maintain support to Ukraine included DFAT managing a collaborative relationship with the Ukrainian embassy in Canberra, and facilitating high-level engagement between Ukrainian and Australian leaders. This included a visit to Ukraine by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, to reiterate Australia's support and strengthen ties with Ukraine's political leadership. DFAT supported the attendance of the Hon Bill Shorten MP at the inaugural Ukraine Peace Summit, providing comprehensive briefing and a national statement to highlight Australia's steadfast support for Ukraine. DFAT also hosted a senior Ukrainian delegation in Australia. Australia's new ambassador to Ukraine presented credentials to President Zelenskyy on 22 April 2024. Support for these events involved careful planning and coordination, logistical support (including security), policy work and relationship management.

The department coordinated engagement with other Australian Government departments to develop ministerial, bilateral and multilateral meeting briefs, respond to requests for support from both foreign governments and community groups, and participate in whole-of-government interdepartmental committee meetings focused on support for Ukraine. This included working with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Defence to announce a new \$100 million package in support of Ukraine's war effort, and a \$31 million package to help meet Ukraine's energy and humanitarian needs. Australia continued to provide duty-free access for all goods imported from Ukraine (a measure that commenced on 4 July 2022) to support Ukraine's economy and help provide it with trade diversification opportunities.

DFAT undertakes a range of activities designed to impose costs on Russia, including imposing targeted financial sanctions and travel bans on 1,049 individuals and 201 entities since February 2022 (78 entities and 65 individuals during 2023–24). Trade between Russia and Australia decreased dramatically in 2023–24 compared with 2021–22. DFAT led the development of ministerial statements (including joint statements), media releases, social media posts, speeches, ministerial correspondence and meeting briefs on Russia, in close coordination with agencies as required. We provided the Minister for Foreign Affairs and all other portfolio ministers with expert advice.

Australia, through DFAT, filed an intervention in Ukraine's case against Russia in the International Court of Justice alongside 31 other states, and delivered oral observations to the court in September 2023 reinforcing the importance and gravity of Ukraine's case to the wider international community. Australia, through DFAT, co-sponsored the UN Human Rights Council resolution establishing an independent commission of inquiry into violations and abuses of human rights, and violations of international humanitarian law in Ukraine, and subsequently co-sponsored the resolutions extending its mandate.

Measure 2: DFAT’s ministers are satisfied with the advice and support provided by the department

Overall performance	Not achieved
Target and result	Maintain satisfaction levels above 85 per cent Not achieved (64.5 per cent)
Methodology	<p>An annual survey of ministers’ chiefs of staff, deputy chiefs, senior advisers and other ministerial officials. Fourteen participants were identified from within the portfolio ministerial offices based on positions held. Final participant details were confirmed through departmental liaison officers to ensure that the identified respondents’ details were accurate and respondents could receive the survey. Respondents’ answers are anonymous. The survey does not address ministerial satisfaction with DFAT’s advice to other agencies. Results are based on a point-in-time assessment (potential variance based on when the survey is undertaken).</p> <p>The department’s target was 85 per cent or greater positive responses across 5 main questions, some of which were composed of sub-questions. Positive responses were defined as either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’. Other selections that the survey respondent could make were ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’ and, in some cases, ‘not applicable’.</p>
Data sources	Responses to the annual survey from ministers’ chiefs of staff, deputy chiefs, senior advisers and other ministerial officials. Fourteen officers were identified by the portfolio ministerial offices to undertake the survey. Eight respondents completed the survey (57 per cent).
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 33 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 20
Measure type	Quantitative, effectiveness
Result explained	In 2023–24, the survey resulted in 64.5 per cent positive responses, so the target of 85 per cent or greater positive responses and the overall performance measure were ‘not achieved’. The department did, however, receive positive responses above 85 per cent for some individual sub-questions.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **'not achieved'**.

Ministerial office satisfaction with the advice and support provided by the department was measured using an annual survey answered by the ministers' chiefs of staff, deputy chiefs, senior advisers and other ministerial officials. The department achieved satisfaction levels above 85 per cent in some areas of the survey.

While not achieving the 85 per cent satisfaction target overall, the survey identified several strengths and areas where the department was performing well. The survey found that DFAT engages professionally (100 per cent positive responses) and provides support in a timely manner for ministerial involvement in overseas visits (87.5 per cent positive responses), meetings (87.5 per cent positive responses), speeches (100 per cent positive responses) and parliamentary processes, such as question time (100 per cent positive responses).

Of the total number of individual responses to all survey sub-questions, 64.5 per cent of answers were positive (13.6 per cent strongly agree and 50.9 per cent agree), 22.5 per cent were neutral and 12.9 per cent were negative (10.7 per cent disagree and 2.2 per cent strongly disagree).

The survey identified several areas the department will focus on to enhance ministerial satisfaction in future years, including around specific products such as meeting briefs and ministerial correspondence. The 2 questions with the highest percentage of negative responses related to the value of regular reporting products that the department provides to ministerial offices for monitoring and tracking, such as reports capturing the volume and status of written products between the department and ministerial offices, and products related to potential travel engagements. The department will work with ministerial offices to further understand why these regular reporting products are not valued and how they can be improved to better meet the needs of the ministerial offices.

Measure 3: Increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability

Overall performance	Partially achieved
Targets and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8,000 Australian university undergraduates complete a New Colombo Plan program in the Indo-Pacific region in 2023–24 Substantially achieved¹⁸ (7,904 completions) Diversity measures for First Nations, disability and regional/remote students are equal to or greater than in the broader Australian university undergraduate cohort Not achieved First Nations: 2.7 per cent against a 2.1 per cent target (achieved) Disability: 8.9 per cent against an 11.4 per cent target (not achieved) Regional/remote: 31.5 per cent against an 18.0 per cent target (achieved)
Methodology	For the first target (8,000 program completions), all completion reports for scholars and mobility students were assessed. The second target on diversity was assessed by capturing diversity data submitted in successful scholarship applications. These assessments were undertaken by an independent service provider with expertise in monitoring and evaluation. The department works closely with the service provider on data extraction, processing, analysis and reporting. For the diversity target, data is compared with national source statistics published by the Australian Government Department of Education.
Data sources	Two IT platforms were used (mobility and scholarship) for assessing completion reports and diversity data, respectively. The data relies on students and universities entering details and self-reporting diversity data. The independent service provider provides overall data processing, analysis and reporting. There are some known data gaps in reported diversity data; however, it remains the only available source. A new IT system is currently under development, ONE Education, to better capture this data.
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 38 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 21 Note: The targets and methodology were revised during the reporting period – refer to Table 2.2 on pages 21–22.
Measure type	Quantitative, output

(continued)

¹⁸ For measure 3, 'substantially achieved' means we met at least 80 per cent (that is, at least 6,400 NCP program completions) of the target of 8,000 completions.

Measure 3: Increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability

Results explained

- In 2023–24, the target of 8,000 Australian university undergraduates completing an NCP program was substantially achieved, with 7,904 undergraduates completing an NCP program, including 7,647 mobility project participants and 257 scholars.
- In 2023–24, 7 of the 257 scholars (2.7 per cent) were recorded as First Nations scholars, achieving the target of 2.1 per cent; 81 scholars (31.5 per cent) were recorded as coming from a regional/remote area, achieving the target of 18.0 per cent; and 23 scholars (8.9 per cent) were recorded as having disability, not achieving the target of 11.4 per cent. As only 2 of the 3 diversity targets were achieved, the overall target was ‘not achieved’.
- The overall performance is ‘partially achieved’, noting that one target was ‘substantially achieved’ and one was ‘not achieved’.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as ‘**partially achieved**’.

