

campaign for *Australian Aid*

Submission to
**Foreign Policy
White Paper**



Executive Summary

A consistent theme from the 8400+ submissions through our Up To Us website and our three public forums was the importance of looking beyond our own interests to support those in need. It's important to approach our country's and the world's problems with an attitude that **we're all in this together**. Alongside interdependence and community other important values that should guide Australia's foreign policy include the equal worth of all people, unity with nature, a fair-go for all, democracy, compassion, empathy and generosity.

Campaign for Australian aid believes that Australia's interests are best served by a focus not just on today but also on future generations. Therefore **Australia must be a global leader** helping to solve the world's toughest challenges and advancing a fairer, more sustainable and peaceful world. **Australian aid and international development** must be a key pillar of foreign policy to help achieve that vision.

The major threats and opportunities facing not just Australia, but the world, requires an Australian foreign policy with an emergency-level focus on **climate change** and the inter-related challenges of **reducing inequality and poverty**.

These challenges cannot be solved as single issues. Nor can any one nation solve its problems alone. The challenges facing us are global, and will require global cooperation on an entirely new scale and will require Australia to lead and to exceed what is required of us, not simply do the bare minimum. The Sustainable Development Goals provide one powerful framework for progress.

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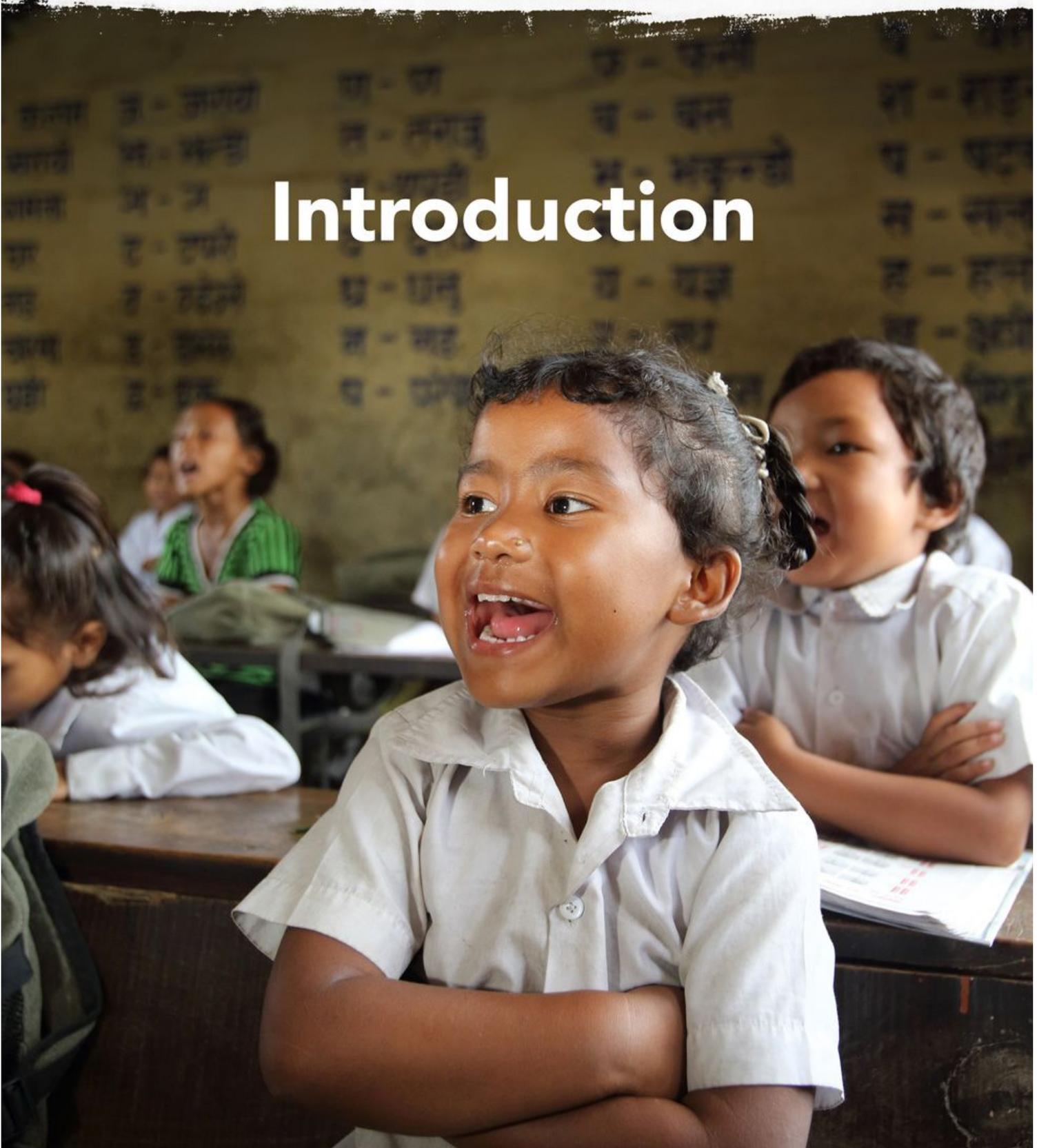
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Introduction



