



Australia Awards

Alumni Growth: Tracking Australia Awards Alumni Over Five Years

Longitudinal Tracer
Survey 2021

Australia Awards
Global Tracer Facility

July 2022



The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of the Australian Government, its agencies, or representatives.

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and where otherwise noted, all material presented is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia license.

Acknowledgement:

The Australian Council for Educational Research is the managing contractor for the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility. Staff from the GTF thank our colleagues at Wallis Social Research for managing the survey and data collection elements of this research. The authors would like to thank DFAT's Global Education and Scholarships Section for supporting this research.

Most importantly, thank you to the alumni who gave their time in completing this survey, the second they have completed in this longitudinal series. Without your insight, feedback and accomplishments, the research we do would not be possible.

Recommended citation

Haddow, A., Edwards, D. & Clarke, L. (2022). *Alumni Growth: Tracking Australia Awards Alumni Over Five Years, Longitudinal Tracer Survey 2021*, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/australia-awards-global-tracer-facility-year-6-results>

Contents

Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction	8
2. Scope, approach and alumni participants	9
2.1 Scope	9
2.2 Approach	9
2.3 Alumni participants	10
3. Alumni career development	15
3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 Progression to positions of influence	15
3.3 Changing responsibilities	15
3.4 Ongoing relevance of qualification in the job market and alumni work	17
3.5 Future career progression and the Australia Awards	18
4. Alumni contributions to development – change in the past five years	21
4.1 Introduction	21
4.2 How contributions have changed over five years	21
4.3 Factors enabling alumni to contribute	23
4.4 Factors inhibiting contributions	26
5. Ongoing cooperation and partnerships with Australia	28
5.1 Introduction	28
5.2 Longevity of links with Australia	28
5.3 How connections with Australia have changed over five years	30
5.4 Professional networks with Australian organisations	32
5.5 Factors enabling alumni to build and maintain their networks	34
5.6 Factors inhibiting alumni in building and maintaining their networks	36
6. Views of Australia	38
6.1 Introduction	38
6.2 How alumni views have changed over five years	39
6.3 Promoting study and connections in Australia	40
6.4 Factors that influence alumni views of Australia	41
7. Conclusion	43
7.1 Recommendation: Engage with less recent alumni	44
8. Acronyms	46
Appendix A: Longitudinal Global Tracer Survey instrument	47
Appendix B: GTF Global Tracer Survey population further information	48
Appendix C: Survey response rates by region and gender	49

Executive Summary

This report details the findings of the 2021 Global Tracer Longitudinal Survey, which follows a sub-cohort of Australian development scholarship alumni who participated in the first Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (GTF) Global Tracer Survey in 2016. The survey was administered online in November and December 2021 to alumni from 15 countries who had studied in Australia as part of a scholarship, focussing on alumni who completed their award between 2007 and 2010. More than 400 alumni participated (a 46.1% response rate). The analyses in this report focus on the changes that have occurred over the past five years for these alumni as they consolidate their careers. They provide a new, extended insight into the long-term outcomes of Australian development scholarships.

The outline below summarises the change in career and outcomes of this sub-group of alumni from 2016 -six to nine years after completing their scholarship- to 2021, now 10 to 15 years post award.

Alumni career development

The Australia Awards are intended to help alumni return as 'change agents'. Results from this new survey show the impact of the awards continues to be evident more than a decade after alumni undertook their scholarships in Australia. In the progression of their careers, alumni note that Australian degrees continue to be relevant to their work and recognised by their employers, with most alumni (89.8%) continuing to hold positions of influence over the past five years. These results indicate that alumni are sustaining the career trajectories to which their Australian scholarship has contributed. Most alumni who held a formal leadership role in 2016 continued to do so in 2021 (73.5%).

In the five years since last being surveyed by the GTF, alumni responsibilities in the workplace and the complexity of their work have increased. Of these alumni, 90 per cent reporting increased complexity of tasks undertaken and overall level of responsibility in their roles. And 78 per cent stated they are now managing or supervising a larger number of people. This influential group of alumni who are now firmly into their mid to late careers also reported that their professional networks have grown since 2016 (95%).

Long-term program outcome 1: Alumni use their skills, knowledge, and networks to contribute to sustainable development

These alumni ‘change agents’ continue to use their skills and knowledge gained on award to improve or contribute to development in their organisation or society, indicating the effect of the Australia Awards is maintained over a prolonged period following their award.

The proportion of alumni reporting they are ‘very much’ using their Australian skills to improve the organisation(s) they work for increased from 2016 by 26.8 percentage points, with 85.2 per cent of alumni reporting this level of contribution in 2021. The proportion of alumni ‘very much’ using Australian skills nearly doubled for contributions to improving local communities (45.8% in 2016 to 81.1% in 2021), and development at the national (48.8% to 80.9%) and regional or global level (36.8% to 75.2%).

Of note, one of the factors that enabled alumni to contribute to development is the rising role of local Australia Awards alumni associations. In 2016, very few alumni reported support from their local Australian alumni association as an enabling factor. In 2021, this rose to nearly one in four alumni reporting support from these groups. This increase may reflect the maturing of these volunteer organisations that were beginning to form or in their early years at the time of the 2016 survey in terms of membership growth and activity offerings.

Long-term program outcome 2: Alumni contribute to cooperation between Australia and partner countries

Alumni have maintained and built the networks they developed as a result of their award, most notably with fellow Australian development scholarship holders. Most of the alumni surveyed had contact with three Awards-related groups in the past five years since 2016; these were: other Australian development scholarship students met on award (89.7%), other Australia Awards alumni met post award (82.7%), and their local alumni association (76.8%).

It was anticipated that alumni networks would fade over time between the 2016 and 2021 surveys. The findings of this report show that while alumni have a decreasing frequency of contact with their networks, they were most consistent in their contact frequency with other Australian development scholarship holders. Half of these alumni continue to have some contact with other alumni (53.8% in 2021). More than a decade post award, alumni-to-alumni links are the most common and active connection in alumni networks. Of note for Posts and Australia Awards regional and country programs, alumni reported similarly significant decreases in contact frequency from 2016 to 2021 with their local Australian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. In 2016, just over one in four alumni (29.9) reported they were ‘never’ in contact, which increased to over half of alumni (57.7%) in 2021.

In the five years between surveys (2016 to 2021), almost one third of the alumni reported they had developed a professional link with an Australian organisation. More than half of the alumni (61.5%) stated that partnership development was part of their job, which was a factor in why they were able to develop a professional link with an Australian organisation in the past five years. This finding reflects the positions of influence these alumni hold, indicating they are a valuable group to reach for those seeking to develop organisational engagement.

Intermediate outcome 3: Alumni view Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise positively

The alumni experiences, both during the award and in subsequent years, continue to positively influence their perceptions of Australia and their perceptions of how the Australia Awards continue to impact them professionally and personally. Since 2016, many alumni reported they became more positive in their views of Australia as a country (67.3%), Australian people (64.9%), and the skills, knowledge, and expertise of Australian people (70.4%).

Alumni are also actively sharing these positive perceptions and experiences of Australia. In the past five years, all alumni stated they had recommended Australia as a place to study to their colleagues, friends, and family, while most (82.6%) have provided advice about developing connections with Australians and Australian businesses.

Recommendation: Engage with less recent alumni

Based on the findings of this longitudinal study, the following is recommended for enhancing the long-term outcomes of less recent alumni.

Engage with less recent alumni	a Through workshops for networking and building partnerships with Australian organisations
	b By providing networking opportunities among alumni and Australian organisations
	c By conducting further research into understanding female alumni, examining career goals and the challenges female alumni experience in achieving their career objectives



Australia Awards

Global Tracer Facility



GTF Longitudinal Tracer Survey Report 2021

Tracing the ongoing effects of the Australia Awards on alumni

Participants

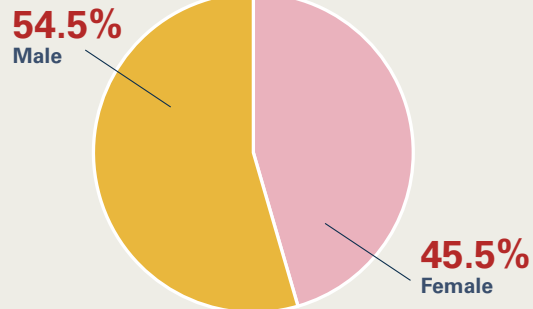
Alumni who completed scholarships between 2007 and 2010.

Total alumni respondents **422**



This group of alumni have responded to two GTF Tracer Surveys – one in 2016 and one in 2021 – the findings in this report explore change between these two surveys.

Gender



Key years



Key changes in long-term alumni outcomes over 5 years (2016 to 2021)

1. Alumni career progression – Increasing



Between GTF Surveys (over the past 5 years), alumni have continued to be influential change agents. Nearly all alumni reported their responsibilities and job profiles have increased:

- 89.8% of alumni continue to hold positions of influence, including informal and formal leadership roles
- More than 90% of alumni reported increased complexity of tasks undertaken and overall level of responsibility in their roles.

2. Contributions to development – Maintaining



There was no significant difference from 2016 to 2021 in the extent alumni use the skills and knowledge from their scholarship to contribute to development. In both these surveys, most alumni (over 85%) reported they use their skills and knowledge 'some' to 'very much', indicating the effect of the Australia Awards is being maintained over time:

- More than 75% of alumni were able to continue use 'some' to 'very much' their skills and knowledge from Award to improve their organisation and local communities and to development at a national level.
- More than 50% of alumni reported they use their Australian-gained skills and knowledge to contribute to development at a regional and global level.

3. Contributions to cooperation – Decreasing



Although alumni reported an intention to remain connected or develop new connections with Australia, over a five year period the surveys show decreasing frequency of contact with other alumni, connections in Australia, and their local Australian High Commission or Embassy:

- The strongest ongoing connection alumni have is with each other, 89.7% have ongoing contact with their peers
- Nearly half of the alumni (45.2%) do not have ongoing networks directly linked to Australia (e.g., individuals and organisations in Australia) a decade since their Award
- Around one third (32.1%) of alumni had developed a professional link with an Australian organisation in the last 5 years (i.e. between 2016 to 2021).

1. Introduction

This report details the findings of the second wave of a longitudinal survey conducted by the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (GTF). The survey, conducted in late 2021, explored the ongoing contributions of alumni who completed their Australian scholarship between 2007 and 2010. The cohort involved in this survey had responded to a GTF Global Survey in 2016, so five years later, this collection examined the changes, progress, and long-term outcomes of this group of alumni.

The GTF is a research program established by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The focus of the GTF is to collect and analyse information from alumni to assist the Global Education and Scholarships section of DFAT to better understand the long-term outcomes of Australian development scholarship alumni. This survey is the fifth Global Tracer Survey undertaken by the GTF, but the first to include a longitudinal element in the data collection.

Given that this survey has involved re-visiting alumni of the 2007 to 2010 graduation cohorts who participated in the GTF Global Survey five years ago, this research aims to understand:

- How alumni have progressed in the five years since they responded to the 2016 GTF survey in relation to:
 - career outcomes
 - contributions to development; and
 - connections with Australia.

The specific aims of this survey fit within the broader goals of the Australia Awards and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that underpin the program. The overarching aim of the Australia Awards is to ‘support partner countries to achieve their development goals through education and knowledge transfer and to build enduring relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests’.¹ The results of this survey are discussed in this report with reference to the long-term program outcomes of the Australia Awards:

Program Outcome 1: Alumni are using their skills, knowledge, and networks to contribute to sustainable development.

Program Outcome 2: Alumni contribute to cooperation between Australia and partner countries.

Alongside the program outcomes, there are three intermediate outcomes important in the context of this survey:

Intermediate Outcome 1: Alumni have the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to development.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Alumni have relevant and useful networks and relationships.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Alumni view Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise positively.

With a focus on exploring the progress of alumni over the past five years, this report is structured around addressing the two long-term program outcomes of the Australia Awards, with reference to the intermediate outcomes where relevant. The following chapter provides insight into this longitudinal survey, the approach to fieldwork and the alumni population included in the survey. The analysis chapters begin by exploring alumni career development in the five years since they were last surveyed, then explores responses and insight from alumni in relation to the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards. The report concludes with a summary of the findings.

1 DFAT, (2022), *Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

2. Scope, approach and alumni participants

2.1 Scope

The purpose of the GTF is to enable DFAT to assess the long-term development contributions and public diplomacy outcomes of Australia's investment in the Australia Awards. The GTF does this through the collection of data from alumni of the Australia Awards and predecessor scholarship programs, colleagues and employers of alumni and stakeholders such as partner governments. Case studies and surveys are the mechanisms used by the GTF for the collection, analysis and publication of findings relating to alumni outcomes. Case studies of the GTF generally focus on a specific issue, field or context and are based around interviews with alumni and other relevant stakeholders. Surveys are either focussed on a specific issue or population, or are broad and global in scope.²

This report is centred on the findings of the first Longitudinal Global Tracer Survey of the GTF. As such, there is an overall focus on understanding the way that alumni have progressed over the past five years (i.e., the period between responding to a GTF survey in 2016 and this survey in 2021). The cohort of focus in this report completed their scholarships between 2007 and 2010, so by the time this second data collection was finalised, all in this group had completed their scholarship more than a decade earlier.

2.2 Approach

This survey was conducted online in November and December 2021. Fieldwork was administered by GTF partners, Wallis Social Research, using their online survey platform and their Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) processes. Each alum was emailed a unique link to the survey, and those with a phone number were also called and invited to participate in the survey. Responses were monitored in real-time, with reminder emails sent at appropriate intervals during fieldwork. Following the survey period, data was coded, cleaned, and prepared for analysis and reporting.