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) is an initiative of the Australian Government that aims to strengthen Australia’s regional standing by building a diverse cohort of Australian alumni with deeper Indo-Pacific knowledge, capability and connections. The NCP provides scholarships of up to 19 months and flexible mobility grants to support Australian undergraduates to undertake study, language training and internships, and engage in practicums and research internships in the region.

The NCP strengthens Australia’s relationships in the region through expanding people-to-people, university, business and institutional links. Numbers of student participants and the diversity of scholars are important factors in achieving an influential network of Australians with experience and strong networks across the Indo-Pacific region. Scholarships range from 3 to 19 months and student mobility grants range from 2 weeks to 2 semesters. During 2023–24, 41 Australian universities worked with over 1,150 Indo-Pacific organisations to implement the NCP program.

Overall, we consider the performance measure to be partially achieved. This is a result of substantially achieving the target of 8,000 Australian university undergraduates completing an NCP program in the Indo-Pacific region (99 per cent of the target was met, with 7,904 Australian university undergraduates comprising 7,647 mobility project participants and 257 scholars), and not achieving one of the 3 diversity targets (disability) for the proportion of students being equal to or greater than in the broader Australian university undergraduate cohort (see Table 2.3).

DFAT works closely with universities to manage program implementation risks, such as travel restrictions, to support student participation, and has incorporated flexibility in the types of offerings for student participation.

Table 2.3: New Colombo Plan scholar diversity targets and completions, 2023–24

Diversity group	2023–24 target (%)	2023–24 completions recorded (%)
First Nations students	2.1	2.7
Students from regional/remote areas	18.0	31.5
Students with disability	11.4	8.9

Note: The diversity targets are based on the number of completions. The scholarship program duration is from 3 to 19 months and ‘completion’ is defined as when scholars return to Australia and submit a completion report. Therefore, completions can occur any time between 3 to 19 months from their start date, which can occur from 1 January to 15 December each year.

The main factors that influenced the participation target results were as follows:

- The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant program deferrals and amendments for scholars who commenced their programs between 2019 and 2022. This caused a high level of unpredictability in estimating scholar completions based on previous cohorts. This instability levelled out from 2023 as programs reverted to pre-COVID-19 conditions.
- The program actively promoted diversity in nominations from 2023 to encourage scholar participation that was representative of the Australian undergraduate student population. This took time for universities to adjust their internal processes to provide appropriate nominations.
- For scholars who completed their scholarships in 2023–24, 75 per cent were awarded their scholarships from 2019 to 2022, when the proportion of nominees with disability was lower than that of the domestic undergraduate student population. There is no legal obligation or requirement for people with disability or for those from diverse backgrounds to disclose information about their disability or diversity factors during the nomination or application process. This can result in under-reporting.

During 2023–24, the department worked to mitigate low participation of students from diverse backgrounds by encouraging universities to nominate diverse students, lifting visibility of disability support funding available throughout the program, and delivering dedicated applications and interview preparation workshops for First Nations nominees.

The program introduced a number of management strategies in 2023–24 to encourage diversity in the nomination process, and it is expected to take several years to see the results.

Diversity data on mobility students was not included in the measure as students are not known at the project application stage and diversity data for mobility students is captured by university officers upon completion of the project (which can occur within a 24-month window). This creates some data gaps during this window. Diversity data for mobility students will be considered for future reporting once the department has a new IT system in place that captures diversity data entered by students. This system – the ONE Education platform – is currently under development.



New Colombo Plan scholar Lachlan Colgrave during his internship with Buntari Ceramics in Indonesia. Credit: Lachlan Colgrave.

Measure 4: Australia’s standing in the region is enhanced through DFAT’s public diplomacy

Overall performance	Achieved
Target and result	Effectiveness of DFAT’s public diplomacy through a case study into increasing Australia’s standing in the region through sport or foundations, councils and institutes Achieved
Methodology	A case study examining the PacificAus Sports program
Data sources	A range of internal and external sources, including trade datasets, cables, meeting minutes and internal records
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 39 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 22
Measure type	Qualitative, effectiveness
Result explained	In 2023–24, overall the objectives for the program were ‘achieved’. Results are detailed in the case study below.

Analysis

DFAT’s public diplomacy, including through the arts, sport and education, is a tool of influence that helps strengthen ties with other countries and raise Australia’s profile as an innovative, contemporary and creative nation. DFAT undertakes a range of activities intended to enhance Australia’s reputation and credibility. For the 2023–24 reporting period, we have assessed this performance measure through a case study on PacificAus Sports, a sports diplomacy program aiming to build Australia’s standing across the Pacific by using a shared passion for sport to engage with leaders and communities in the Pacific.

Case study: PacificAus Sports program

The PacificAus Sports program leverages the shared passion for sport between Australia and Pacific island nations to maximise the opportunities for and benefits of diplomatic engagement. PacificAus Sports is delivered across the Pacific through a portfolio of small-scale partnerships across sports, support to elite development pathways for Pacific sporting teams, and an increased presence of Australian sporting codes in the Pacific. High-profile sporting events that bring together government leaders and influential advisers, and that celebrate the cultures of nations, provide strong opportunities for diplomatic engagement and relationship building.

Intended favourable outcome

In 2023–24, DFAT aimed to achieve the favourable outcome of increasing Australia’s standing in the Pacific region through **leveraging sports events to provide opportunities for leaders from Pacific and Australian countries to come together**, and **expanding the reach of PacificAus Sports through social and mainstream media presence across the Pacific**.

Result

We consider the favourable outcome to be **achieved**. The program provided a consistent platform for high-level diplomatic engagement. Public statements by the prime ministers of Papua New Guinea and Fiji evidence the value that the program provides in the context of broader bilateral relationships. The reach of the program through social media was expanded, well exceeding planned targets.

Analysis

As a vehicle to promote public diplomacy, PacificAus Sports builds on the strength of Australian sport and its presence in the region, and fosters deep collaboration between government, sporting codes and the sports industry. During the reporting period, PacificAus Sports sought to maximise the reputational benefits arising from increased sports engagement with Pacific island nations. Noting the maturity of the program, the focus was to sustain and build on those activities that were delivering the most significant sporting diplomacy outcomes, and to build on lessons learned to enhance Australia’s standing in the region.

The program provided consistent platforms for diplomatic engagement, in particular through the rugby league and rugby union sporting codes, and included both planned and impromptu engagement on the margins of major events. The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, and the Minister for International Development and the Pacific, the Hon Pat Conroy MP, engaged with their counterparts in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Preparation for these engagements included whole-of-government liaison efforts and coordination, coordinating relevant sporting and counterpart government stakeholders, briefing for ministers and senior departmental staff, program preparation, and policy work. The sporting events also provided opportunities for Australian Government officials to discuss more regularly a range of bilateral and regional relationship matters with counterparts in other governments.

To amplify the reach of Australia’s sports diplomacy efforts, the department launched a Facebook page for PacificAus Sports, in addition to the regular accompanying media events. The intended audience target was 2,000 followers in the first 12 months (from page commencement in February 2024), which was well exceeded, reaching 5,000 in the first 6 months. This audience analysis was complemented by the continued monitoring of audience reach for existing Pacific sporting broadcasts delivered by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Programming broadcast across the region is developed with a uniquely Pacific flavour, including exploring the big sporting issues in the Pacific and highlighting achievements of elite Pacific athletes.