1. The Campaign for Australian Aid

- 1.1. The Campaign for Australian Aid is for all Australians who believe we can and should do more as a nation to end extreme poverty around the world. We're over 55 aid and development organisations, plus churches, community groups, businesses and over 115,000 people who speak out for a world where all women, children and men can fulfil their potential and live a happy and healthy life. See final page for full list.
- 1.2. This submission was informed by over 8400 individual submissions through our "Up To Us" website as well as public forums held in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane.

2. "National interest" should benefit today and future generations by securing a peaceful, stable and prosperous world for all

- 2.1. National interest has to be understood in a proper time frame - thinking not just of today but our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world and the Australia future generations will live in.
- 2.2. Our security, prosperity and influence can only be ensured when we contribute to overcoming global challenges. We need to seek our national interest in concert with other nations, to shape a future where Australia – and the rest of the world – can flourish.
- 2.3. Australia will be much better off among neighbours who enjoy more peace and security, better health and greater prosperity.
- 2.4. Australia's interests are best served by a focus not just on today but also future generations. Therefore Australia should aspire to be a global leader helping to solve the world's toughest challenges and advancing a fairer, more sustainable and peaceful world. Australian aid and international development must be a key pillar of foreign policy to help achieve that vision.
- 2.5. The major threats and opportunities facing not just Australia, but the world, requires an Australian foreign policy with an emergency-level focus on climate change and the inter-related challenges of reducing inequality and poverty.

- 2.6. These challenges cannot be solved as single issues. Nor can any one nation solve its problems alone. The challenges facing us are global, and will require global cooperation on an entirely new scale and will require Australia to lead and to exceed what is required of us, not simply do the bare minimum.

3. Values and principles that should guide Australia's foreign policy

- 3.1. There are a range of values that resonate with Australians and should guide Australia's foreign policy:
 - 3.1.1. **The equal worth of all people:** recognising that we all have equal worth as human beings and an equal right to a good life.
 - 3.1.2. **Interdependence and community:** recognising that we depend on each other, and are not just isolated individuals but social beings who can achieve more together than apart.
 - 3.1.3. **Unity with nature:** we are part of nature and respect nature limits; looking after nature is a gift to ourselves, each other and future generations.
 - 3.1.4. We pride ourselves on being the land of the fair go. **Fairness** is reflected in many of our domestic and international policies, none more so than our overseas aid program. Australian aid has helped millions of people overcome barriers that cause poverty, oppression and injustice, to access a good education, quality healthcare, security and sustainable employment. Australia should continue to give people living in the poorest parts of the world a fair go through a stronger aid program.
 - 3.1.5. **Democracy** is founded on fair elections, institutions that curb elected representatives' power, the freedom to act in one's best interest and to seek change, and the right to have one's will enacted by elected representatives. Australia must support democracies around the world to ensure positive futures for unstable nations.
 - 3.1.6. **Compassion, empathy, mercy and generosity** are at the heart of what it means to be human, so Australian foreign policy must be grounded in shared humanity.