2.2.1 Survey instrument

Questions in the survey were structured around the main aims of this research, and the program outcomes of the Australia Awards. Development of the survey focussed on collecting data that was comparable to the GTF Global Survey conducted in 2016³ and with reference to change for alumni in the period between 2016 and 2021. The survey covered the following broad framework:

- Career development
- Contributions to development
- Connections with Australia and alumni networks
- The impact of the Australia Awards and future plans
- Demographics and characteristics of alumni and their award.

The full Longitudinal Tracer Survey instrument is available to download [here](#) (full link in Appendix A).

² All published GTF research reports can be found here: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/Pages/australia-awards-global-tracer-facility>
³ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/Pages/australia-awards-global-tracer-facility-tracer-survey-alumni-of-2006-2010>

2.3 Alumni participants

The survey was designed to follow up with a sub-set of respondents to the Year 1 GTF survey undertaken five years ago in late 2016. Participants for the 2021 iteration of the survey were those who completed the 2016 survey and completed their scholarship between 2007 and 2010.

In total, there were 1000 alumni who fit this population. Table 1 shows the distribution of these alumni across the four cohort-completion years of focus.

Table 1: Sample for the Longitudinal Tracer Survey, target population, contactable alumni, respondents, and response rate

Sample	Number/percentage
Total Target Population (alumni who completed scholarship between 2007 and 2010, <i>and</i> responded to the GTF survey in 2016)	1000
Contactable Target Population (alumni in target population who had a valid email address or telephone number)	958
Respondents to the Longitudinal survey	442
Response Rate	46.1%

The demographic characteristics of the alumni who responded to the survey are provided in Figure 1. Of the 442 respondents, slightly more than half were male (54.5%), just under three per cent reported having disability, and almost one in 10 were living in a country different to their country of origin. The field of education in which the alumni studied their scholarship covers the wide range of areas of study in Australian universities. Most common were alumni who studied in business and management or society and culture (about a quarter of respondents in each of these fields; one in 10 alumni had studied in an education degree, with health and agriculture fields having similar numbers of respondents.

Alumni in the survey were from 15 different Australia Awards recipient countries. The reason for the survey covering just 15 countries was that for the original GTF survey in 2016, DFAT specified a selection of countries to focus on. Given this new longitudinal survey was a follow-up of the 2016 respondents, the data collection was restricted to this particular selection of countries. Population and response numbers and response rates by country are detailed in Table 2. Further detail on alumni by gender and country is included in Appendix C.

Table 2: Population and response numbers by country

Countries	Target population	Total respondents	Response Rate
Bangladesh	77	45	58.4%
Bhutan	30	16	53.3%
China	9	4	44.4%
Fiji	5	3	60.0%
Indonesia	612	274	44.8%
Lesotho	17	6	35.3%
Malawi	14	5	35.7%
Mongolia	32	17	53.1%
Pakistan	93	52	55.9%
Tanzania	18	8	44.4%
Vanuatu	5	3	60.0%
Zambia	11	4	36.4%
Other countries*	35	5	14.3%
Total	958	442	46.1%

*'Other Countries' are countries with alumni in the sample but fewer than 3 responses. Countries in this category with respondents to this survey include Solomon Islands, Kenya, Timor-Leste.

More than half of the secured sample are alumni from Indonesia. Large numbers of Indonesian alumni are common in these global-level data collections, given the size of the Indonesian Australia Awards alumni cohort; in instances where the collection is limited to a small sample of countries, these numbers can be more pronounced in the overall response numbers. This is a limitation to the study,⁴ but the responses have been explored by a number of variables to examine differences by country and demographic characteristics, and the outcome of these analyses suggests that the findings presented in this report are generalisable across the wider alumni population at the global level.

In 2023, Year 8 of the GTF, a similar longitudinal survey will be undertaken, following up with alumni who completed their award between 2014 to 2016 and participated in the Year 3 Global Tracer Survey conducted in 2018. This next iteration of the GTF longitudinal analyses will have a more global emphasis, as the baseline survey of 2018 was conducted across all countries where the Australia Awards are administered.

4 In more recent surveys of the GTF, the data collection approach has changed to incorporate alumni from all recipient countries in GTF large scale global surveys



Australia Awards

Global Tracer Facility



Demographics of alumni respondents, GTF Longitudinal Survey 2021

Total alumni respondents **442**




From **15** different countries



45.5%
Female

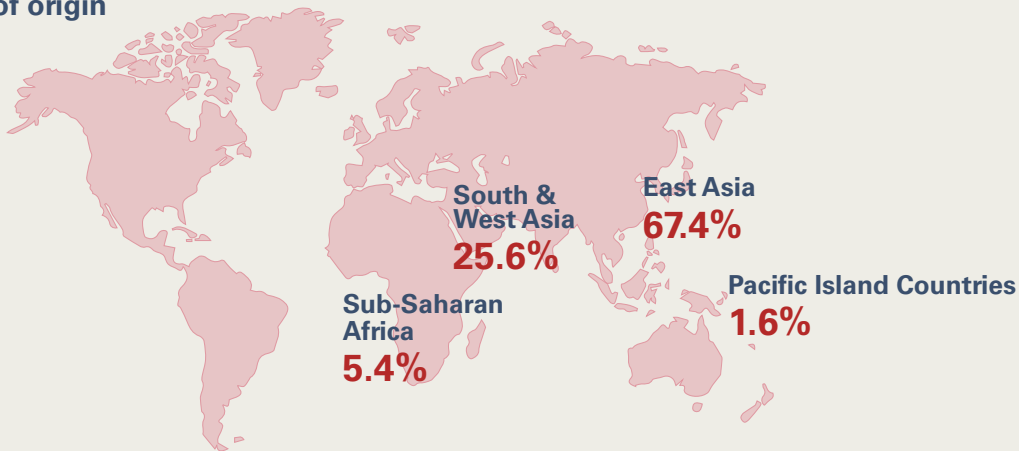


54.5%
Male

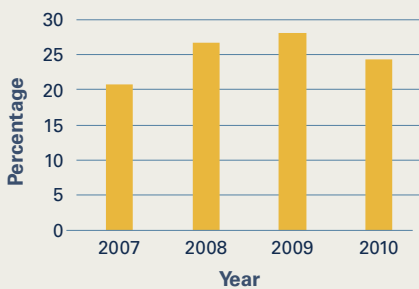
Mobile alumni **9.5%** 
(those currently living away from country of origin)

Identify as having disability **2.8%** 

Region of origin



Year of completion of award



Broad field of study on award

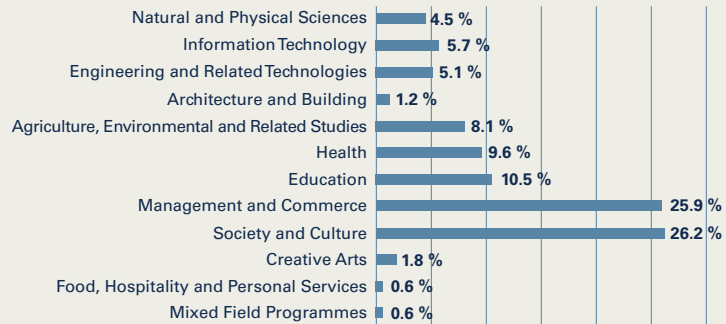


Figure 1: Demographic and scholarship characteristics of alumni respondents, GTF Longitudinal Global Tracer Survey, 2021

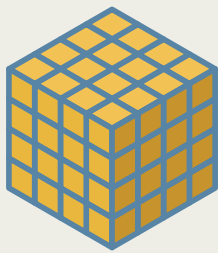


Australia Awards

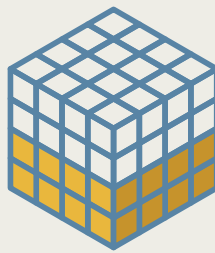
Global Tracer Facility



Employment and leadership of alumni respondents, GTF Longitudinal Survey 2021



Employed full-time
88.9%

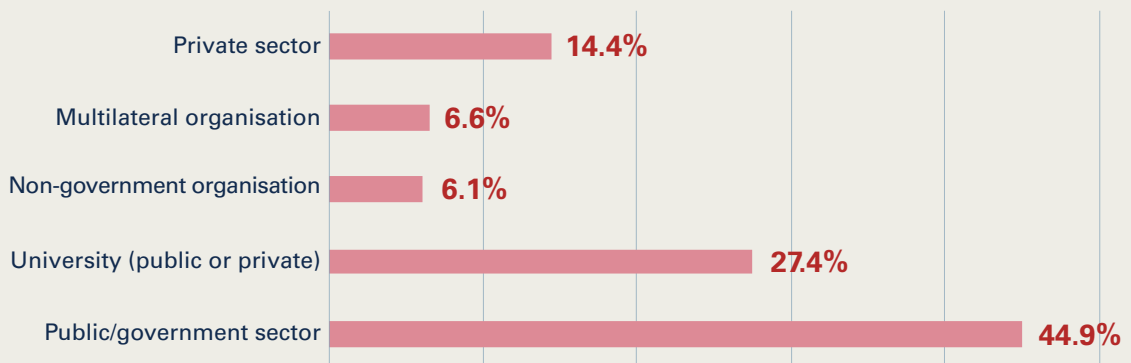


Employed part-time
3.2%

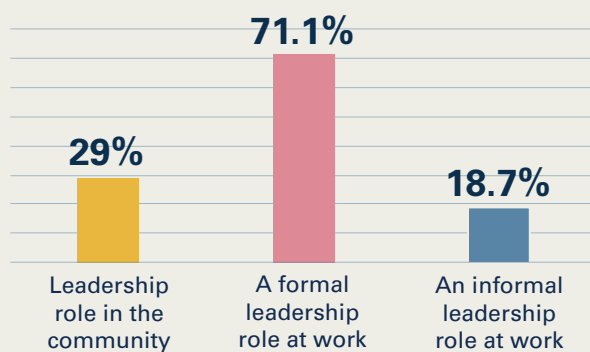


Studying
3.4%

Type of organisation of employment



Alumni in leadership roles



In the last 5 years...

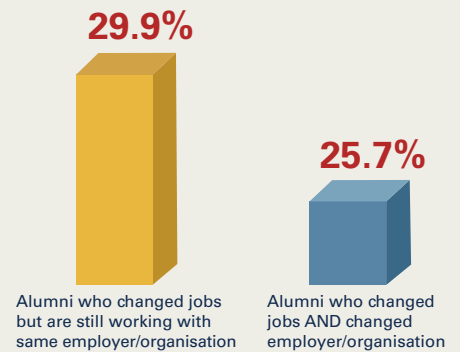


Figure 2: Employment and leadership characteristics of alumni respondents, GTF Longitudinal Global Tracer Survey, 2021

Most alumni responding to the survey were in full-time employment, and a small proportion were employed part-time or studying (Figure 2).

The most common sector in which these alumni are employed was the public sector (almost 45% of respondents), while just over a quarter are employed in a university. A small but important cohort of this group of alumni works in the private sector (14.4%), with other small cohorts in multilateral and non-government organisations.

In the five years since they were last surveyed, about 30 per cent of these alumni had changed jobs within the organisations they worked, and just over a quarter had changed jobs and their employer or organisation. Some of these changes are discussed in more detail in the following section.

Importantly, more than seven in 10 of the alumni involved in the survey have a formal leadership position at work, with others likely to hold informal positions of leadership. Nearly one in five are leaders within their community.

3. Alumni career development

3.1 Introduction

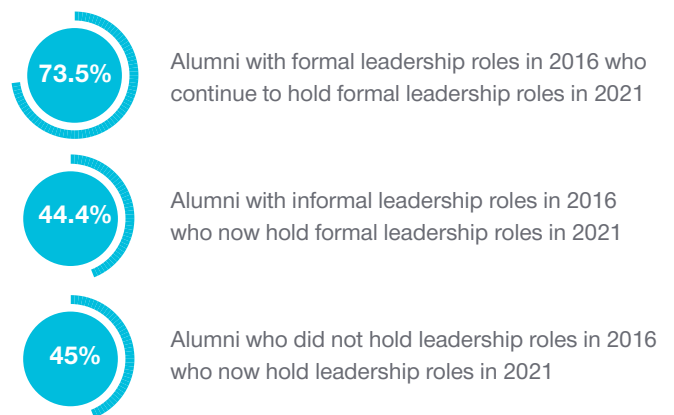
This survey is longitudinal in nature – allowing the GTF to explore changes in the outcomes of alumni over a five-year period, from the first global alumni survey, undertaken in 2016, to the survey completed in 2021. This section of the report explores the changes for individual alumni in the 2016 to 2021 period. At this point in time, alumni involved in this survey had completed their Australian scholarship between 10 and 15 years earlier (i.e., between 2007 and 2010). As such, many would be well established in their working life, and possibly in the mid to late point of their careers.

3.2 Progression to positions of influence

The Australia Awards are intended to help alumni return as ‘change agents’ who can utilise their skills and knowledge to contribute to development in their country and cooperation with Australia. An anticipated outcome of this is that the Awards will enable alumni to rise to positions of influence where they can implement change and improve practices.

In 2016, 67.5 per cent of respondents stated they held a formal leadership role in their workplace, and just over one quarter (26.8%) stated they had an informal leadership role, indicating that nearly a decade since their award, most alumni (94.3%) were in positions of influence. Five years later, in 2021, there was no significant difference in the proportion of alumni in formal leadership positions (71.1%); however, the proportion of alumni in informal positions decreased to 18.7 per cent. Overall, most alumni (89.8%) continue to hold positions of influence in their workplace. It is difficult to measure how long the effect of receiving an Australia Award has on the career progression of alumni. However, these results indicate that alumni are sustaining the career trajectories to which their Australian scholarship has contributed. Figure 3 shows that most alumni who held a formal leadership role in 2016 continued to do so in 2021 (73.5%), and nearly half of the alumni in 2016 who had an informal leadership role, or no leadership role had progressed to formal leadership positions in 2021 (44.4% and 45% respectively).