In 2023–24, the contribution of PacificAus Sports to Australia’s standing in the region was recognised publicly by both key government counterparts and external commentators. At an event to celebrate Australia’s continued support to Fijian rugby, Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka stated, ‘Your contribution to our sporting teams through the PacificAus Sports program, which I’m told is the most successful Australian-funded program in Fiji, will contribute to the development of our people in ways we cannot imagine right now’.¹⁹ *The Economist* and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute also published articles identifying PacificAus Sports as a key contributor to Australia’s relationships in the Pacific region.²⁰

To support elite development pathways during 2023–24, PacificAus Sports fostered the participation of Fiji’s Kaiviti Silktails team in the NSW Rugby League Jersey Flegg Cup, and further supported the PNG Hunters’ participation in the Queensland Rugby League Hostplus Cup. The program also provided support for Pacific elite athlete preparations and qualification for the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics, and further extended the reach of cricket, Australian Football League and netball into the region. Pacific netball teams improved their performance, with the Tonga Talas making their first appearance at the Netball World Cup in 2024.

¹⁹ Fijian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Drua teams secure new sponsorship deal for 2024 Super Rugby Pacific competition’, *Fijian Ministry of Foreign Affairs blog*, 16 October 2023.

²⁰ The Economist, ‘The Pacific Games: come for the rugby, stay for the geopolitics’, *The Economist*, 24 November 2023; and H Campbell, ‘Australian sports diplomacy is a sure winner in the Pacific’, *The Strategist*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 14 February 2024.



The Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for International Development and the Pacific, travelled to Papua New Guinea for the Prime Minister's XIII men's and women's rugby league matches in Port Moresby on 23 September 2023. This is the first time the competition has been played in Port Moresby since 2018. Credit: Sarah Hodges/DFAT.

Measure 5: Australia’s treaty obligations are met under Australia’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency

Overall performance	Achieved
Target and result	All International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reporting obligations are met and IAEA inspections supported to demonstrate Australia’s compliance with its obligations Achieved (IAEA drew the ‘broader conclusion’ for Australia)
Methodology	Compliance is independently verified by the IAEA. Complying with Australia’s obligations on a quarterly basis is a prerequisite for achieving the ‘broader conclusion’ the following year.
Data sources	The IAEA Safeguards Statement and its conclusion. The Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (ASNO) annual report includes the Safeguards Statement and lists IAEA inspections that occurred during the reporting period. The IAEA typically issues its annual Safeguards Statement in June for the prior calendar year, so the IAEA Safeguards Statement for 2023 only accounts for the first 6 months of the 2023–24 reporting period.
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 41 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 22
Measure type	Qualitative, effectiveness
Result explained	In 2023–24, the IAEA continued to draw the ‘broader conclusion’ for Australia that ‘all nuclear material remains in peaceful activities’. Therefore, the target and overall performance measure were ‘achieved’.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **‘achieved’**.

In July 1974, Australia ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) – a multilateral treaty with commitments verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That month, the Safeguards Office, now the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (ASNO), was established. ASNO, located within DFAT, is led by a statutory position of Director-General, appointed by Australia’s Governor-General. The Director-General tables a separate annual report in Parliament, pursuant to the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Act 1987*.

As a non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT, Australia made commitments to the IAEA to accept nuclear safeguards – a range of technical measures applied by the IAEA on nuclear facilities and materials – and to implement a national system of accounting for and controlling Australian nuclear material, associated items and facilities.

Each non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT is required to conclude its own safeguards agreement with the IAEA – called a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA). Australia’s CSA details its responsibilities and the IAEA’s requirements to verify that Australia is meeting its NPT obligations. Most countries, including Australia, have signed an Additional Protocol. The Additional Protocol gives the IAEA greater access to locations and information to provide higher confidence to the international community that Australia is abiding by its non-proliferation commitments.

Once the IAEA is satisfied that a country has met its obligations under the CSA and Additional Protocol, the IAEA draws a ‘broader conclusion’ which states that ‘all nuclear material remains in peaceful activities’.²¹ Of the 189 states with safeguards agreements in force with the IAEA, the IAEA drew the broader conclusion for only 74 states.

For 2023, the IAEA drew a ‘broader conclusion’ for Australia, the IAEA’s strongest-level safeguards conclusion. The IAEA has drawn this conclusion for Australia every year since 2000, a measure of Australia’s high non-proliferation credentials. As a result, the performance measure was achieved.

In 2023–24, ASNO submitted all reports, declarations and notifications to the IAEA on nuclear materials, facilities and activities, ensuring that Australia met its obligations under the CSA and Additional Protocol.

²¹ IAEA, *Safeguards Statement for 2023*, IAEA, paragraph 14.

During 2023–24, ASNO officers facilitated all requests for IAEA inspections. The IAEA inspectors made 5 separate visits to Australia, conducting 22 different inspection activities in 5 states and territories. This is approximately a 30 per cent increase on the long-term average of IAEA inspections prior to the AUKUS announcement.²²

Australia’s planned acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines is leading to an uplift in ASNO’s responsibilities, namely our domestic and international reporting and regulatory obligations.



An ASNO official and a nuclear permit holder conduct a nuclear security inspection in November 2023 as part of Australia’s obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Credit: Felicity Spurrett/DFAT.

²² The Hon Scott Morrison MP, the Hon Peter Dutton MP and Senator the Hon Marise Payne, *Australia to pursue nuclear-powered submarines through new trilateral enhanced security partnership* [joint media release], 16 September 2021.

Key activity 2: Deliver international development and humanitarian assistance**Measure 6: The development program is effective, efficient and responsive**

Overall performance	Achieved
Target and result	At least 85 per cent of investments are assessed as satisfactory on both effectiveness and efficiency criteria in the investment monitoring reports process Achieved (85 per cent)
Methodology	Internal analysis of annual ratings in investment monitoring reports (IMRs), which consist of 3 types: standard IMRs, humanitarian investment monitoring reports (HIMRs) and final investment monitoring reports (FIMRs). A standard IMR covers performance over a 12-month period and applies to ongoing investments that are not specific humanitarian responses. An HIMR covers the performance of humanitarian investments over a 12-month period. An FIMR is completed in the final year of implementation of an investment and covers performance over the life of the investment. Only one type of report is completed for each eligible investment in each annual process.
Data sources	IMRs, HIMRs and FIMRs
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 34 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 23 Note: The target and methodology were revised during the reporting period – refer to Table 2.2 on pages 21–22.
Measure type	Quantitative, effectiveness
Result explained	In 2023–24, IMRs were completed for 375 investments, with 85 per cent assessed as satisfactory against both effectiveness and efficiency criteria, meeting the 85 per cent target. As the department met the 85 per cent target, the overall performance measure was ‘achieved’.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **‘achieved’**.

The objective of Australia’s development program is to advance an Indo-Pacific region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous. The development program supports our national interests by working with our partners globally – and with a particular focus on the Indo-Pacific region – to address shared challenges. To be successful, the development program must be effective (delivering the outcomes intended), efficient (in the use of time and resources) and responsive to partners’ priorities and needs.

Implementation of Australia’s development program is guided by *Australia’s International Development Policy* (released in August 2023) and its associated International Development Performance and Delivery Framework. The framework establishes 3 tiers of indicators to assess the performance of the development program, comprising the Indo-Pacific development context (Tier 1), Australia’s contribution to development (Tier 2), and how we work (Tier 3). The performance measure maps to the highest-level indicator in Tier 3, which measures effectiveness and efficiency across DFAT’s portfolio of programs through an established process of investment monitoring reports (IMRs).

IMRs are structured self-assessments completed by DFAT staff annually for bilateral, regional, global and multilateral investments of \$3 million and above. A proportion (66 per cent in 2023–24) of all IMRs are subject to either internal or external review to strengthen the robustness of assessments. This includes all final investment monitoring reports (FIMRs) being assessed by a team of external, independent monitoring and evaluation specialists to validate results.