For decades, Australian aid has helped people break free from the devastating cycles of poverty, disadvantage and oppression. If we prioritise compassion, Australian aid can continue to be a powerful force for transforming lives and communities.

- 3.2. Australian aid is a key tool in both reflecting and projecting Australian values.

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Top Priorities



4. Australia must be a global leader, not a follower

- 4.1. Australia should be at the forefront of international responses to the major global issues of concern. The world is in crisis: we're tackling war, poverty, hunger, displaced people and climate change alongside a rise in nationalist, and isolationist sentiment.
- 4.2. To lead the global community, Australia must do more to help overcome these global challenges; we must lead by example and promote solutions. We must also live the values we promote internationally here at home – including domestic human rights, and contributions to global cooperation and aid projects.
- 4.3. Countries going it alone is dangerous and Australia should do all it can to encourage global cooperation and integration. Australia must work to strengthen the global system of international rules and respect human rights.
- 4.4. Australia's global leadership is enhanced by walking the talk in Australia - with consistent domestic policies on achieving the SDGs in Australia including - indigenous rights and recognition, gender equality and representation, human rights, disability rights, reducing inequality, ending poverty, and emission (air and water pollution) reductions.
- 4.5. In championing application and upholding of human rights around the world Australia should make a special priority of championing the role of civil society and the necessary legal, normative, social and political protections that enable vibrant civil societies.
- 4.6. A leading Australia would be one that is working with others to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, on reforming and strengthening global institutions such as the UN, on meeting and exceeding our global financial, people seeking asylum and climate commitments, on abiding by international law, on fair trade and investment policies and robust corporate tax laws, and providing leadership, both within Australia and on the world stage, on climate change and inequality.
- 4.7. Australia has a strong economy, a stable population and a significant opportunity to welcome people seeking refuge across the globe. We must commit to increasing our humanitarian intake to 42,000 by 2021.

5. Australia must have an emergency-level focus on climate change

- 5.1. Climate change is the greatest threat to our region's future prosperity. Government, business and individuals unsustainable use of natural resources and environmental degradation is causing more extreme weather events and a vulnerable global food system. Australia's future stability depends on a healthy planet, so we must meet emissions targets to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees celsius.
- 5.2. According to the World Bank, climate change could mean that a child born today may not be able to inhabit our earth by the time they turn 83 (the end of this century). But if we act now, we can leave our children a healthy planet.
- 5.3. The security and human development impacts of a +1.5 degrees rise in temperature will be profound. One of the earliest and obvious impacts will be the growth in number and force of extreme events, with the consequential effect of displaced people and drains on humanitarian relief - exactly the sort of events in our part of the world which should be provoking deep consideration in the White Paper.
- 5.4. Australia needs to act decisively to address climate change and its effects on vulnerable people. We have the means to help countries already threatened by climate change, many of whom are our regional neighbours and have not caused the destructive climate conditions they face today.
- 5.5. Climate change has a devastating impact on the Pacific, whose island nations are among the most impacted. Sea levels rise, crop yields decrease, fishing stocks are depleted, flooding and erosion threaten households and livelihoods. These conditions, unless tackled, will lead to a significant escalation in climate-induced migration.
- 5.6. Australia has a significant role to play in increasing contributions to the Global Green Climate Fund. More Australian aid can also help our regional neighbours to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- 5.7. Australia must meet emissions targets to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees celsius, and ban new coal and gas mines. Australia can lead the world in climate-responsive technology innovations and sustainable development.