Figure 3: Changes in alumni leadership positions from 2016 to 2021 (n=400)



3.3 Changing responsibilities

Surveyed alumni indicated that much had changed in the past five years in relation to their roles and responsibilities at work. More than half (56%) of alumni had changed jobs since they were surveyed in 2016, and in total, just over a quarter (26%) had changed jobs and the organisation/employer they worked for during this time.

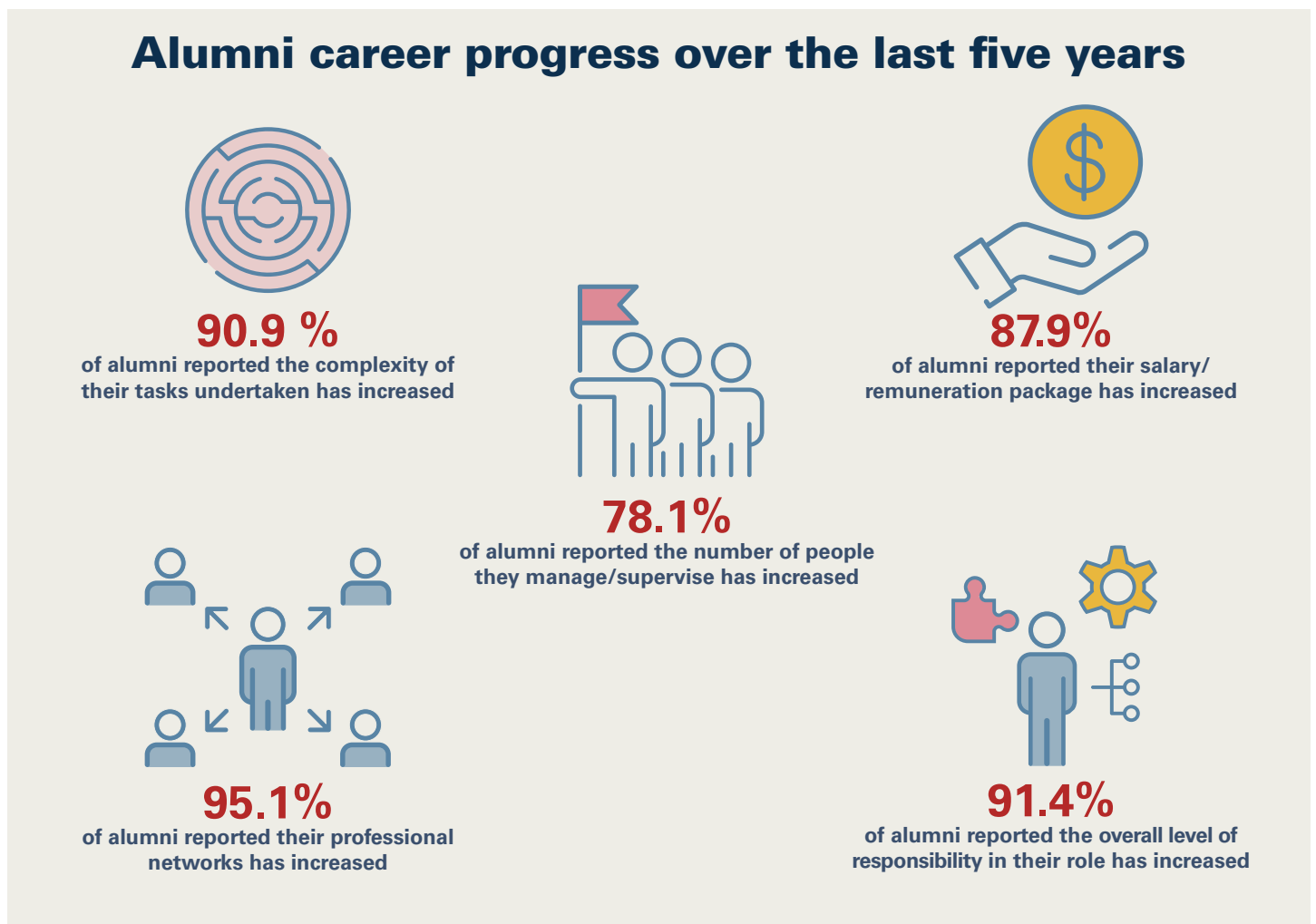
Most remarkable is the overall increase in the complexity and responsibility that alumni have experienced in their work over this five-year period. The infographic below shows more than 90 per cent of these alumni have found an increase in the complexity of tasks they undertake in their work and the overall level of responsibility they have in their roles. In addition, more than three quarters (78%) of these alumni are now managing or supervising a larger number of people in their job than five years ago, and for the vast majority (88%), their salary or remuneration package has increased (Figure 4: Change in job complexity and responsibilities over five years).

Furthermore, and of particular importance in the ongoing links and connections these alumni maintain across the world, almost every alumni involved in this survey (95%) indicated that their professional network has grown in the past five years.

These outcomes highlight the continual growth that alumni of the Australia Awards experience personally in their careers over time. They provide an important set of data to demonstrate change and offer a reminder of the growing influence of Australia Awards alumni in the years following their scholarship. These individuals remain influential, and it is important Australia remains connected and engaged with alumni, even when this is a decade and a half since completion of the award.

Examining these outcomes by gender it is interesting to note that female alumni reported similar rates of progression to male alumni across four of the five aspects, but were slightly less likely than male alumni to report an increase in the complexity of their work tasks (87.5% compared to 93.8% of male alumni). Further analysis of the gender differences in career progression is reported at the end of this chapter.

Figure 4: Change in job complexity and responsibilities over five years



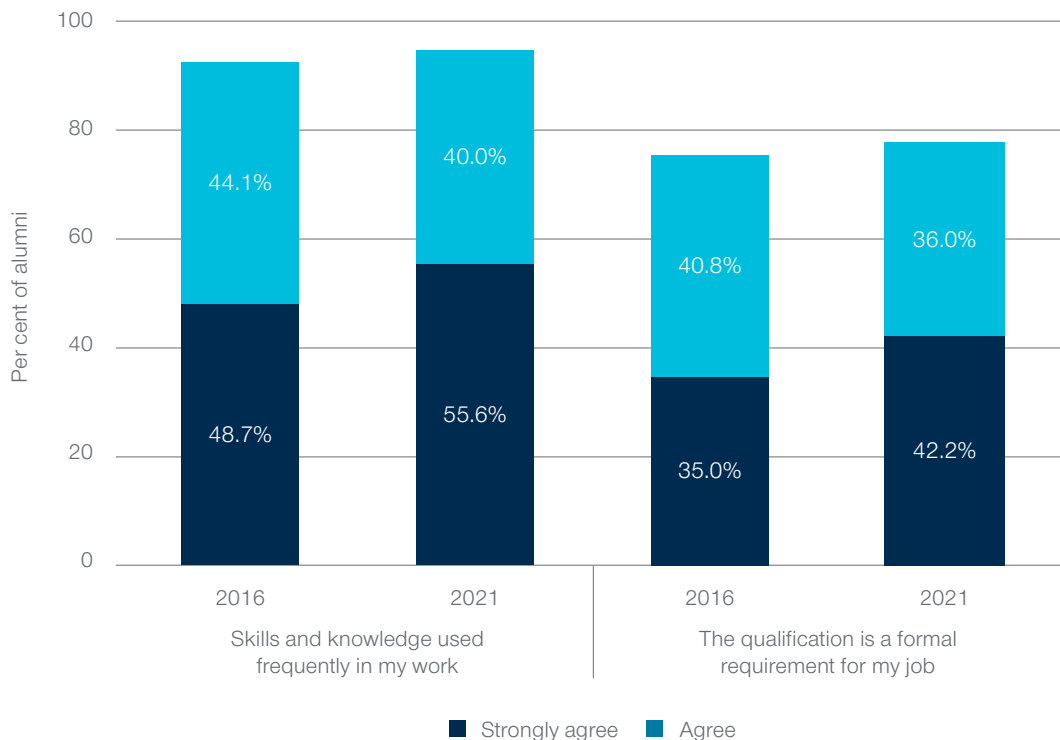
3.4 Ongoing relevance of qualification in the job market and alumni work

The survey also found that for these alumni, their scholarship remains relevant to their working life more than a decade after they have completed their qualification in Australia. Of particular interest to this research is that alumni indicated their use of knowledge and skills from their award increased over the five years from 2016 to 2021.

As shown in Figure 5: Alumni who indicate high relevance of Australia Awards qualification to their work, 2016 and 2021 (n=412), almost all alumni strongly agree or agree they use the skills and knowledge from their award in their work, with that percentage of alumni increasing from 93 per cent in 2016 to 96 per cent in 2021. The qualification they gained on award also increased in relevance for alumni, with 78 per cent indicating it was a formal requirement for their work in 2021, up from 76 per cent for the same alumni five years earlier.

These findings suggest that Intermediate Outcome 1 of the Australia Awards: ‘Alumni have the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to development’ is likely being met for this cohort. These findings also help set the background for exploring Program Outcome 1: ‘Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development,’ which is examined in detail in the next chapter of the report.

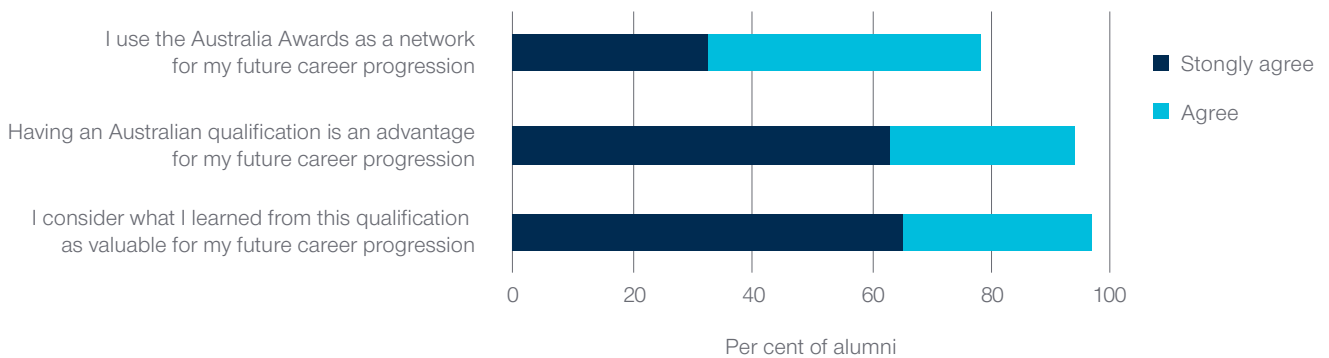
Figure 5: Alumni who indicate high relevance of Australia Awards qualification to their work, 2016 and 2021 (n=412)



3.5 Future career progression and the Australia Awards

Related to the discussion above, these alumni were also asked to reflect on the way in which the Australia Awards might benefit them in the future as they continue to progress their careers. In accord with the data presented above, alumni were very optimistic that there will be continued benefits from their award into the future. Figure 6: Alumni who indicate continuing importance of Australia Awards for career progression (n=428) shows that nearly all alumni (98%) indicated that the qualification they gained will continue to be valuable, and 95 per cent saw that having an Australian qualification was advantageous and a benefit for their future. More than three quarters (79%) indicated that the networks that they established through the Australia Awards will be used as they continue in their working life.

Figure 6: Alumni who indicate continuing importance of Australia Awards for career progression (n=428)

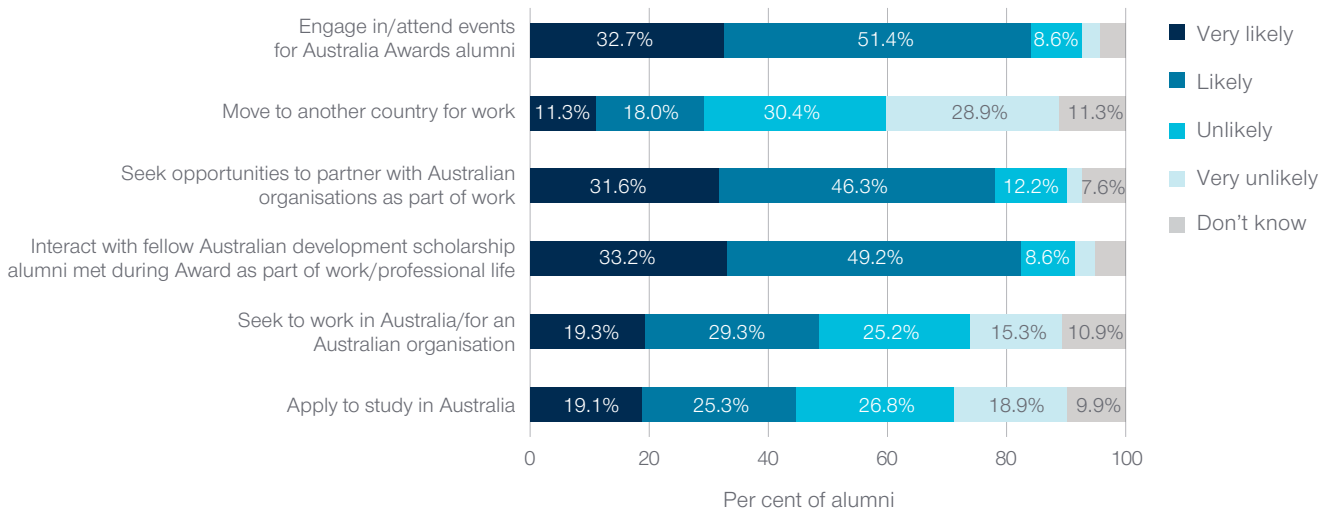


Over the next five years, from 2021 to 2026, alumni intend to remain actively engaged in the Australia Awards (Figure 7: Alumni plans for the next five years (2021 to 2026)). Most alumni stated they are very likely or likely to engage in or attend events for Australia Awards alumni (84.1%), interact with fellow Australian development scholarship alumni met during their award as part of their work or professional life (82.4%), and seek opportunities to partner with Australian organisations as part of their work (77.9%).