In 2023–24, the department met the target of at least 85 per cent of the overall number of investments assessed being rated as satisfactory (a score of at least 4 – ‘adequate’) on both effectiveness and efficiency criteria in annual IMRs. Reports were completed for 375 investments, and 85 per cent were assessed as satisfactory against both effectiveness and efficiency criteria. While this is a decline of one percentage point compared with 2022–23 (see Table 2.4), achieving the 85 per cent target reflects DFAT’s performance in delivering expected outputs and outcomes across the development program.

Of the 375 investments with IMRs, 27 were humanitarian responses and therefore a humanitarian investment monitoring report (HIMR) was completed. In 2023–24, 96 per cent of HIMRs were assessed as satisfactory against both effectiveness and efficiency criteria, an increase of 22 percentage points compared with 2022–23. Of the 375 investments with IMRs, 59 completed implementation during the reporting period and we therefore prepared final investment monitoring reports (FIMRs) for those completed investments. In 2023–24, 80 per cent of FIMRs were assessed as satisfactory against both effectiveness and efficiency criteria, an increase of 10 percentage points compared with 2022–23. During 2023–24, 14 investments (4 per cent of the 375 investments with IMRs) were identified as underperforming. Eight underperforming investments completed implementation during the reporting period (therefore, no remediation was undertaken in response to the IMR ratings), and remediation plans were developed for the 6 ongoing investments identified as underperforming.

Progress against other development program measures and targets, including against specific policy priorities defined in *Australia’s International Development Policy* and the International Development Performance and Delivery Framework, is reported through the annual Performance of Australian Development Cooperation report.

As Table 2.4 illustrates, investments over the past 3 years have shown high levels of effectiveness and efficiency – at an annual average of 85 per cent being assessed as satisfactory for effectiveness and efficiency.

Table 2.4: Proportion of development investments rated as satisfactory, 2021–22 to 2023–24

Year	Investments rated satisfactory for effectiveness and efficiency (%)
2021–22	85
2022–23	86
2023–24	85

Note: To be rated as satisfactory, an investment must achieve a score of at least 4 ('adequate') on both effectiveness and efficiency criteria in annual investment monitoring reports.

Key activity 3: Advocate within multilateral institutions

Measure 7: Australia's payments to multilateral development organisations generate collective action on issues impacting Australia

Overall performance	Partially achieved
Target and result	Mandatory payments to multilateral development institutions are paid on time Partially achieved (8 out of 9 encashments)
Methodology	An internal review of mandatory payments made to multilateral development institutions
Data sources	Instruments of commitments
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 36 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 25
Measure type	Quantitative, output
Result explained	In 2023–24, 8 out of 9 encashments were made by the agreed encashment date. As one encashment was paid late, but within a week of the agreed date, the target and the overall performance measure were 'partially achieved'.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as '**partially achieved**'.

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) provide finance and technical assistance to support low-income countries to meet their development goals. Australia works closely with other donors and MDB managers to negotiate funding commitments in 3- or 4-year replenishment cycles, and through this process advocates for policy and resource settings that best respond to the priorities of countries in our region. Through our contributions, the department leverages the scale of MDB expertise and financial reach to support collective action, meet shared development goals and respond to crises. Providing a significant share of development support in the Indo-Pacific, the MDBs contribute to a stronger, prosperous and more resilient region.

Donors that make larger commitments during replenishment negotiations hold a larger burden share in mechanisms such as the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the Asian Development Bank's Asian Development Fund. While our membership of these institutions enables a seat at the table, our contributions give credibility to our policy and resourcing positions. Australia's financial contributions are complemented by productive relationships with other members that underpin the ability of donors to achieve collective agreement on the scale and strategic direction of these MDB mechanisms.

As an example, Australia's priorities for the most recent replenishment of the Asian Development Fund (known as 'ADF 14', spanning the calendar years 2025–2028) included robust, predictable funding allocations for vulnerable Pacific island countries to meet their development challenges; a greater focus on delivering high-quality infrastructure that is climate resilient and brings local economic benefits; and significant dedicated resourcing for action on gender equality and climate. Australia worked closely with other donors such as Japan, and Pacific island countries such as Cook Islands and Kiribati, to see these priorities agreed in the final ADF 14 replenishment framework in May 2024 as an expression of our intent for collective action.

Payments that donors agree to make (encashments) enable the MDBs to operationalise the intent for action agreed through replenishments. Donor contributions do not have to be paid up-front but are paid over the encashment cycle, which is negotiated as part of the replenishment process. The schedules are formalised through financially binding instruments of commitment (signed by Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs) and promissory notes (signed by Australia's Treasurer). Ensuring payments are made on time, including during times of known domestic budgetary constraints, demonstrates Australia's financial and political commitment to the multilateral bank system. It also provides the financial certainty that allows MDBs to finance the multi-year projects necessary to promote sustainable development in line with the expectations of Australia and other donors.

In 2023–24, the department was responsible for 9 encashments totalling \$334,420,664 to MDBs. Four encashments were made to the Asian Development Fund; 4 to IDA; and one encashment to IDA's Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Of the 9 encashments, 8 were made on time, totalling \$300,280,664.

One encashment was made late, within one week of its due date. Owing to fluctuations in foreign exchange rates, MDRI liabilities are recalculated for all donors every 3 years. To ensure alignment with the amended encashment total, the department undertook an additional review of the payment request, which resulted in a delay in transferring funds. The encashment was made within 5 business days of the planned date and was not considered problematic by our partners. As a result, the overall performance measure was partially achieved.

The department has adjusted its timeline planning for 2024–25 to account for the 3-year cycle of the MDRI liabilities review.

Measure 8: International organisations reflect Australian interests and values when addressing global challenges

Overall performance	Achieved
Target and result	<p>Australia leads at least one activity per year involving a senior government representative²³ in or related to a relevant multilateral forum²⁴ for each of the 5 focus areas: UN reform, World Trade Organization reform, First Nations, peace and security, and human rights</p> <p>Achieved</p>
Methodology	<p>The department identified Australian-led activities involving a senior government representative in or related to a relevant multilateral forum for each of the 5 focus areas used to assess our performance against the target. The department then undertook a review of 6 of the identified activities, ensuring coverage of all 5 thematic focus areas, to assess our performance against the overall measure. This includes 2 activities under the UN reform focus area.</p>
Data sources	<p>A range of internal and external sources, including UN resolutions, amendments and voting records, cables, media releases and internal records</p>
PBS and corporate plan references	<p>Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 37</p> <p>Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 26</p> <p>Note: The target was revised during the reporting period – refer to Table 2.2 on pages 21–22.</p>
Measure type	<p>Qualitative, effectiveness (measure); quantitative, output (target)</p>
Result explained	<p>In 2023–24, the department reviewed 6 Australian-led activities involving a senior government representative in or related to a relevant multilateral forum covering the 5 focus areas. Of these 6 activities, 4 achieved their objectives, and 2 partially achieved their objectives. For the purpose of our review, for an activity to have achieved its objectives, the relevant outcome documents from an international organisation are aligned with Australian interests and values, including if this intended to maintain the status quo. As all activities resulted in an achieved or partially achieved result, our performance rating against the measure is ‘achieved’.</p> <p>To protect key diplomatic relationships, we are unable to publish details of all of the reviewed activities. An analysis of our performance against 5 of the 6 activities is provided below.</p>

²³ A senior government representative is a minister, assistant minister, head of mission/permanent representative, thematic ambassador, the DFAT Secretary or a senior executive.

²⁴ Relevant multilateral forums include the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies, the World Trade Organization, multilateral banks and treaty bodies.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **‘achieved’**.

