

INCREASE AUSTRALIAN AID AND OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

RESTORE AUSTRALIAN AID TO AT LEAST \$5.5 BILLION

Australia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, consistently placed in the top three wealthiest nations per adult in the annual Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report. Yet the Australian Government has cut back our aid budget and reneged on our commitment for official development assistance (ODA) to reach 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) by 2030.

The government must reverse these decisions. Australia has the potential to be a much better global citizen. When people are empowered to take charge of their lives and work their way out of poverty, everyone benefits.

Australians continue to donate to humanitarian and development organisations such as Oxfam. But these efforts far from replace the role of official aid in boosting humanitarian action and reaching the poorest people. As a member of the Group of 20 (G20), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations (UN), Australia must invest appropriately, along with its peers, in global efforts to alleviate poverty and tackle humanitarian emergencies.

WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO

BOLSTER THE AID BUDGET.

Restore Australian aid to at least \$5.5 billion by no later than the 2019–2020 federal budget.

CONTRIBUTE OUR FAIR SHARE.

Commit Australia's ODA to reach 0.7% of GNI by 2030.

WHY

Business leaders, church and community groups and people all over Australia have expressed public outrage over the government's extreme cuts to the Australian aid budget. More than 60,000 Australians have signed up to be part of the *Campaign for Australian Aid*, taking more than 71,500 actions calling on politicians to increase our contribution.

With projected growth in the Australian economy, an aid budget of \$5.5 billion would still only equate to around 1% of the entire federal budget and would be equivalent to around 0.26% of Australia's GNI — nowhere near the goal of 0.7%. In other words, Australia can afford to make this modest investment in aid without compromising other important areas of spending.

Stepping up on aid is in everyone's interest. A fair aid program creates stability by lifting people out of poverty. Aid fosters peace and sustainable local economies, making our own country less likely to be drawn into or threatened by regional conflicts. It also addresses the root causes of refugee flows. In the area of health, a strong official Australian aid program is able to lower the risk of health pandemics entering Australia by assisting health systems, and providing vaccines and medical treatment. Australian business leaders know that the Australian economy, now more than ever, is interconnected with Asia, the Pacific and the globe. In a global economy, the

success of Australian businesses and investments depends on the strength, stability and health of the nations with which we work.

If nothing is done to change the trajectory of spending on Australian aid, the government will be investing around 0.15% of our GNI on aid by 2030. Today, the government already spends less than the average wealthy OECD country on aid, coming in 16th out of 28 countries last year.¹ This is despite having the lowest national debt and an economy that has continued to grow. If the government spent just 0.15% of our GNI on aid, at 2014 spending levels we would rank 22nd out of the wealthy 28 countries that are measured by the OECD, despite our much greater wealth. Not only would this send a strong international message that Australia is not prepared to do our fair share for our neighbours, millions would miss out on the support that a fair Australian aid budget could provide.

ABOUT OXFAM

Around the world, one person in three lives in poverty. Oxfam is determined to change that by mobilising the power of people against poverty. Globally, Oxfam works to find practical, innovative ways for people to lift themselves out of poverty and thrive. We save lives and help rebuild livelihoods when crisis strikes. And we campaign so that the voices of poor people influence the local and global decisions that affect them. In all we do, Oxfam works with partner organisations and alongside vulnerable women and men to end the injustices that cause poverty.

Oxfam Australia, a partner of the Australian Government, is an independent, not-for-profit, international development organisation. We have more than 550,000 supporters in Australia who contribute skills, time and financial support to advance our work in Australia and around the world.

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/development-aid-rises-again-in-2015-spending-on-refugees-doubles.htm>