Close to half of the alumni also stated they were very likely or likely to seek to work in Australia or for an Australian organisation (48.6%) and apply to study in Australia (44.4%). More than half stated it was unlikely or very unlikely that they would move to another country for work (59.3%).

These results indicate that following a decade since these alumni undertook their award, they continue to intend to participate in Australia Awards alumni opportunities and remain engaged with Australia professionally. Posts' engagement of this cohort of experienced professionals in positions of influence would be beneficial to the Australia Awards alumni network and in enhancing the broad contributions of alumni to the long-term outcomes of contribution to development and cooperation between Australia and partner countries.

Figure 7: Alumni plans for the next five years (2021 to 2026)



Gender differences in alumni progression

Examining the gender differences in alumni progression from 2016 to 2021 revealed new insight into how female alumni career's are progressing compared to male alumni based on changes to their work positions and employers, and attainment of formal leadership positions.

Female alumni were as likely as male alumni to report progression in their roles at work. Across four of the five domains examined, female alumni reported *similar* rates to male alumni in increases in their salary/remuneration (86.4% compared to 89.1%), the number of people managed or supervising (78.8% compared to 77.5%), professional networks (94.1% compared to 96%), and overall responsibility (91.3% compared to 91.5%). Female alumni (87.5%) were slightly less likely than male alumni (93.8%) to report an increase in the complexity of their work tasks. However, female alumni were less likely than male alumni to hold a formal leadership role in their workplace (65.3% compared to 75.8%) and were more likely to have an informal leadership role in their workplace (22.2% compared to 15.9%).

While the overall numbers within the sample are small (making comparisons at this level less reliable), female alumni were as likely as male alumni to hold a formal leadership role in the private sector (82.4% compared to 81.1%). In contrast, female alumni were less likely to have formal leadership positions if working in the public/government (73.4% compared to 84.1%) and university/academia (49% compared to 67.3%) sectors.

In the five years from 2016 to 2021, female alumni were also less likely than male alumni to have changed employers (21.9% compared to 28.9%) since 2016, and nearly half of the female alumni reported they have not changed jobs (46.5% compared to 42.2%).

Female alumni appear to have equal measures of progression in their roles in the past five years, but this has not translated to equal opportunities to be recognised with formal leadership roles in the workplace. The results here have limitations in their generalisability to all Australia Awards alumni, and as such, further examination of the barriers to leadership roles for female alumni is recommended.

These preliminary insights do point to areas challenging female progression, which DFAT can assist to improve, thereby increasing the contribution by all alumni to the Australia Awards program objectives. Posts could work with partner country government stakeholders to advocate enhancing equal opportunities for women to advance in the workplace. Posts and managing contractors could also develop contextually-relevant professional development workshops for female alumni.

4. Alumni contributions to development – change in the past five years

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores if, and to what extent, the contributions to sustainable development of the alumni surveyed here have changed in the five years between survey collections (2016 to 2021). At the time of the first survey in 2016, alumni were mid-career professionals and at around six to nine years post award. Five years on, alumni are all over a decade post award (11 to 14 years).

The analyses explore the latency of the effect of the Australia Awards on alumni contributions to development through their work and whether the factors for success remain similar or if new hurdles arise as alumni further progress in their careers. The assumption of latency is stated in the Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.⁵ It is expected alumni can immediately apply their skills and knowledge one to two years post award, but most alumni will be contributing to development outcomes from three to five years or more post award.⁶

The findings of this chapter can help inform DFAT and managing contractors of the types of long-term impacts by alumni and ways to support mid- to later-career alumni to extend the likelihood of applying their Australia Awards to contribute to sustainable development. They also build on the findings in the section above to provide insight into Australia Awards Program Outcome 1: ‘Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development.’

4.2 How contributions have changed over five years

It was anticipated that over the five years from 2016 to 2021, the proportion of alumni contributing to the organisation (meso) and at the national, and regional and global levels (macro) would increase. The assumption was that as alumni careers progress in terms of the technical capacity and leadership position in their work, the likelihood to contribute with impact at a meso and macro level will increase as well.

To test this assumption, the survey asked alumni to reflect on the extent they use their skills gained from their Australian qualification to improve practices and contribute to development in their workplace, local community, country, and region or globally.

Figure 8: Comparison of alumni reporting using their Australian skills to contribute to development in 2016 and 2021 (n=405) shows that alumni responses to questions about the extent of their contributions in 2016 and 2021 were not significantly different across the six response options (very much, some, not much, not at all, not applicable, and don't know). Overall, most alumni indicated that their skills gained on award are improving or contributing to development in their organisation or society. This result indicates the effect of the Australia Awards is maintaining over these five years a decade after their award.

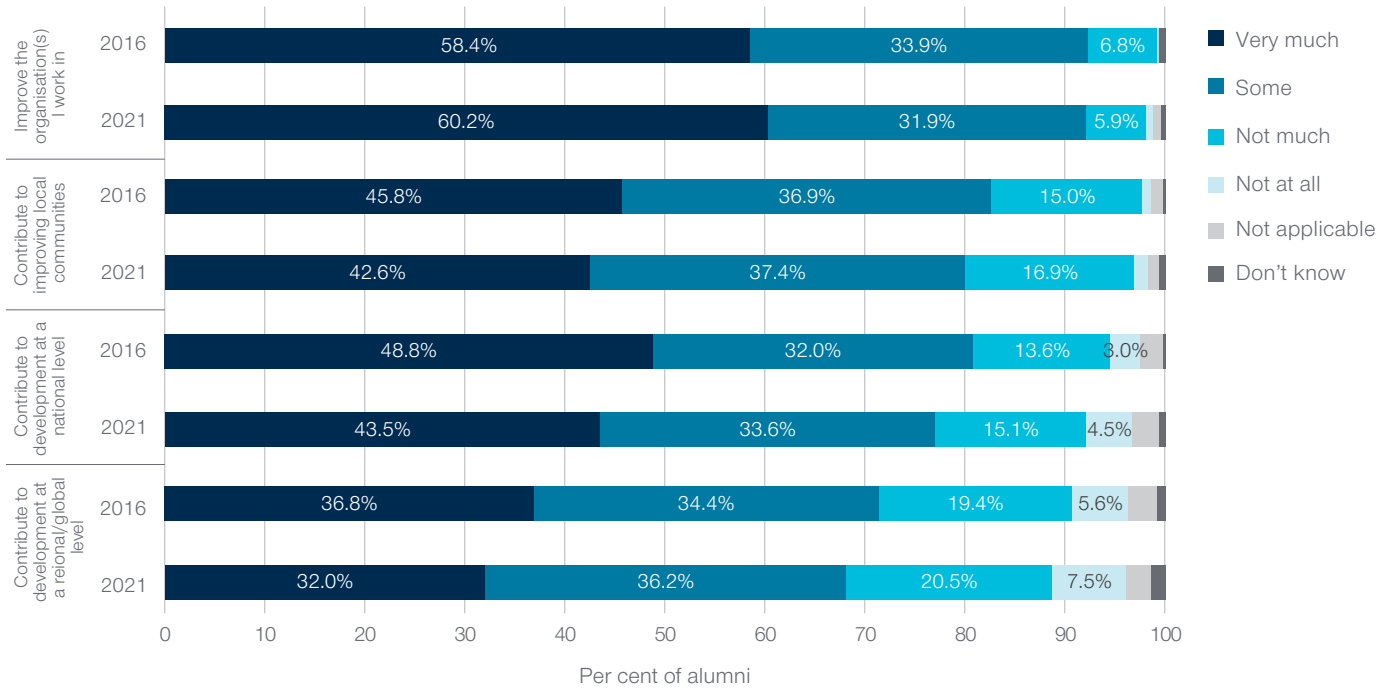
At the organisational (meso) level, more than half the alumni (58.4%) reported that in 2016 they were ‘very much’ using their Australian skills to contribute to improving the organisation(s) they work in, with most (85.2%) of these alumni also reporting that they make this same level of contribution in 2021. Similarly, at the macro levels, nearly half of the alumni stated in 2016 that they were ‘very much’ contributing to improving local communities and development at a national level (45.8% and 48.8%, respectively). Again, most of these alumni reported the same level of contribution in 2021 (81.1% and 80.9%, respectively).

⁵ DFAT. (2022). *Australia Awards MELF Guidance Note 1: Global Australia Awards Program Logic*. Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

⁶ *Ibid.* P.1.

At the highest level of impact, where contributions to development are less tangible and directly linked, just over one in three alumni stated in 2016 that they were ‘very much’ using their Australian skills to contribute to development at a regional or global level (36.8%). In 2021, 75.2 per cent of these alumni indicated they continued to use their skills to contribute in this way.

Figure 8: Comparison of alumni reporting using their Australian skills to contribute to development in 2016 and 2021 (n=405)

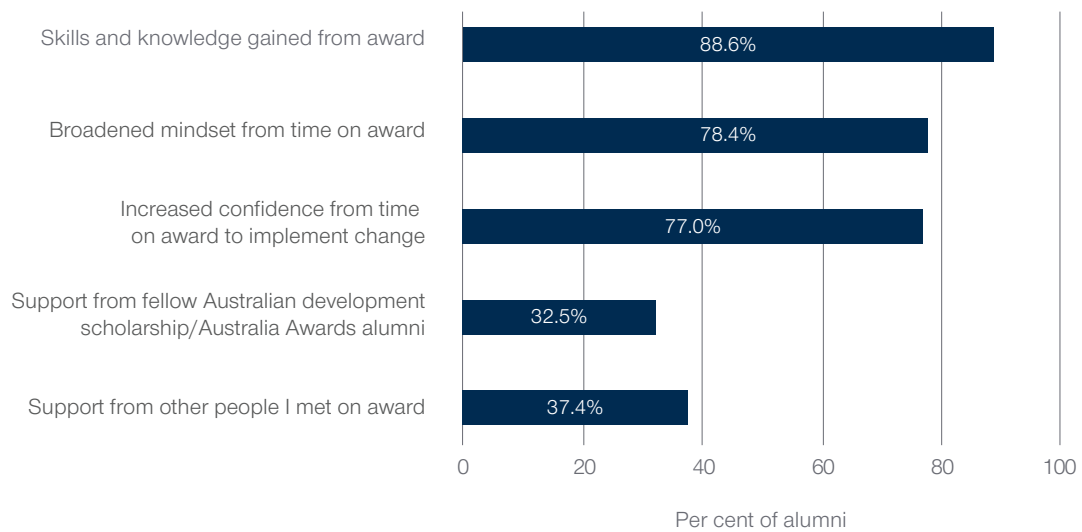


4.3 Factors enabling alumni to contribute

This section examines the factors that helped to facilitate alumni contributions to development through their work at the personal level (micro), at the organisational level (meso) and at the societal level (macro).

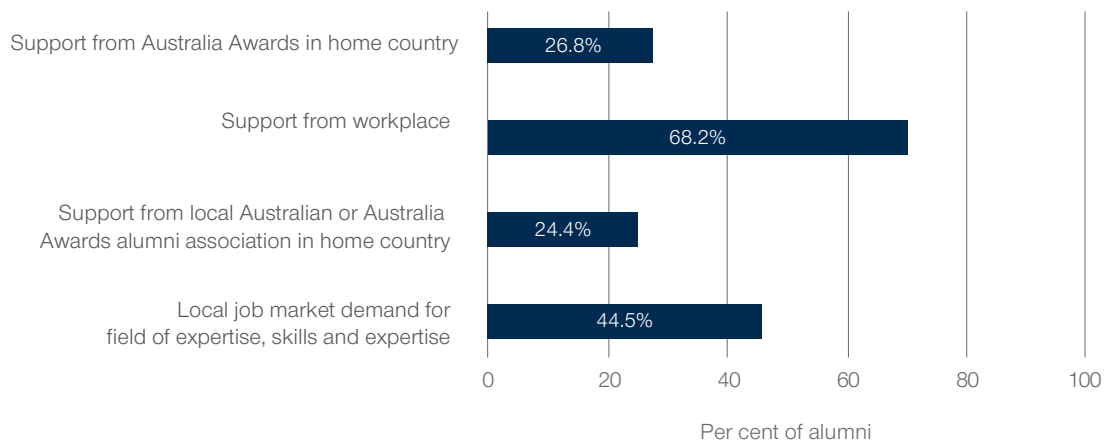
At a personal level, most alumni reported that the skills and knowledge (88.6%), broadened mindset (78.4%) and increased confidence to implement change (77%) gained from their time on award in Australia enabled their ability to contribute to development through their roles at work (Figure 9: Enabling factors (personal) noted by alumni as helping to contribute to development in their job in 2021 (n=401)). For one in three alumni, the networks they developed with fellow Awards alumni (32.5%) and other people they met while in Australia (37.4%) were a source of support in enabling their contributions. Of note in these results are the differences by gender in the use of networks. Compared to male alumni, female alumni were more likely to state support from fellow awards alumni (37.4% compared to 28.4%), and from other people they met on award (42.6% compared to 33.2%).