The multilateral system – including the United Nations (UN) and its specialised agencies and the World Trade Organization (WTO) – provides a critical platform for Australia to advocate our values and national, regional and global interests. The department leads Australia’s overall engagement in the multilateral system, working closely with other Australian Government agencies that engage with the multilateral system. The department’s role is to ensure Australian Government engagement is coordinated to meet strategic objectives and maximise Australia’s influence. DFAT advocates for openness, transparency and upholding international law, and aims to uphold institutions, rules and norms that underpin Australia’s interests. Over 2023–24, the principles of the multilateral system – cooperation to address shared global challenges – have faced significant tests. During this period, there has been the largest number of conflicts globally since the end of the Second World War and backsliding on some Sustainable Development Goals. While activities led by the department provided a platform to advocate for the Australian Government’s interests and values in multilateral settings, the Australian Government’s strategic objective of a strong, cohesive multilateral system remains under strain.

In 2023–24, the department reviewed 6 Australian-led activities covering 5 focus areas that reflect priorities set by the Australian Government. Of these 6 activities, 4 achieved their objectives and 2 partially achieved their objectives. For the purposes of our review, for an activity to have achieved its objectives, the relevant outcome documents from an international organisation are aligned with Australian interests and values, including if this intended to maintain the status quo. Our assessment of our performance acknowledges and respects that there are limitations on individual countries’, including Australia’s, ability to influence international organisations’ strategy, tactics and outcomes. To protect key diplomatic relationships, we are unable to publish details of all of the activities reviewed by the department over the reporting period.²⁵

²⁵ The 5 activities published in this analysis are the UN General Assembly High-Level Week (UN reform focus area), the WTO Ministerial Conference (WTO reform focus area), the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (First Nations focus area), Judge Hilary Charlesworth’s candidacy for re-election to the International Court of Justice (peace and security focus area), and advocacy against the death penalty (human rights focus area).

Foreign Minister’s engagement at the UN General Assembly High-Level Week

The objectives of this activity were **achieved**. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Week is the UN’s premier forum and the largest annual meeting of world leaders. It allows Australia to take forward a wide range of interests, including in UN reform, peace and security, development and human rights, and ensuring that the UN system has focus on the Indo-Pacific. The participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, in the High-Level Week in September 2023 reflects Australia’s firm commitment to effective global cooperation. It supported DFAT’s intent to use the platform of the High-Level Week to articulate Australia’s longstanding support for the UN system, including the rules and norms that shape our international engagement and position Australia as a constructive player and bridge-builder. DFAT set the strategic overview of Australia’s interests and coordinated closely with our whole-of-government partners to support ministerial engagement. DFAT aimed to:

- show Australia is listening and responding to concerns about the multilateral system
- protect and promote the rules and norms that underpin global stability, while showing we are not sticking to the status quo
- build confidence in a multilateral system that delivers for all.

The department also designed the Foreign Minister’s program; drafted statements and interventions, including Australia’s national statement to UNGA;²⁶ negotiated outcomes documents, resolutions and communiqués; organised side events and speaking opportunities; managed public messaging and narratives, along with engagement with civil society; and supported ministerial engagement and bilateral meetings.

As a result, the Foreign Minister was able to leverage a wide range of opportunities – thematic side events, bilateral meetings, plenary sessions, and informal and impromptu interactions – to deliver targeted and consistent messages to a range of audiences, in line with our strategic objectives across all 5 focus areas. Results of the High-Level Week are long-term and incremental, with success best measured over the longer term. We did see some immediate results on voting patterns on issues we care about – for example, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. We continue to monitor and assess our influence across our key multilateral priorities.

²⁶ Senator the Hon Penny Wong, *National Statement to the United Nations General Assembly*, 23 September 2023.



Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs, delivers Australia's National Statement to the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 23 September 2023. Credit: Andrew Kelly.

WTO reform at the WTO Ministerial Conference

The objectives of this activity were **partially achieved**. The department provided briefings for Senator the Hon Don Farrell, the Minister for Trade and Tourism, and Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for Trade, to influence institutional reforms that aimed to maximise the value of WTO ministerial conferences, and to drive dispute settlement reform at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference held in February 2024.²⁷ The department's briefings aggregated information that facilitated the 2 ministers' presentations on Australia's interests and values at more than 13 bilateral meetings, 6 meetings with groups of different countries and 11 formal WTO meetings, enabling their advocacy that built support for reform outcomes. Australia's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO in Geneva was in attendance and drove this advocacy. Departmental officials also made representations to the WTO and to numerous countries in the lead-up to and at the conference, working with multiple partners to influence all WTO members' commitment to accelerate efforts to overhaul key aspects of the international trade system that are supported by the WTO, including dispute settlement systems.

DFAT's engagement enabled Australia to demonstrate leadership and influence in the WTO and showed that the WTO system remained impactful. DFAT-supported event outcomes included a waiver of some intellectual property rules to promote COVID-19 vaccines, development of new rules on fisheries subsidies, and an agreement from WTO members to start intensive discussions to reform the WTO to ensure its sustainability. While we did make progress on dispute settlement reform, through reaffirming our commitment

²⁷ Senator the Hon Don Farrell, *13th WTO Ministerial Conference, 26–29 February 2024, UAE* [speech], 27 February 2024.

and agreeing to accelerate discussions, there were no major breakthroughs, which has contributed to a result of ‘partially achieved’ for this activity.



Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism (centre right), Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for Trade (right), and Mr James Baxter, Australia’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO (centre left), with Director-General of the WTO, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (front), in Abu Dhabi during the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference from 26–29 February 2024. Credit: Michael Godfrey.

Re-election campaign for Judge Hilary Charlesworth to the International Court of Justice

The objective of this activity was **achieved**.²⁸ Judge Charlesworth was appointed to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 9 November 2023. The department drove communications campaigns that included a statement delivered by the Foreign Minister, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, and a range of sensitive bilateral negotiations undertaken by senior Australian officials, including our ambassadors to the Australian missions in New York and Geneva and heads of mission globally. The department also worked with senior officials within their countries of accreditation to highlight Judge Charlesworth’s strong credentials and maximise voting support. The department briefed senior officials in line with Australia’s campaign.

The International Court of Justice plays a critical role in upholding international law and the rules-based order. The reappointment of Judge Charlesworth is a symbolic affirmation of Australia’s commitment to the vision of the ICJ – to uphold international law and the rules-based order, and to work with influence and the highest integrity. It ensures this critical institution reflects Australia’s interests and values, including to have the highest qualified judges of integrity serving on the court.

²⁸ Senator the Hon Penny Wong and the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, *Hilary Charlesworth re-election to the International Court of Justice* [joint media release], 10 November 2023.

High-level engagement at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The objectives of this activity were **achieved**. These objectives are outlined in the Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda,²⁹ and are reflected in the establishment of the position of Ambassador for First Nations People.³⁰

In 2023–24, DFAT supported the then Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Linda Burney MP, and the Ambassador for First Nations People, Mr Justin Mohamed, to advocate Australia’s interests and values. Efforts included supporting their representation at the 23rd session of the UN’s premier forum on Indigenous issues in April 2024 – the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) at the United Nations in New York. Through enabling Ambassador Mohamed’s engagement with First Nations representatives at the event, DFAT was able to listen, learn and engage First Nations perspectives. Outcomes have contributed to informing a First Nations approach to foreign policy and mainstreaming of First Nations voices and perspectives across our development, trade and foreign policy portfolios and, in turn, in Australian Government agencies’ engagement with international organisations.

The 23rd session of the UNPFII was the first time an Australian minister had attended the forum, let alone a First Nations Australian minister. DFAT designed and implemented the program of engagement, which reflected Australia’s First Nations priorities, as outlined in the Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda and the Foreign Minister’s statements on the purpose of the new ambassadorial role.³¹ The program included the head of mission of Australia’s UN mission in New York hosting an event, delivering 5 national statements and contributing to 3 joint statements. DFAT, alongside the National Indigenous Australians Agency, sponsored the participation of 7 First Nations Australian youth delegates. The department drafted statements, organised side events, and supported the attendance of civil society delegates. The department’s efforts, through advocacy, were influential in the establishment of a landmark new Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge. This demonstrates the department’s commitment to embedding First Nations perspectives into foreign policy.

