

Team Leader, New Colombo Plan Program Support Unit

Start Date	1 June 2026	Duration	3 years
Location	Adelaide preferred	Reports To	Palladium Contractor Representative

Palladium is a global development and consulting firm, part of the GSI Consulting Group, working alongside some of the world's leading project management and engineering organisations. We partner with governments, businesses, investors and communities to design and deliver complex programs that create lasting impact. With a presence across more than 90 countries, Palladium offers the opportunity to work on meaningful challenges, alongside talented colleagues, in environments where your work can truly make a difference.

Program overview

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) plays a key role in supporting the Australian Government's objectives in building Asia capability. It aims to lift the Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy in Australia by supporting Australian undergraduates to undertake study, language learning and internships in the Indo-Pacific. The goal of NCP is *NCP alumni contribute their skills, knowledge and networks to Australia's enduring engagement in the Indo-Pacific region*. This is achieved through three complementary grants programs: the Scholarship Program, Mobility Program and Semester Program.

The NCP is administered by Palladium on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) via the Program Support Unit (PSU) under the Australia Awards Global Support Mechanism (AAGSM). The AAGSM provides operational and technical support services to DFAT's International Education and Scholarships Branch, with two End of Investment Outcomes (EOIOs):

- EOIO 1 - Operational Support: High quality and efficient administrative and standard business support services provided to DFAT.
- EOIO 2: Technical Support: High quality, coherent, consistent and fit for purpose technical support services that also promote gender equality, disability and social inclusion outcomes throughout DFAT's international scholarship programs network.

The NCP PSU supports DFAT's New Colombo Plan Secretariat (NCS) with high-quality grant administration and management consistent with the principles of the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles. Support service delivery includes end-to-end grants cycle and funds management, as well as technical support in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), alumni engagement, communications, events management, business sector engagement and risk management.

Purpose of position

The Team Leader is the Contractor's dedicated senior lead for the NCP PSU and the primary operational interface with NCS. The role focuses on execution, coordination and performance, ensuring DFAT's strategic direction is clearly understood and consistently operationalised across all aspects of delivery.

The Team Leader maintains regular and strategic dialogue with DFAT and leads, manages and coordinates people, systems and workflows to deliver agreed activities and to support achievement of AAGSM and NCP outcomes.

This is a hands-on delivery leadership role suited to an experienced program leader who can balance senior-level engagement with detailed operational oversight in a complex, high-accountability environment.

Primary responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Lead and manage the NCP PSU in accordance with DFAT's policy settings, ensuring delivery is adaptive and responsive to emerging issues, risks and priorities.
- Drive innovative and effective service delivery across the scholarships, semester and mobility grants programs, scholar support, financial management, alumni engagement, communications and outreach, risk and safeguard management, reporting and enabling functions.
- Ensure effective collaboration across the AAGSM to maximise efficiencies and coherence across DFAT's scholarship and fellowships programs.

Program delivery and performance

- Lead the establishment and maintenance of Annual Work Plans, performance assessment systems and results frameworks to ensure alignment with DFAT requirements, and support assessment of progress towards outcomes.
- Take accountability for NCP PSU performance including deliverables, milestones and service levels.
- Drive continuous review and reflect on program inputs, processes, and outcomes, with a view to providing recommendations to DFAT on program improvement and innovation.
- Identify and pursue operational efficiencies, including opportunities to streamline delivery, and leverage resources across the AAGSM.
- Oversee budgets, forecasting and financial controls to support value for money and efficient delivery.

DFAT and stakeholder engagement

- Lead NCP PSU representation in governance mechanisms and meetings as directed by NCS.
- Lead on the development of a Ways of Working framework and maintain strong, professional and solutions focused relationships with NCS. Provide NCS with clear, timely and pragmatic advice on delivery performance, risks, trends and improvement opportunities.
- Under NCS direction, lead NCP PSU relationship management with universities and the broader delivery network, clearly communicating NCP policy objectives, program intent and changes to support shared understanding and quality outcomes.

Team leadership and management

- Lead, motivate and develop a multidisciplinary team across all delivery components, set clear expectations and accountabilities, fostering a client focused, high-performance culture of continuous improvement underpinned by a growth mindset.
- Ensure the PSU has the capability, structure and resourcing required to meet current and future service demands including formal periodic reviews of the organisational structure.

Risk and safeguarding

- Ensure fit for purpose mechanisms are in place for risk management, safeguarding, fraud control and compliance across all components of the NCP PSU.
- Lead responses to critical incidents, issues or emerging risks, ensuring an appropriate level of communication with NCS.

Reporting, monitoring and continuous improvement

- Oversee high quality contractual and operational reporting ensuring all documentation is designed with the end user in mind and aligns with DFAT requirements.
- Ensure a focus on program outcomes is embedded across all delivery and lead the development, implementation and ongoing refinement of program reporting, data and performance frameworks, including monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

- Lead the establishment and maintenance of mechanisms to proactively share statistic information, analysis and observations that would benefit program operations and performance, and inform decisions.

Other Responsibilities

- Comply with and promote DFAT policies across all aspects of implementation, including GEDSI, safeguarding, fraud and anti-corruption, PSEAH, child protection, and environmental and social safeguards.
- Engage in relevant Palladium corporate initiatives and development opportunities, to ensure consistency with Palladium approaches and practices, and compliance with systems and processes.
- Perform other duties as reasonably required by the Contractor Representative or DFAT, consistent with the role and experience.
- Undertake local and international travel as required.

Delivery principles

- One Team – committed to the One Team approach to achieving EOIOs, modelling intentional and open communication, collaboration and shared problem solving, strength in differences and a learning culture.
- Client focused delivery – provide leadership to ensure provision of sophisticated services which are client, solutions and outcomes focused.
- Flexible and responsive – provide leadership to embed a flexible and responsive approach to service delivery, responding to evolving priorities and focusing on continuous improvement, proactively identifying opportunities for improved quality, efficiency and outcomes.
- Ethics and Integrity - operate with high levels of integrity, consistent with the intent of DFAT's Ethics, Integrity and Professional Standards Policy Manual.

Relationships and accountability

The position of Team Leader will report into the Contractor Representative. The role will:

- Ensure effective collaboration across the AAGSM to maximise efficiencies and coherence across DFAT's scholarship and fellowships programs.
- Provide effective leadership to the NCP PSU Senior Management Team to ensure DFAT's strategic direction is clearly understood and consistently operationalised across all aspects of delivery across the NCP PSU.
- Carry a significant degree of autonomy and lead the NCP PSU delivery team and budget.

Qualifications, capabilities and experience required

- Significant senior experience leading complex program support units or service delivery operations, ideally under government contract, including delivery experience with DFAT or other Australian Government agencies.
- Experience delivering international education, scholarships or grants programs highly desirable.
- Demonstrated ability to operationalise policy and strategy into practical, scalable delivery models.
- Proven experience coordinating multidisciplinary teams and workflows in high-accountability environments.
- Sound financial, risk and compliance management expertise, including safeguarding and duty of care.
- High level stakeholder engagement and communication skills, with the ability to work effectively with senior government clients.

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in management, public policy, international relations, education or a related discipline, or equivalent professional experience.

Core capabilities

Palladium's Core Capability Framework for APAC Projects outlines the standard of performance and behaviours expected at each level within the organisation.

It is recommended that all employees are familiar with the capabilities expected of them at their level as the framework will be utilised to optimise performance.