Figure 9: Enabling factors (personal) noted by alumni as helping to contribute to development in their job in 2021 (n=401)



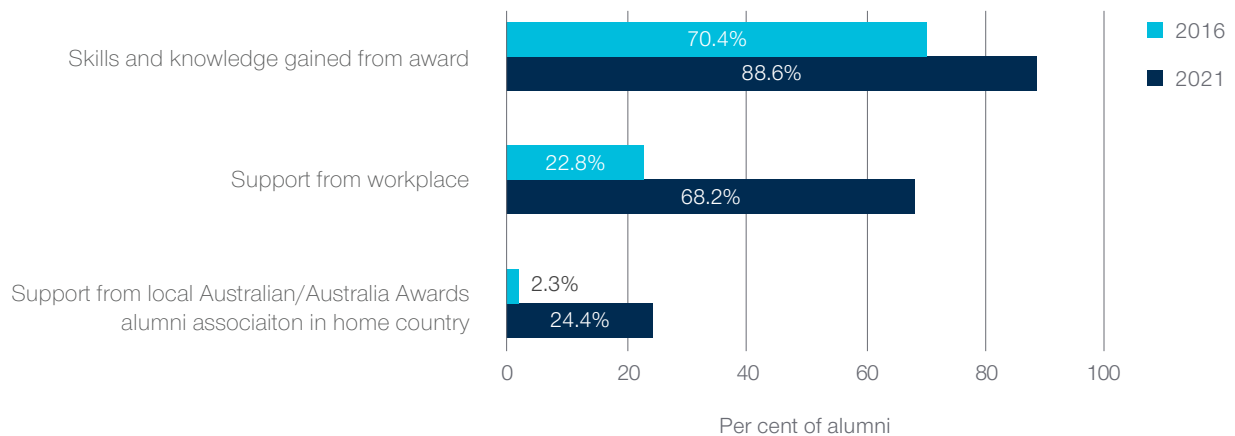
For many alumni, support from their workplace (68.2%) was a contributing factor enabling their contributions (Figure 10: Enabling factors in the workplace and society noted by alumni as helping them to contribute to development in 2021 (n=401)). Nearly half of the alumni reported that there was a local job market demand for the degree they received under their scholarship (44.5%), and around one in four alumni stated that their local Australia Awards office and Australian alumni association had helped them in having successful contributions following their award. Similar to the gender differences in networks, female alumni were slightly more likely to report that their local Australian alumni association were an enabling factor (26.8% compared to 22.4% of male alumni). However, there was a difference in the proportion of male alumni who experienced local job market demands for their Award. Nearly half (48.3%) of male alumni stated this demand enabled their contributions compared with 40 per cent of female alumni.

Figure 10: Enabling factors in the workplace and society noted by alumni as helping them to contribute to development in 2021 (n=401)



Three enabling factors were compared from the 2016 survey to this 2021 longitudinal survey; skills and knowledge gained from the award, support from the workplace, and support from local Australian alumni associations. Across these three dimensions, the proportion of alumni stating these were factors that have enabled their contributions to development significantly increased (Figure 11: Comparison of factors enabling alumni to contribute to development in 2016 and 2021 (n=401)). The utility of skills and knowledge alumni gained from their award increased from 70.4 per cent to 88.6 per cent, and workplace support increased from just under one quarter (22.8%) to two-thirds of alumni (68.2%). In 2016, very few alumni reported support from their local Australian alumni association as an enabling factor. In 2021, this rose to nearly one in four alumni reporting. This increase may reflect the maturing of these volunteer organisations that were beginning to form or in their early years at the time of the 2016 survey in terms of membership growth and activity offerings.

Figure 11: Comparison of factors enabling alumni to contribute to development in 2016 and 2021 (n=401)

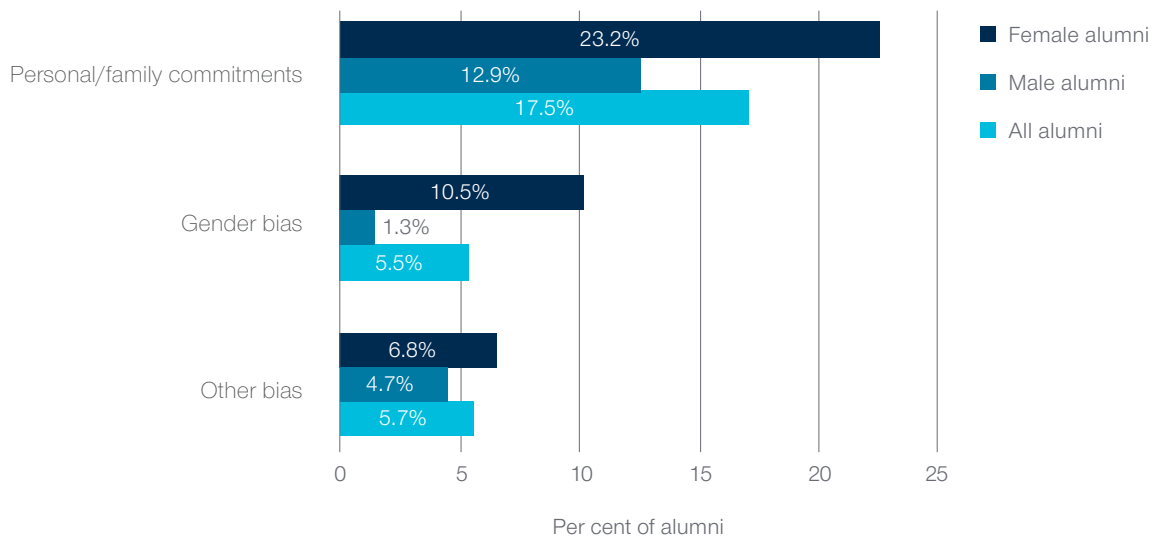


4.4 Factors inhibiting contributions

This section examines the factors that inhibited alumni contributions to development through their work at the personal level and the organisational and societal levels.

At the personal level, family commitments were the most commonly stated barrier inhibiting the extent to which alumni could contribute, with 17.5 per cent reporting this compared with gender bias and other bias challenges, which were 5.5 per cent and 5.7 per cent, respectively (Figure 12: Individual challenges experienced by alumni to contribute to develop in their job in 2021 (n=393)). However, when examining these factors by gender, female alumni are exceedingly affected by personal and family commitments and gender biases compared with male alumni. Nearly one in four female alumni (23.2% compared to 12.9% for males) stated personal or family commitments challenged their ability in the workplace, and one in 10 female alumni (10.5% compared to 1.3%) experienced gender bias. Other biases were similarly experienced by female and male alumni (6.8% and 4.7%, respectively).

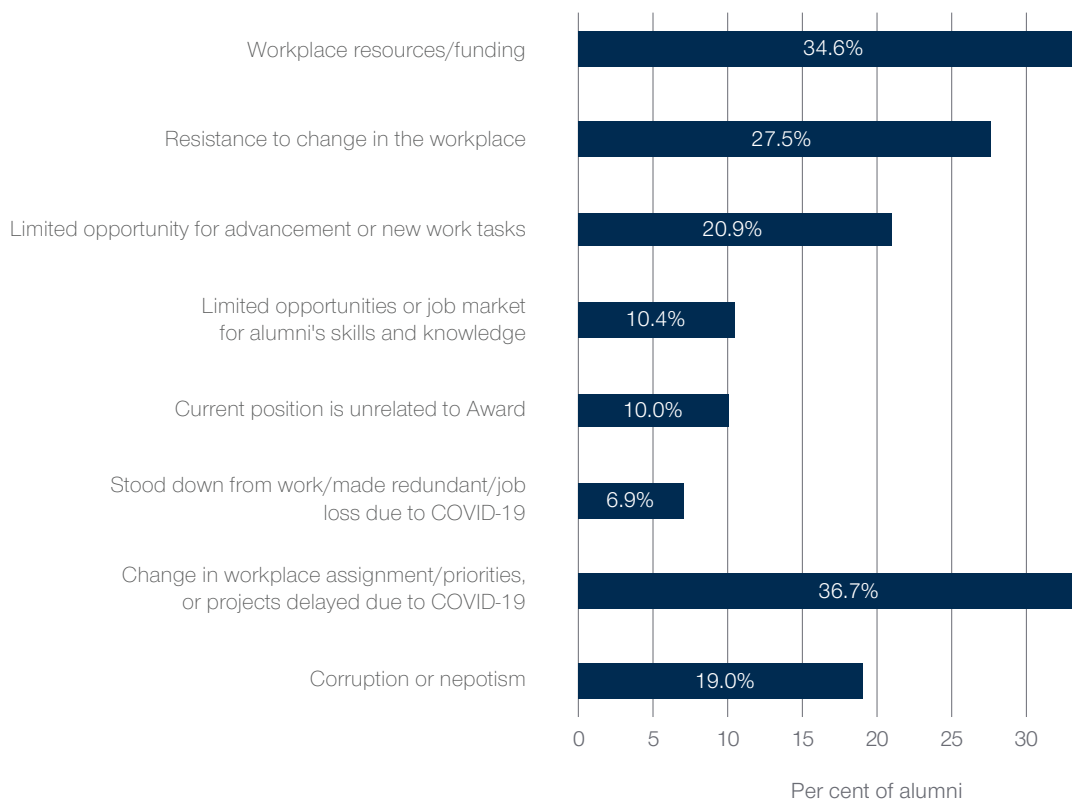
Figure 12: Individual challenges experienced by alumni to contribute to develop in their job in 2021 (n=393)



In relation to other types of challenges faced by alumni (Figure 13: Workplace and societal challenges experienced by alumni to contribute to development in their job in 2021 (n=393)), one in three stated that workplace resources and funding (34.6%) and a similar proportion (36.7%) noted the impact of COVID-19 on changes to work assignments and priorities or delays. One in four alumni were challenged by resistance to change in the workplace (27.5%), and one in five alumni experienced limited opportunities for advancement or new work tasks (20.9%). Of the alumni who reported limited opportunities for advancement or new work tasks, there was no significant difference in the proportion of these alumni who had changed jobs and or employers since 2016 compared with those who have not changed positions since 2016.

Male and female alumni indicated similar workplace and societal challenges across most domains reported in Figure 13: Workplace and societal challenges experienced by alumni to contribute to development in their job in 2021 (n=393). Differences of note were workplace resources or funding and resistance to change in the workplace. Female alumni were 10 percentage points higher in reporting the lack of resources and funding as a challenge to their contributions (39.5% compared with 30.6% of male alumni). In contrast, male alumni were more likely to be challenged by resistance to change in the workplace (31% compared with 23.2% of female alumni).

Figure 13: Workplace and societal challenges experienced by alumni to contribute to development in their job in 2021 (n=393)



5. Ongoing cooperation and partnerships with Australia

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the changes in alumni networks and partnerships developed when in Australia or as alumni in the five years since the first GTF survey in 2016. With 10 years since their time in Australia as awardees, these insights can help to understand the longevity of alumni networks and the key factors that facilitate maintaining or developing connections with Australia. This focus on alumni linkages relates to the public diplomacy long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards, alumni contributions to cooperation and partnerships between Australia and partner countries.

The findings of this chapter can help DFAT to identify pathways to engage, or re-engage, with less-recent alumni contributing to development and likely have valuable networks and interest to continue being engaged with Australia as Australia Awards alumni.

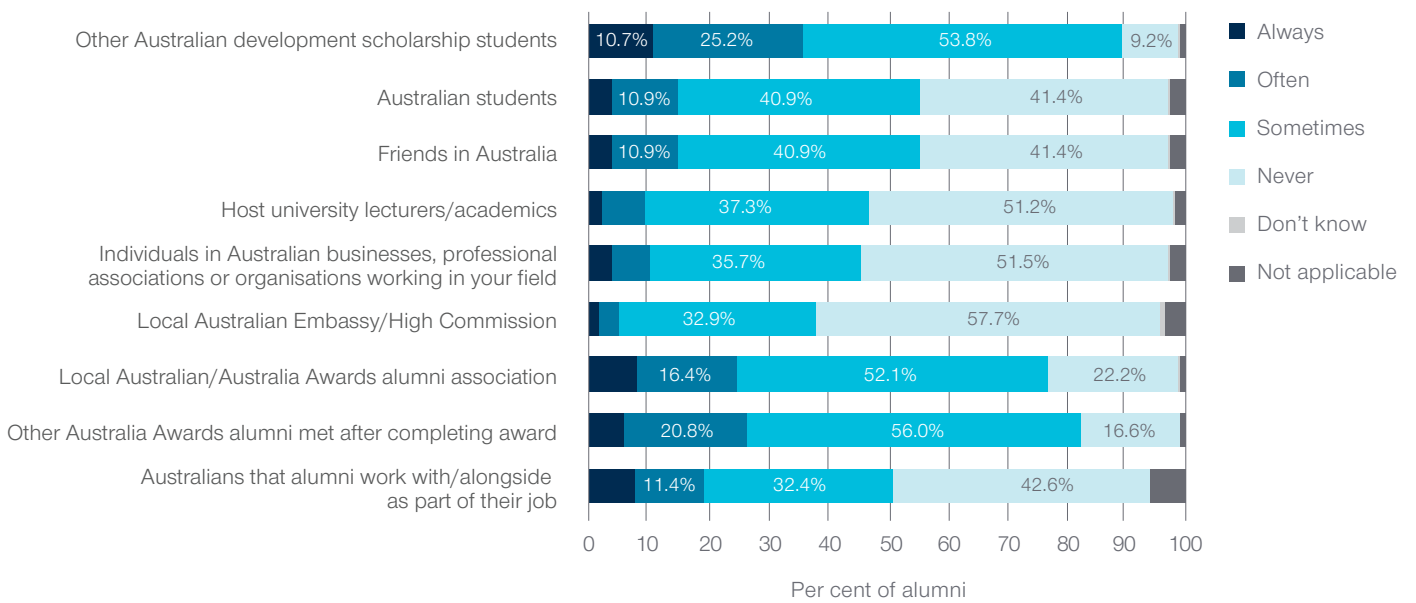
5.2 Longevity of links with Australia

After at least a decade since they were in Australia on award, most alumni have remained in contact with people they met during their scholarship, and in particular, with other Australian development scholarship students (89.7% are 'always,' 'often' or 'sometimes' in contact with this group). Furthermore, more than three-quarters of alumni (76.8%) have maintained contact with their local Australian alumni association and with other Australia Awards alumni met after completing their award (82.7%).

As Figure 14: Alumni ongoing contact with Australia over the past five years (since 2016) (n=413) shows, alumni were most likely to have frequent contact ('always' and 'often') with peers they met in Australia and post-award (particularly other awardees, 35.9%, local alumni associations, 24.7%, other Australia Awards alumni met post award, 26.7%, and Australian colleagues, 19.2%).