Advocacy against the death penalty

The objectives of this activity were **partially achieved**. In 2023–24, DFAT advocated for global abolition of the death penalty and demonstrated leadership on this issue in multilateral forums. DFAT, through our permanent mission in Geneva, delivered 5 national statements at the UN Human Rights Council’s 54th, 55th and 56th sessions over 2023–24, which reinforced our strong opposition to the death penalty and support for abolition.

²⁹ DFAT, *Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda*, DFAT, May 2021.

³⁰ DFAT, *Office for First Nations International Engagement / Ambassador for First Nations People*, DFAT website, accessed 28 August 2024.

³¹ Senator the Hon Penny Wong, the Hon Linda Burney MP and Senator Patrick Dodson, *Ambassador for First Nations People* [joint media release], 7 March 2023.

DFAT successfully advocated in partnership with other abolitionist states for a strong resolution on the question of the death penalty during the 54th Human Rights Council session,³² spanning over 5 weeks from September to October 2023. In these negotiations, Australia and other abolitionist states successfully defended against the introduction of a sovereignty amendment as well as 6 other hostile amendments (brought by Singapore and a number of other retentionist states). These amendments were intended to remove language expressing concern at the arbitrary nature of mandatory sentencing as well as language that categorised drug-related offences as not meeting the threshold of ‘the most serious crimes’. Despite successful advocacy campaigns from like-minded states and Australia on global abolition, overall global statistics on death penalty cases rose in 2023–24. As a result, we assess this activity as ‘partially achieved’.

Challenges measuring Australia’s influence in multilateral institutions

The multilateral system is complex, and outcomes are affected by a multitude of factors. While it is DFAT’s role to anticipate and respond to these factors in the national interest, measuring the effectiveness of DFAT’s engagement with the multilateral system in this context remains a challenge. The department’s approach for 2023–24 was intended to capture the effort, complexity and range of engagement that is required to influence international organisations. This measure will be updated in 2024–25 to address these challenges.

³² Australia did not have voting rights at the Human Rights Council as it was not a council member during the reporting period, but this did not negate our ability to engage in the negotiation process.

Performance results for Outcome 2

Outcome 2: The protection and welfare of Australians abroad and access to secure international travel documentation through timely and responsive travel advice and consular and passport services in Australia and overseas

Key activity 4: Deliver consular services

Measure 9: Australians have access to consular information and services, including in times of crisis

Overall performance	Achieved
Targets and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 per cent of travel advisories reviewed biannually for posts in a volatile risk environment and where there are elevated Australian interests; 100 per cent of travel advisories reviewed annually for all other posts Achieved (100 per cent reviewed biannually and 100 per cent reviewed annually) A maximum of 2 unplanned Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) telephony outages greater than 5 minutes per financial year Achieved (no unplanned CEC outages recorded)
Methodology	The department undertakes a count of travel advisory reviews and CEC telephony outages. For the performance measure to be assessed as 'achieved', both targets need to be 'achieved'.
Data sources	Travel advisory reviews and records of CEC telephony outages
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 45 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 27
Measure type	Quantitative, output
Results explained	<p>We achieved the target of 100 per cent of travel advisories reviewed biannually for posts in a volatile risk environment and where there are elevated Australian interests, and 100 per cent of travel advisories reviewed annually for all other posts.</p> <p>No unplanned outages to the CEC telephone line were recorded during 2023–24, so the target of a maximum of 2 unplanned CEC telephony outages greater than 5 minutes per financial year was achieved.</p> <p>As both targets were achieved, we rate the overall performance measure as 'achieved'.</p>

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **'achieved'**.

DFAT provides consular services overseas through our network of embassies, high commissions and consulates. Australians in need of emergency assistance can call the Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) 24 hours a day. Australians can also access travel advice and important information through the department's Smartraveller website. The performance measure reflects the value we place on the accuracy and timeliness of our travel advice, and on Australians having access to consular services regardless of their time zone and in times of crisis.

Reviews of travel advisories

DFAT travel advisories, published on the Smartraveller website, are a primary resource Australians use to obtain information for safe overseas travel. In 2023–24, 100 per cent of travel advisories were reviewed biannually for posts in a volatile risk environment and/or where there were high Australian interests. One hundred per cent of travel advisories were reviewed annually for all other posts.

Unplanned Consular Emergency Centre telephony outages

DFAT provides emergency consular assistance 24 hours a day through the CEC, which is located in Canberra. After standard hours, Australians overseas can call the Australian embassy, high commission or consulate in the country they are visiting and follow the phone prompts for connection to the CEC. An unplanned telephony outage means that all phone systems and call diversion systems are not operational at any point in time, resulting in a call to the CEC being unanswered by the department. In 2023–24, the CEC telephone line experienced no unplanned outages.



On 16 October 2023, Australian Government–assisted flights were undertaken from Tel Aviv, Israel. Australian embassy staff worked with the Australian Crisis Response Team, including Belinda Boyle (centre), to perform consular activities, coordinating with our counterparts from New Zealand to repatriate Australian nationals and people from neighbouring Pacific countries. Credit: Nathan Fulton/DFAT

Key activity 5: Deliver passport services**Measure 10: Australian passports are processed efficiently**

Overall performance	Partially achieved
Targets and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 per cent of routine passports processed within 10 business days Not achieved (77.2 per cent) 98 per cent of priority passports processed within 2 business days Achieved (99.9 per cent)
Methodology	The results for both targets are calculated by determining the total number of passports that were not processed within the stipulated timeframe and dividing that by the total number of passports processed. The resulting percentage represents the proportion that failed to meet the stipulated processing timeframe, which is subtracted from 100 per cent to provide the performance results for each target.
Data sources	IT platforms data on finalised passport applications
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 46 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 28
Measure type	Quantitative, output
Results explained	<p>In 2023–24, 77.2 per cent of routine passport applications were processed within 10 business days. Therefore, the target of 95 per cent was ‘not achieved’.</p> <p>In 2023–24, 99.9 per cent of priority passport applications were processed within 2 business days, exceeding the target of 98 per cent. Therefore, the target of 98 per cent was ‘achieved’.</p> <p>As one target was not achieved and one was achieved, the overall performance measure is ‘partially achieved’.</p>

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **‘partially achieved’**.

In 2023–24, the department recorded a result of 77.2 per cent of routine passport applications processed within 10 business days against a target of 95 per cent, and 99.9 per cent of priority passport applications processed within 2 business days against a target of 98 per cent.

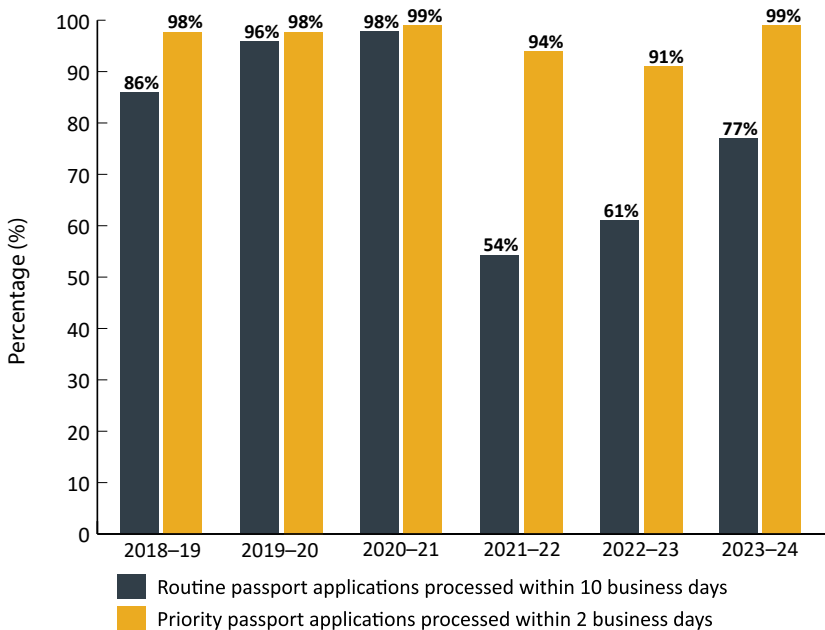
The result of 99.9 per cent of priority passport applications processed within 2 business days was an improvement of 8 percentage points compared to 2022–23 and an improvement of 6 percentage points on 2021–22 (see Figure 2.2). This performance outcome was achieved against a backdrop of a 25 per cent increase in priority applications compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2018–19.