In contrast, alumni were least likely to have maintained frequent contact with Australian professionals and representatives; these included their host university lecturers or academics (9.6%), Australian professionals (individuals in Australian organisations) (10.1%), and Australian Embassies and High Commissions (5.2%).

Figure 14: Alumni ongoing contact with Australia over the past five years (since 2016) (n=413)



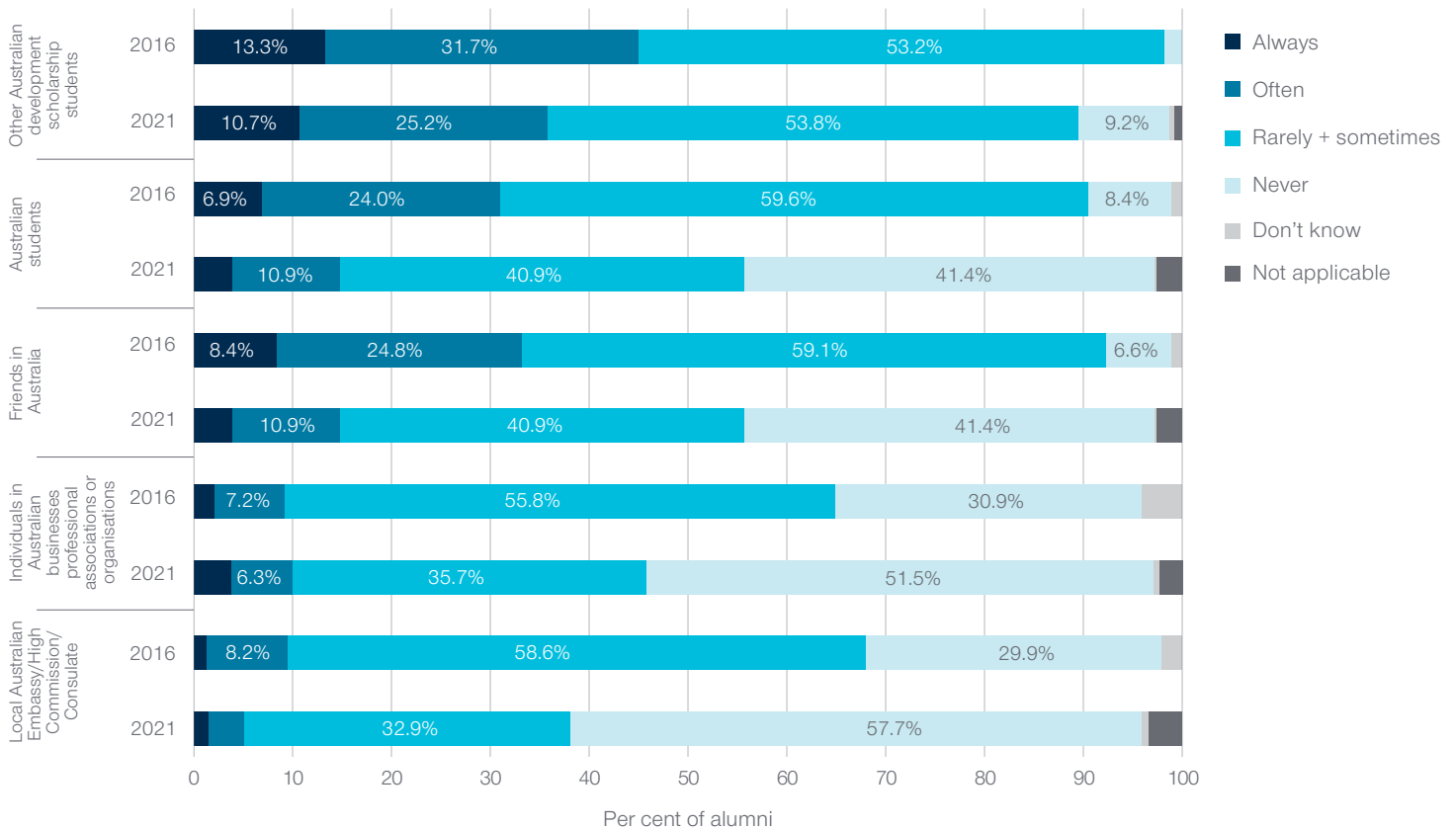
5.3 How connections with Australia have changed over five years

Figure 15: Alumni ongoing contact with Australia – 2016 survey responses compared to 2021 survey responses (n=413) shows the frequency of contact by alumni with various groups from the 2016 GTF survey (six to nine years post award) and from the 2021 GTF survey (11 to 14 years post award). These groups were retrospectively constructed as the first GTF Global Survey in 2016 evolved over the preceding survey iterations, including improving the way questions were framed. The following five contact groups could be compared as they were either similarly categorised or included in the 2016 survey: other Australian development scholarship students, Australian students, friends in Australia, individuals in Australian businesses, professional associations or organisations, and local Australian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate.

The GTF had anticipated that the links of alumni would fade due to time, and the findings here do show that ongoing contact with all five groups had decreasing frequency of contact, with some more significant than others. Alumni were most consistent in their contact frequency with other Australian development scholarship holders, with half of these alumni continuing to be ‘rarely + sometimes’ in contact with other alumni (53.8% in 2021). Connections in Australia (Australian students, friends, and professionals) had significant increases in the proportion of alumni who reported they were ‘never’ in contact with these groups by 2021 (33%, 34.8%, and 20.6% increase in no contact across these groups, respectively).

Of note for Posts and Australia Awards regional and country programs, alumni reported similarly significant decreases in contact frequency from 2016 to 2021 with their local Australian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. In 2016, just over one in four alumni (29.9) reported they were ‘never’ in contact, which increased to over half of alumni (57.7%) in 2021.

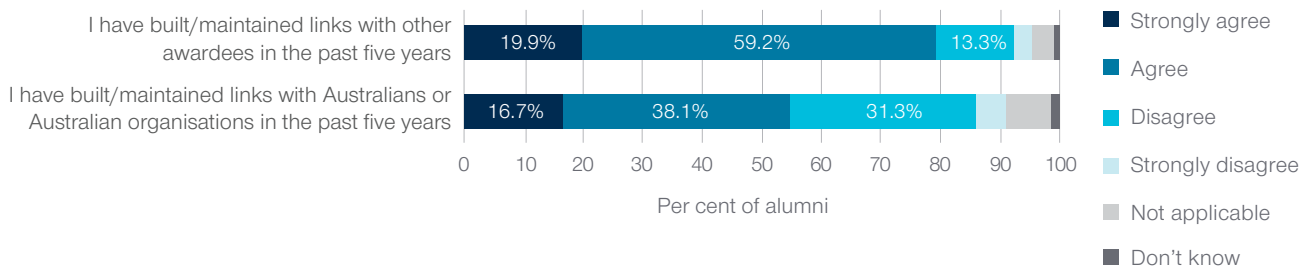
Figure 15: Alumni ongoing contact with Australia – 2016 survey responses compared to 2021 survey responses (n=413)



While contact frequency provides helpful insight into who alumni have connections with, the figure below provides insight into the quality of these connections. When divided into two broader categories – other awardees (and alumni) and Australians or Australian organisations – there is rough alignment in the proportion of alumni who are in contact and their agreement that they have built or maintained links with individuals from these groups. Most alumni (79.1%) reported they have built or maintained connections with other awardees, similar to the proportion of alumni who stated they have had contact with other Australian development scholarship holders they met on or after their award (89.7% and 82.7%, respectively, see Figure 16: Alumni network development from 2016 to 2021 (n=412)). This comparison indicates that while Figure 15: Alumni ongoing contact with Australia – 2016 survey responses compared to 2021 survey responses (n=413) shows the frequency of contact has reduced over time, the connections may be substantive and continue to have longevity.

Half of the alumni (54.8%) also reported having built or maintained links with Australians or Australian organisations between 2016 and 2021 (Figure 16: Alumni network development from 2016 to 2021 (n=412)). Which may likely be with Australian students and friends in Australia with whom a similar proportion of the alumni (55.8% for both groups) have remained in contact. However, for nearly half of the alumni (45.2%), a decade since their award, they do not have ongoing networks directly linked to Australia.

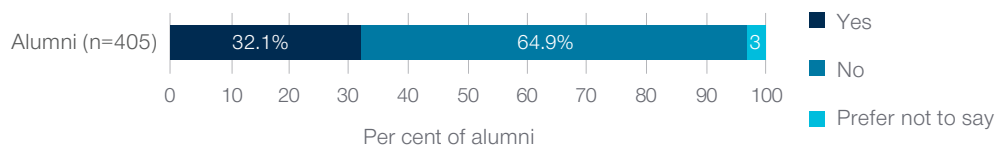
Figure 16: Alumni network development from 2016 to 2021 (n=412)



5.4 Professional networks with Australian organisations

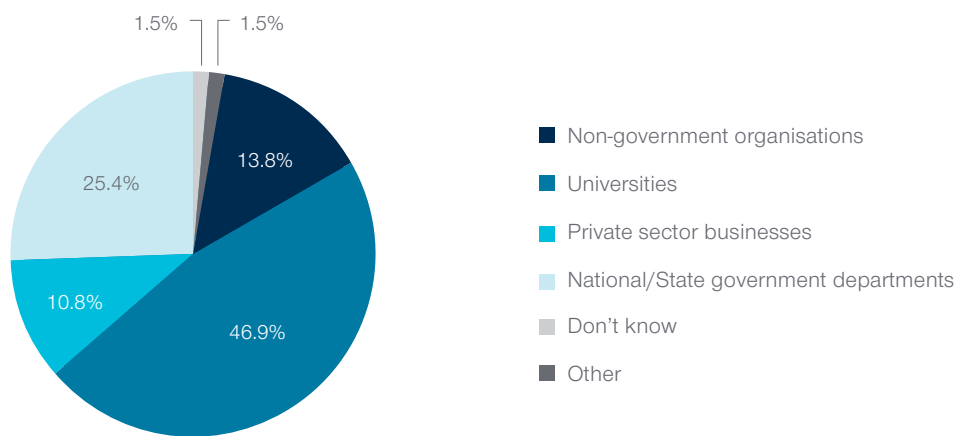
In the five years between surveys (2016 to 2021), almost one third of the alumni participating in this survey reported they had developed a professional link with an Australian organisation (Figure 17: Alumni who developed a professional link with an Australian organisation in the last five years (2016 to 2021) (n=405)). This indicates that although the proportion of alumni decreased who have ongoing contact with individuals in Australian businesses, professional associations or organisations (as detailed in the discussion above), there is still genuine growth in the professional partnerships being developed by these alumni, and new partnerships continue to form.

Figure 17: Alumni who developed a professional link with an Australian organisation in the last five years (2016 to 2021) (n=405)



In exploring these new partnerships developed between 2016 and 2021, alumni had found links with Australian organisations from across all sectors (Figure 18: Type of Australian organisations alumni developed professional links with between 2016 to 2021 (n=130)). Almost half of new partnerships were with universities (46.9%). A quarter of these alumni (25.4%) reported they had expanded their networks with individuals from Australian national or state government departments. Non-government organisations (NGOs) and private sector organisations were less commonly partnered with (13.8% and 10.8%, respectively), although the fact that there are partnerships by alumni in these sectors as well as the government and university sectors is noteworthy.

Figure 18: Type of Australian organisations alumni developed professional links with between 2016 to 2021 (n=130)

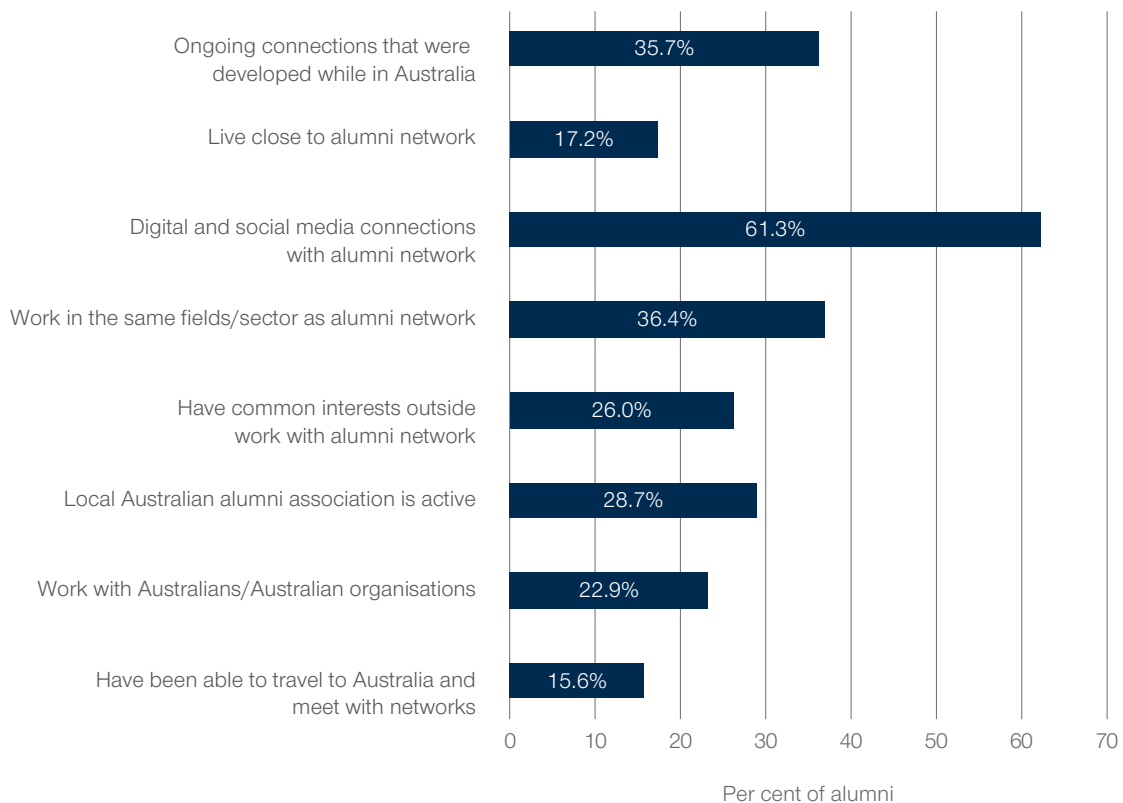


5.5 Factors enabling alumni to build and maintain their networks

More than 10 years after their scholarship time in Australia, the main factor highlighted by these alumni as enabling them to maintain or build their networks over the past five years was digital and social media (61.3%, Figure 19: Factors enabling alumni to build and maintain their networks (n=410)). For one in three alumni, their networks stemmed back to connections made while in Australia (35.7%), with that foundation important to their continuing links. A similar proportion of alumni stated they worked in the same fields or sectors as their alumni network (36.4%), which likely offers a common interest for ongoing engagement.