One factor that contributed to this performance was enhanced priority passport application monitoring. Analysis of each failure to meet priority processing timeframes was also embedded across the processing teams to identify systemic issues.

The target for processing 95 per cent of routine passport applications within 10 business days was not achieved due to passport processing efficiencies only providing for a part-year impact on performance, and due to a 22 per cent higher demand compared with the pre-pandemic demand in 2018–19. Despite this, the following factors provided for an improvement of 16 percentage points in 2023–24 performance compared to 2022–23, and an improvement of 23 percentage points on 2021–22 (see Figure 2.2):

- Demand for passports returned to pre-pandemic patterns, with application lodgements linked to seasonality.
- The average number of passport applications processed per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee for 2022–23 was 384. This progressively increased to an average of 711 per FTE employee for the last quarter of 2023–24.
- Core passport processing capacity was increasingly met through an ongoing Australian Public Service (APS) workforce, which provided organisational stability. As of 30 June 2024, ongoing APS staff provide for 46 per cent of the total Australian Passport Office (APO) workforce.
- A commercial solution implemented in 2022 – designed to reduce processing work by automatically processing photos and signatures – experienced technical issues, requiring the diversion of staff to process those elements. The APO redesigned its business processes and uplifted staff training to reduce rework.

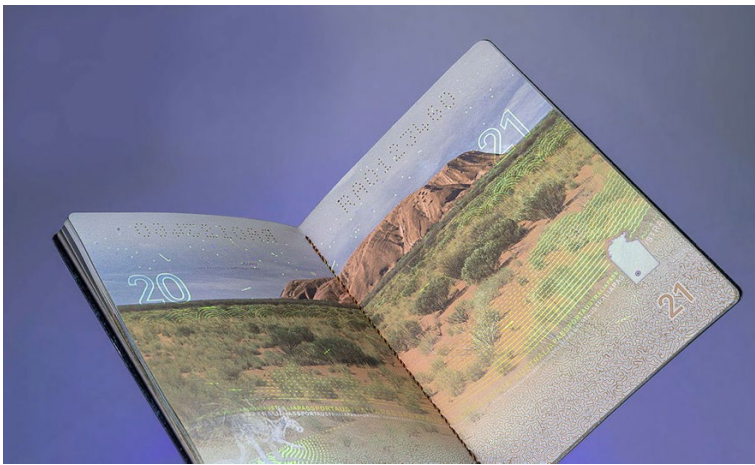
Figure 2.2: Proportion of passports processed within stipulated timeframes, 2018–19 to 2023–24



Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

The department will seek to embed these passport processing improvements throughout 2024–25. In addition, we will convert an additional 60 contractor positions to ongoing APS roles to provide for increased stability in the core passport workforce, cross-skill passport processing staff to provide for increased flexibility, and work with the software provider to deliver improvements to automatic photo and signature processing capabilities.

We will implement a new performance measure during 2024–25, capturing the period from lodgement to delivery, as recommended in Auditor-General Report No. 13 of 2023–24: *Efficiency of the Australian Passport Office*. This includes developing a target to monitor performance of the newly introduced fast-track (5-day processing) service.



Australia's latest passport – the R series. Credit: Note Printing Australia.

Measure 11: Customers are satisfied with passport services

Overall performance	Achieved
Target and result	85 per cent satisfaction rate overall from customer surveys Achieved (94 per cent)
Methodology	A customer satisfaction survey is conducted monthly by an independent provider with expertise in designing and conducting customer surveys. The Australian Passport Office works closely with the independent provider on survey design, reporting and secure data management. Customers are surveyed monthly and are selected in accordance with a proportionate sampling approach.
Data sources	Survey data held by the independent provider
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 46 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 29
Measure type	Quantitative, effectiveness
Result explained	In 2023–24, the department achieved a 94 per cent overall satisfaction rate in the passport customer surveys, exceeding the 85 per cent target. Therefore, the overall performance measure was ‘achieved’.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **‘achieved’**.

The department places a high value on customer feedback, including the level of satisfaction with its passport services. To measure our performance more rigorously, in 2023–24, we moved from quarterly to monthly surveys and expanded the survey audience to include child applications and applications lodged overseas. The satisfaction survey is managed on behalf of the department by an independent survey provider. The survey asks customers a range of questions to rate their overall satisfaction with their recent experience of applying for and receiving a passport. The question that is specifically relevant to this measure is, ‘Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your recent experience of applying for and receiving a passport?’

The department achieved the performance result for this measure, with 94 per cent of survey responses rating the department’s passport services as satisfactory or very satisfactory, based on aggregate results from surveys conducted over the reporting period. This is up from 85 per cent in 2022–23 (see Figure 2.3).

The lower satisfaction results for the 2 preceding reporting periods (2021–22 and 2022–23) are attributable to the passport processing delays customers experienced after COVID-19 international travel restrictions were removed in November 2021. Application lodgements for 2023–24 were, on average, 22 per cent higher than pre-pandemic levels (2018–19), resulting in longer wait times for customers.

Achieving a 94 per cent satisfaction rate, well above the 85 per cent target, highlights the department’s success in delivering passport services in line with customer expectations. The department remains committed to using survey findings and customer feedback to continually improve service quality.

Figure 2.3: Customer satisfaction with passport services, 2018–19 to 2023–24

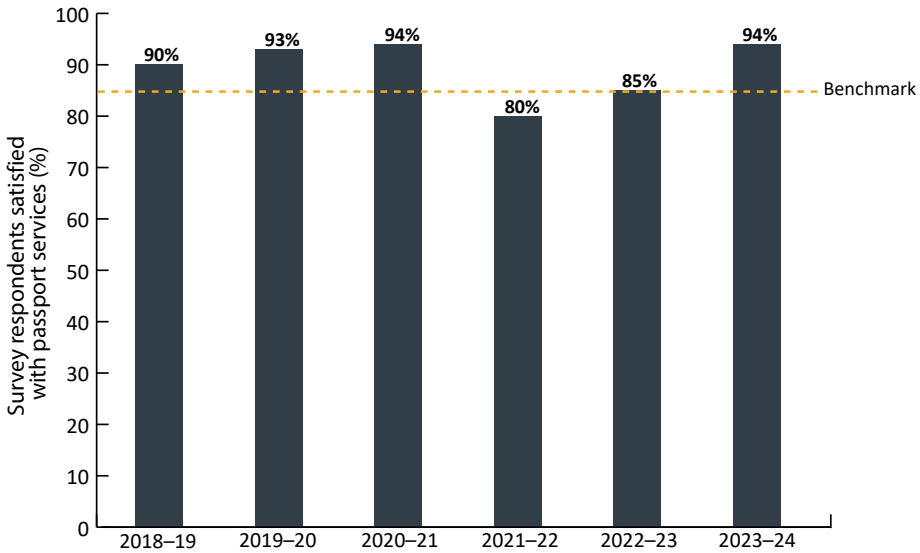
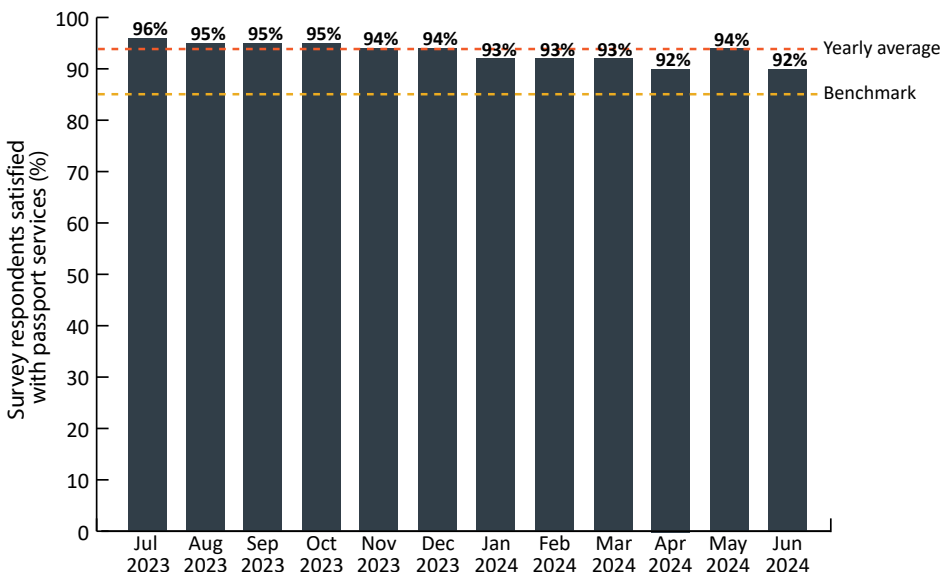


Figure 2.4 shows the monthly satisfaction results achieved across 2023–24. Notwithstanding a 4-percentage-point variation across the reporting period, the department exceeded the target customer satisfaction rating of 85 per cent each month.

Figure 2.4: Customer satisfaction with passport services, by month, 2023–24



Performance results for Outcome 3

Outcome 3: A secure Australian Government presence overseas through the provision of security services and information and communications technology infrastructure, and the management of the Commonwealth’s overseas property estate

Key activity 6: Manage the Australian Government’s overseas network

Measure 12: Australian Government staff, information and assets overseas are protected through appropriate risk-focused security measures

Overall performance	Achieved
Target and result	DFAT achieves the set security performance standards across a majority of its posts in the areas of compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents Achieved (the department met the set security performance standards across a majority of its posts in all areas of compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents)
Methodology	Ongoing assessments of compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents for each of DFAT’s overseas posts
Data sources	Data collected for each post on compliance with security, culture and responsiveness to incidents
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 48 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 30 Note: The targets and methodology were revised during the reporting period – refer to Table 2.2 on pages 21–22.
Measure type	Qualitative, effectiveness
Result explained	In 2023–24, DFAT achieved the set security performance standards across a majority of its posts in the areas of compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents. Therefore, both the target and the overall performance measure were ‘achieved’.

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **'achieved'**.

In 2023–24, a majority of posts achieved the standard of security performance in the areas of compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents.

DFAT monitors security performance at overseas posts through an ongoing assessment of data used to calculate an aggregate score from 3 component areas – compliance, culture and responsiveness to incidents.

During 2023–24, posts achieved increases in scores across all 3 component areas. The largest increase in performance scores across all posts was in the area of culture. This increase is likely in response to the implementation of new reporting mechanisms and targeted awareness and communication campaigns. Enhanced governance arrangements have resulted in improvements in the overall compliance score.

Measure 13: The overseas property estate is effectively maintained and fit for purpose

Overall performance	Achieved
Targets and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 80 per cent satisfaction rating with the performance of the outsourced property service provider and the Overseas Property Office Achieved (85.5 per cent) Annual reinvestment in the DFAT portfolio of a minimum of 2 per cent of the building asset value Achieved (2.5 per cent) At least 90 per cent of the owned property estate planned and preventative maintenance program is completed as per the agreed schedule Achieved (99 per cent)
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual client satisfaction survey of 115 overseas posts conducted by an independent provider with expertise in designing and conducting customer surveys An annual independent valuation program of real property assets An annual completion rate of the planned and preventative maintenance program
Data sources	Responses to the annual client satisfaction survey, independent property valuation reports, expenditure data, and records of maintenance work orders from an independent provider
PBS and corporate plan references	Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24, p 49 Corporate Plan 2023–24, p 31
Measure type	Quantitative, output
Results explained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023–24, the client satisfaction survey achieved a satisfaction rating of 85.5 per cent, exceeding the 80 per cent target, so the target was ‘achieved’. The department achieved a 2.5 per cent annual reinvestment in the owned property portfolio, exceeding the target of 2 per cent, so the target was ‘achieved’. The department achieved 99 per cent of the scheduled planned and preventative maintenance activities, and minor capital works were delivered as per the agreed schedule. This exceeded the target of 90 per cent, so the target was ‘achieved’. <p>Noting that all 3 targets were achieved, the overall performance measure is ‘achieved’.</p>

Analysis

We rate our performance against this measure as **‘achieved’**.

The department manages the Commonwealth’s overseas property portfolio for over 1,900 properties. We work with a contracted property services provider that delivers services for the overseas owned estate and for leased head-of-mission residences and chanceries. These services include planned and preventative maintenance, leasing, property upgrades and construction works.

Performance of the contracted property services provider and the Overseas Property Office

In May 2024, an independent provider conducted an annual satisfaction survey of all overseas posts on their satisfaction with the property services provided by the department and the contracted property services provider. The survey measured how well the department’s Overseas Property Office (OPO) and the contracted property services provider delivered property services for the overseas owned property portfolio and for leased head-of-mission residences and chanceries.

The survey results showed that OPO and the contracted service provider achieved high levels of client satisfaction in 2023–24, achieving an overall combined satisfaction rating of 85.5 per cent (87 per cent in 2022–23), which exceeds the target of 80 per cent. OPO and the service provider achieved improved satisfaction ratings against the 2022–23 survey results for competency and skills to meet the property needs of posts (+9 percentage points), reliability of property management services (+6 percentage points), resourcing capacity to meet posts’ property services requests (+6.5 percentage points), and clients being appropriately informed about property services available to them by OPO and the service provider (+8 percentage points).

The survey also identified some areas for improvement where posts were not satisfied with the property services provided, such as how quickly services are completed by the service provider (35 per cent not satisfied), OPO’s understanding of post maintenance requirements (33 per cent), OPO providing an appropriate level of priority to posts’ property requests (33 per cent), and the service provider keeping posts informed on progress of property maintenance (18 per cent). OPO will work with the contracted property services provider to address these areas for improvement.

Annual reinvestment in the DFAT property portfolio

The department achieved a 2.5 per cent annual reinvestment in the owned property portfolio, exceeding the 2023–24 annual property reinvestment target of 2 per cent. This continual reinvestment in the property portfolio ensures that the overseas property estate is effectively maintained and fit for purpose.

Planned and preventative maintenance program

During 2023–24, the contracted property services provider delivered 11,941 preventative works across the portfolio to improve the functionality, efficiency and lifespan of owned properties.

Overall, 99 per cent of the planned and preventative maintenance activities were delivered, exceeding the target of 90 per cent. The preventative maintenance program covers essential services, such as fire safety, electrical, plumbing, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

Overall performance

Achieving all 3 planned performance results demonstrates the department's commitment to ensuring the overseas property estate is effectively maintained and fit for purpose.