For around a quarter of alumni, shared interests outside of work were helpful (26%) in enabling connections, in addition, an active local Australian alumni association (28.7%) and working with Australians or in Australian organisations (22.9%) were also areas noted as helping alumni keep in touch with connections established while in Australia.

Figure 19: Factors enabling alumni to build and maintain their networks (n=410)



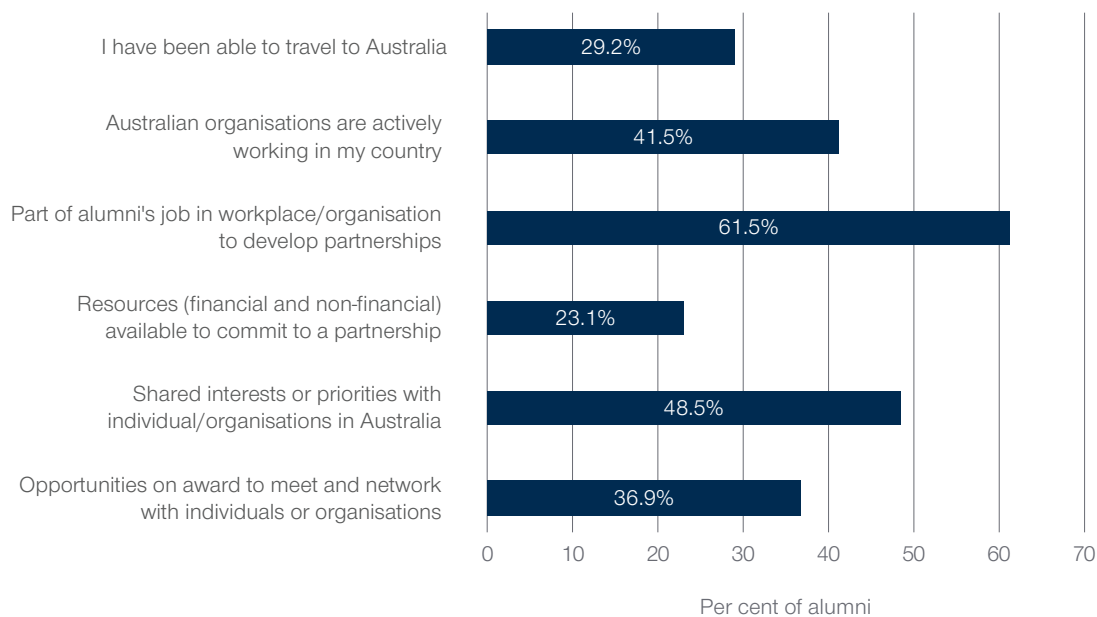
In the professional context (Figure 20: Factors enabling alumni to develop a professional link with an Australian organisation (n=130)), over half of alumni (61.5%) stated that partnership development was part of their job, which was a factor in why they were able to develop a professional link with an Australian organisation in the past five years. Close to half of alumni (48.5%) also stated shared interests or priorities with individuals and organisations in Australia, and a quarter of these alumni noted the presence of Australian organisations actively working in their country helped them forge professional links.

For more than a third of alumni (36.9%), the opportunities they had to meet and network with individuals or organisations while on award in Australia remain important more than a decade later. This indicates longevity in the connections made through extracurricular activities on award that provide professional networking opportunities.

For building professional links with Australian organisations, the ability to travel to Australia was important in this context; close to one in three alumni (29.2%) stated that this was an enabling factor developing new professional links in the past five years, since 2016.

Partnership development and building professional links require resources, and for 23.1 per cent of alumni, having resources (financial and non-financial) available meant they could commit to a partnership.

Figure 20: Factors enabling alumni to develop a professional link with an Australian organisation (n=130)



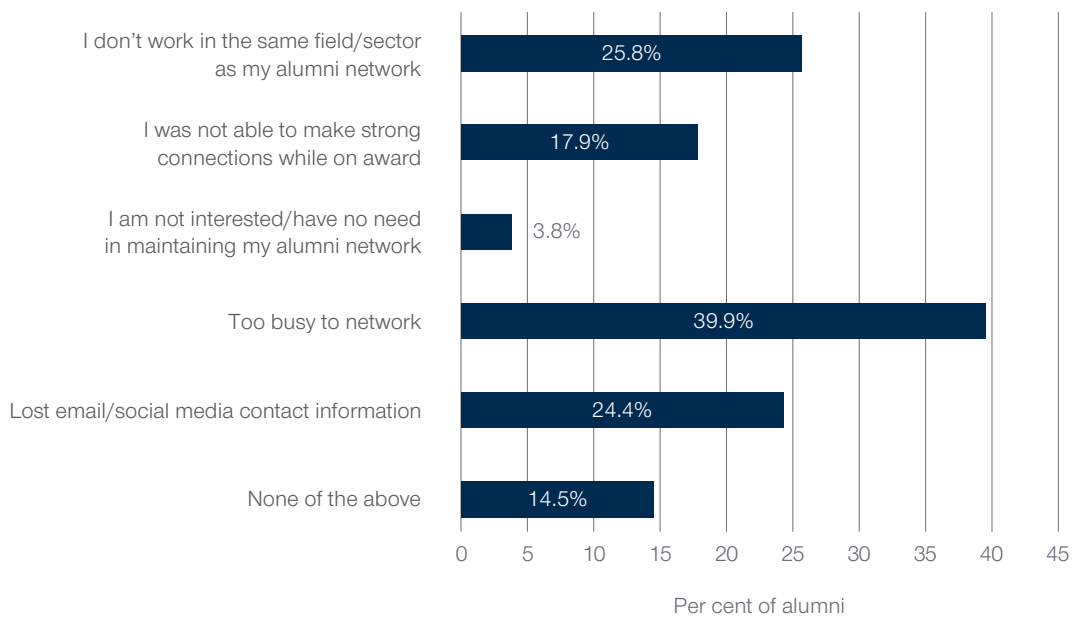
5.6 Factors inhibiting alumni in building and maintaining their networks

Alumni were also asked about factors that challenged their ability over the past five years (since 2016) to build and maintain their networks which contributes to the cooperation (long-term Program Outcome 2) aims of the Australia Awards.

The most frequently cited challenge was time; 39.6 per cent of the alumni stated their schedules limited their ability to invest time as they were 'too busy to network' (Figure 21: Factors that challenged alumni in building or maintaining their networks (n=404)).

For one in four alumni, fostering connections with their networks was challenging as they did not share a professional link in the field or sectors they are working in (25.8%). A similar proportion reported they had lost email or social media contact information for their networks (24.4%). Nearly one in five alumni (17.9%), alumni stated they were not able to make strong connections while on award in Australia.

Figure 21: Factors that challenged alumni in building or maintaining their networks (n=404)

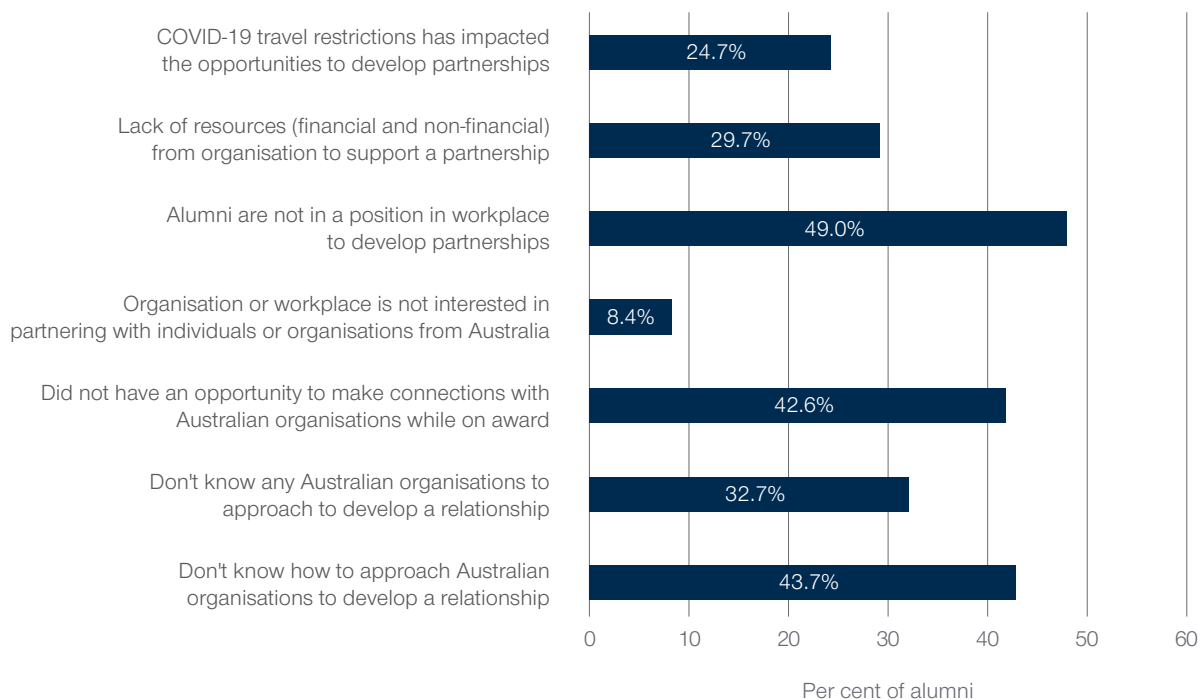


On developing professional links with an Australian organisation in the five years since 2016, almost half of the alumni (49%) stated they were not in a position in their workplace to develop partnerships (Figure 22: Factors that challenged alumni in their ability to develop a professional link with an Australian organisation (n=260)). Just under half of the alumni reported that they did not have an opportunity to make connections with Australian organisations while on award (42.6%), and a similar proportion stated that they do not know how to approach Australian organisations to develop a relationship (43.7%). In addition, one in three alumni (32.7%) stated they did not know any Australian organisations to approach to develop a relationship. These three issues experienced by alumni may be linked in that workshops during pre-departure orientation on identifying opportunities and strategies to network with Australian organisations could assist in reducing these challenges.

For around a quarter of alumni (24.7%), the travel restrictions due to COVID-19 negatively impacted their opportunities to develop partnerships with Australian organisations. Lack of resources from their organisation, financial and non-financial, to support a partnership was a challenge stated by just over one in four alumni (29.7%).

Few alumni, less than one in 10 (8.4%), stated that their employer was not interested in developing partnerships with individuals or organisations from Australia. This indicates that, for the most part, alumni and their employers would be receptive to Australian partnerships. However, identifying and understanding how to undertake these opportunities is the most prevalent challenge for many alumni.

Figure 22: Factors that challenged alumni in their ability to develop a professional link with an Australian organisation (n=260)



6. Views of Australia

6.1 Introduction

From the 2016 survey responses, we know that most alumni had developed positive views of Australia as a country (96%), Australian people (94.2%), and the knowledge, skills, and expertise of Australians (95.2%) as a result of their experiences on award in Australia. The limitation of this understanding was a lack of baseline data for comparison. However, the longitudinal survey in 2021 was able to address this limitation to an extent by following up with the alumni who responded to the Year 1 Global Tracer Survey in 2016 to compare the longevity of their overwhelming positive views of Australia and the influences which changed their opinions over the past five years since the first survey.

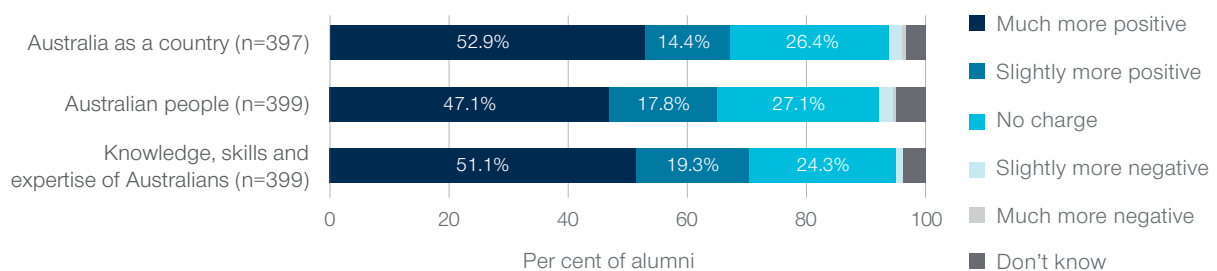
In the 2021 survey, alumni were asked if their views of Australia, Australian people, and the knowledge, skills and expertise of Australians changed in the past five years. Many stated that their views had changed positively. One in four alumni reported that their views had not changed over this period.

A challenge in seeking feedback on alumni views of Australia is the significant likelihood of positive response bias. In research of this nature - following up with past program participants to understand the program's effect and their experiences of it - those who respond are more likely to be those who have had positive experiences as a result of their award. This study aimed to limit the influence of positive response bias by carefully and neutrally framing questions such as views of Australia in a way that encourages an open reception to all opinions and experiences. As a result, the findings here can provide insight into the general sentiment of alumni views and attitudes toward Australia.

6.2 How alumni views have changed over five years

Over the past five years, alumni perspectives and interactions with Australia as a country, Australian people, and Australians' knowledge, skills, and expertise have continued to sway towards the positive (Figure 23: Changes in alumni views over the past five years (since 2016) (n=399)). As a country, two thirds of alumni became much more or slightly more positive in their views of Australia (67.3%), and similarly, of Australian people (64.9%). Many alumni also stated their views changed positively regarding the knowledge, skills, and expertise of Australians (70.4%). Very few alumni reported a negative change over the past five years (since 2016) in their views of Australia as a country (3%), Australian people (2.8%), or the knowledge skills and expertise of Australians (1%).

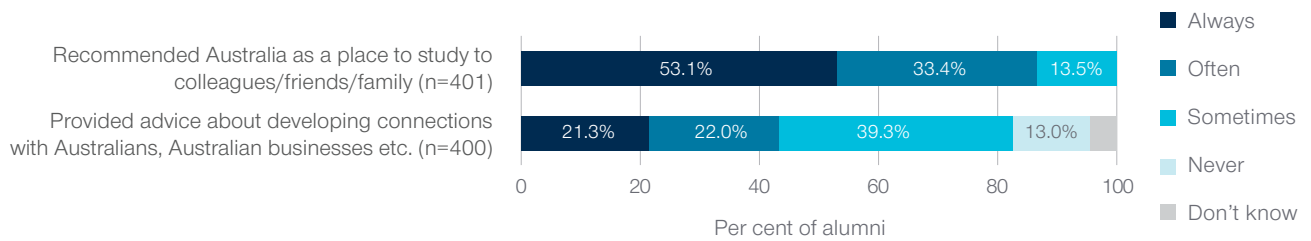
Figure 23: Changes in alumni views over the past five years (since 2016) (n=399)



6.3 Promoting study and connections in Australia

Since 2016, all alumni (100%) stated they had recommended Australia as a place to study to their colleagues, friends, and family, with over half of alumni reporting that they always recommend studying in Australia (53.1%). Many alumni (82.6%) also stated they provided advice about developing connections with Australians and Australian businesses, while only 13 per cent of alumni said that they never did during the past five years (Figure 24: Frequency alumni provided advice to other about opportunities in Australia in the past five years (since 2016) (n=401)). These findings indicate that positive views of Australia, generated initially by their award experience over 10 years ago, are extended by alumni through them sharing these views with their networks.

Figure 24: Frequency alumni provided advice to other about opportunities in Australia in the past five years (since 2016) (n=401)



The insights from alumni also reflect a diverse range of values and perspectives. Examples of alumni responses referencing the above most stated words include:

[I] got the opportunity from the High Commission to visit Australia again in 2017, [I] graduated while in Australia, and attended a conference in Australia by invitation of government...[this] contributed to my improved perception.

[I recently had the] Chance to work collaboratively with Australians and Australian organisations in Indonesia.

Australia has better adaption of technology. Australian people, [I] view slightly more negative due to the COVID-19 response.

My Australian friend, whom I met on the Award, paid me a visit in 2018. Our friendship is still going strong.

I have been involved in collaboration with two Australian universities in different cities. In social, the more I visit Australia, the more I feel at home.

The Australian Government has shown great success in protecting the people from the COVID-19 pandemic. Australian people became more accommodating to the new immigrants.

The continuous support through small grants says that Australia cares for the plight of our people.

My past knowledge about Australia's dominant energy source has changed. Several years ago, there was strong evidence that Australia would be persistent in relying on coal as the dominant energy source, but through recent global environmental initiatives and climate change issues, I see that many young Australians DO concern about environmental issues affecting their futures, and they demand the Australia government to take any actions. As a result, my perception has changed.

7. Conclusion

This study is the first longitudinal tracer survey undertaken by the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (GTF). It follows from the 2016 Year 1 Global Tracer Survey of alumni who graduated between 2006 and 2010 and tracked a sub-cohort of alumni who completed their award from 2007 to 2010. The results of this study provide DFAT’s Global Education and Scholarships section, Posts and managing contractors with extended insight into the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards and how the effect of the award continues a decade later by charting the progression of alumni who are now mid- to late-career.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that since undertaking their scholarships in Australia more than 10 years ago, the impact of the awards is evident. Alumni value and can utilise the skills, knowledge, and networks they developed on award in Australia to contribute to the long-term program outcomes of the Australia Awards, contribution to sustainable development and bilateral cooperation. In the progression of their careers, alumni indicate that Australian degrees continue to be relevant to their work and recognised by their employers, with most alumni continuing to hold positions of influence over the past five years.

These alumni were asked what it meant to be an Australia Awards alumni today regarding the influence the award currently has on their lives, professionally and personally. The rich answers they provided are summarised in the word diagram (Figure 26: Alumni responses to ‘What does being an Australia Awards alumni mean to you?’ Reflections on any ongoing benefit or impact the Australia Awards has had on alumni personally or professionally (n=383)), where the larger the word font, the more frequently alumni used it. The diagram highlights many of the aims and objectives of the Australia Awards themselves, demonstrating their ongoing relevance and importance to these alumni, even more than a decade after they completed their scholarships.

Figure 26: Alumni responses to ‘What does being an Australia Awards alumni mean to you?’ Reflections on any ongoing benefit or impact the Australia Awards has had on alumni personally or professionally (n=383)



Australia Awards alumni continue to contribute to sustainable development with an impact on their organisations and society. The effect of the Australia Awards in enabling alumni to make these contributions is sustaining, with alumni reporting similar rates of contributions to development through their work in both 2016 and 2021.

Alumni contributions to cooperation between Australia and partner countries are reflected through their personal and professional networks developed while on award and as alumni. While the frequency of contact with their peers, Australian professionals and Australian representatives has decreased since 2016, many alumni stated that they have been able to build or maintain their networks during these five years up to 2021.

One third of alumni have developed a professional link with an Australian organisation in the five years since the previous survey – this points to the ongoing capacity and interest among alumni in developing relationships with Australians. One of the factors enabling the continued development of partnerships was that developing connections and networks for many alumni is part of their job (61.5%). Of the challenges that alumni reported they experienced in developing professional connections with Australian organisations, the predominant factors included uncertainty by the alumni on how to find and approach Australian organisations to establish relationships and a lack of opportunity to make connections with such organisations while on award.

Alumni hold complex but overall positive views about Australia as a country, Australian people and Australian knowledge, skills, and expertise. These views have been built on their experiences on award in Australia and contribute to alumni interest in remaining engaged with their Australian networks and actively recommending study and professional opportunities in Australia to their friends, family, and colleagues. These less recent alumni are valuable ambassadors of the Australia Awards who have significant professional experience and networks to contribute to the Australia Awards alumni community.

7.1 Recommendation: Engage with less recent alumni

Based on the findings of this longitudinal study, the following section outlines three issues and recommendations for enhancing the long-term outcomes of less recent alumni. **Alumni are unsure how to approach Australian organisations for partnering:** The survey data showed that more than three quarters of alumni stated it was likely in the next five years they would seek opportunities to partner with Australian organisations as part of their work. However, between 2016 and 2021 almost two thirds of alumni did not develop a professional link with an Australian organisation due to not knowing how to approach Australian organisations for partnering (43.7% of alumni), and not knowing any Australian organisations to approach (32.6% of alumni). This indicates a gap between what alumni would like to do, and a barrier which can be addressed by Posts and managing contractors.

Alumni have decreasing links with Australia but are interested in remaining connected: Overall, alumni reported they have decreasing contact with their networks developed on award and as alumni. One quarter of alumni (25.8%) reported the personal nature of their networks was a challenge to fostering connections as they did not share a professional link in the field or sectors they work in. A similar proportion of alumni (24.4%) stated they had lost email or social media contact information for their networks. These are factors which Posts and managing contractors could influence with specific alumni engagement activities that are attractive to less recent alumni who have a unique offering to DFAT and the Australia Awards alumni community. Many of these alumni have developed significant professional experience and hold positions of influence (89.9%) as well as an intention to be involved in future Australia Awards alumni events (84.1%). While many alumni (76%) reported they have remained in contact with their local alumni association, current engagement by Posts with this group is low. More than half of the alumni (57.7%) stated they never had contact with their local Australian Embassy or High Commission, a significant increase from 29.9 per cent of the alumni reporting this in 2016.

There is unclear understanding of female alumni career progression and barriers to formal leadership positions:

This study revealed new insight into how female alumni careers are progressing compared to male alumni. While female alumni were as likely as male alumni to report progression in their roles at work in terms of complexity and responsibilities, they were less likely than male alumni (by 10 percentage points) to hold a formal leadership role in their workplace. There are factors influencing these differences which we still do not understand - such as female alumni perspectives on leadership, career aspirations and their specific local contexts. Undertaking a deeper examination of female alumni perspectives and experiences of their careers since completing their Award would help identify solutions to better support professional development for female alumni post award.

The following table summarises the recommendations and who can influence addressing these three issues.

Issue	Recommendation	Who can influence
1. Alumni are unsure how to approach Australian organisations for partnering	<p>Workshops for alumni who have a role that require developing partnerships, or those interested, to build communication and negotiation skills and strategies in approaching Australian organisations for partnering.</p> <p>These could be undertaken as standalone alumni engagement activities in-country or via a Fellowships modality. Both options would be enhanced by being sector specific with participation from relevant Australian organisations interested in partnering with local organisations in the partner country.</p>	<p>Posts and MCs</p> <p>DFAT Global Education and Scholarships Section (GLE)</p>
2. Alumni have decreasing links with Australia and fellow alumni but are interested in remaining connected	<p>Networking among alumni and Australian organisations operating in partner countries in similar sectors would enhance the professional development workshop and provide a forum for interested groups to make initial connections.</p> <p>For alumni seeking to reconnect, cohort reunions could address this challenge for those that live in the same country.</p>	<p>Posts and MCs</p>
3. Unclear understanding of female alumni career progression and barriers to formal leadership positions	<p>Undertake global and context specific research to examine more deeply female alumni perceptions and experiences of leadership (positional and developmental) and career progression.</p>	<p>GTF – an upcoming case study will explore further with a sub-cohort of female alumnae from Indonesia</p> <p>Encourage Posts and MCs to explore further as well</p>

8. Acronyms

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interview
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
GTF	Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OASIS	Online Australia Awards Scholarships Information System

Appendix A: Longitudinal Global Tracer Survey instrument

The full survey instrument is available via pdf at the following site:

<https://research.acer.edu.au/tracer/32/>

Appendix B: GTF Global Tracer Survey population further information

Table 3: Country of birth of alumni respondents to 2021 Longitudinal Global Tracer Survey

Country of Birth	Number of respondents	% of sample
Indonesia	274	62.0
Pakistan	52	11.8
Bangladesh	45	10.2
Mongolia	17	3.8
Bhutan	16	3.6
Tanzania	8	1.8
Lesotho	6	1.4
Malawi	5	1.1
China	4	0.9
Zambia	4	0.9
Vanuatu	3	0.7
Fiji	3	0.7
Other countries	5	1.1
Total	442	100.0

Note: 'Other Countries' are countries with alumni in the sample but fewer than 3 responses. Includes Solomon Islands, Kenya, and Timor Leste.

Scholarships, fellowships, and other awards included in population for the GTF Global Tracer Surveys are listed below:

- Australian Development Scholarships
- Australia Awards Scholarship
- Australia Awards fellowship
- Australian Leadership Awards
- Australia Partnership Scholarships
- Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
- Australian Sponsored Training Assistance Scheme
- Carnegie Mellon University AusAID Scholarships
- Australia Pakistan Scholarships Program
- Australia Iraq Agricultural Scholarships
- Equity and Merit Scholarship Scheme
- Colombo Plan Scholarships
- Australian Development Cooperation Scholarships
- United Nations Development Programme
- Eduka Scholarships
- International Monetary Fund
- John Crawford Scholarship Scheme
- Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative
- AusAID Private Sector Category
- Australian Partnership Scholarship
- Winrock
- Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Program

Note: in addition to this list, alumni with the notation 'Unspecified Development Award' in DFAT records were also included in the population scope. Alumni who responded to the survey were asked to update the detail of their award where possible.

Appendix C: Survey response rates by region and gender

Table 4: Target population, respondents, and response rates to 2021 Longitudinal Global Tracer Survey, by country and gender

Countries	Target population			Respondents			Response rate		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Bangladesh	37	40	77	22	23	45	59.5%	57.5%	58.4%
Bhutan	8	22	30	2	14	16	25.0%	63.6%	53.3%
China	nr	nr	9	nr	nr	4	nr	nr	44.4%
Fiji	nr	nr	5	nr	nr	3	nr	nr	60.0%
Indonesia	305	307	612	128	146	274	42.0%	47.6%	44.8%
Lesotho	nr	nr	17	nr	nr	6	nr	nr	35.3%
Malawi	nr	nr	14	nr	nr	5	42.9%	28.6%	35.7%
Mongolia	18	14	32	14	3	17	77.8%	21.4%	53.1%
Pakistan	26	67	93	15	37	52	57.7%	55.2%	55.9%
Tanzania	8	10	18	5	3	8	62.5%	30.0%	44.4%
Vanuatu	nr	nr	5	nr	nr	3	nr	nr	60.0%
Zambia	nr	nr	11	nr	nr	4	0.0%	44.4%	36.4%
Other countries*	14	21	35	2	3	5	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Total	446	512	958	200	242	442	44.8%	47.3%	46.1%

Note: Where individual number of male or females is below 3 in population or respondent cell, the gender data is not reported ('nr')

*'Other Countries' are countries with alumni in the sample but fewer than 3 responses. Includes Solomon Islands, Kenya, and Timor Leste.