- 5.8. Australia should lead international efforts on combating climate change, strive to reduce carbon emissions, encourage action overseas, decrease our reliance on coal, and promote the understanding that climate change, poverty and inequality are linked. The environmental crisis and the crisis of poverty are one crisis. Neither problem can be solved in isolation from the other.

6. Reducing inequality and poverty is vital for peace, human security and prosperity

- 6.1. The growth of income and wealth inequality is economically harmful and politically unsustainable. Extreme concentration of wealth undermines the economy, particularly by depressing demand for goods and services. It corrodes democracy as the wealthiest few exercise a disproportionate effect on the political process.
- 6.2. Inequality is a threat to Australia's open economy, open society, to our democracy and global peace. Inequality is also contributing to people turning to protectionist and isolationist policies, sentiment that will increase if growing inequality within and between countries is not addressed.
- 6.3. Australia's prosperity depends on overcoming extreme poverty and inequality, and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth for all. As the gap between rich and poor widens, global security becomes weaker and weaker. By writing off poor nations' excess debts, Australia could support development in those countries. By supporting a minimum tax on corporate income, Australia can help to stop corporations secretly shifting money around the world.
- 6.4. Addressing inequality requires a rethink of tax policies, trade policies, global tax policies, and the influence and power of corporations compared with ordinary people. Australia needs to promote sustainable and inclusive growth and a fair global taxation system.
- 6.5. Today, 800 million lives are still characterised by persistent, absolute poverty. Poverty stops people from achieving their potential, from contributing fully to society, and from enjoying basic health.
- 6.6. Poverty's twin is inequality: in 2017, 8 billionaires own the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world – 3.6

billion people. We must eradicate absolute poverty and inequality to create a fairer world.

- 6.7. The gap between the super-rich 1% and the rest of the world is only getting bigger. Australia must help make the world fairer – by helping other countries develop strong and inclusive systems for education and justice.
- 6.8. Current pursuits of economic growth, with little attention to the distribution of growth's benefits or the impacts on earth's support systems and finite resources, has led to a situation of inequality where our actions are acting as a brake on economic growth. Consolidating wealth and power in the hands of very few people, as opposed to increasing the growth for the poorest 20%, is halting growth.
- 6.9. The economic impact of rising natural disasters, structural exclusion of women, people with a disability, old and young people, and those from sexual, ethnic, religious and/or racial minority groups is crippling the growth potential of the world economy.
- 6.10. An inability to shift to growth models that preserve the safe-operating space within our planetary boundaries and manage our demand on finite resources will quickly erode the prospect of ongoing prosperity into the future with greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation also acting as drivers of insecurity.
- 6.11. Poverty can cause disability, and disability can entrench poverty. 1 in 5 people in developing countries has a disability. Australia was the first country to introduce a strategy for disability-inclusive development. Australia should champion the cause of people with disabilities through the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network, and by advocating in mainstream arenas like the High Level Political Forum.

6.12. Building peace and human security

- 6.12.1. Peace is the best legacy we can leave to future generations. Building a more peaceful world will make a lasting impact on our children. Australia should use its relationships and economic influence to resolve conflict and create peace.
- 6.12.2. The challenges we face are no longer the kinds that can be protected against by strengthening borders

and militaries and being prepared for conflict. In facing challenges to security posed by climate change, pandemics and disease threats, humanitarian conflicts, people movement and migration we need to broaden our conception of security. A human security approach is required.

- 6.12.3. The security of states increasingly relies on the security of individuals within states and the extent to which they live free from fear and violence and free to live life with dignity.
- 6.12.4. Australia's focus must be human security because this is the way to ensure national security. As the Syrian civil war exacerbates the international refugee crisis and the rise of ISIS, global order is under threat. Australia should set an example on the world stage of protecting human security: safeguarding personal freedoms, responding to climate change, and working to prevent further conflict.
- 6.12.5. Australia must do more to prevent conflict as part of aid and development. This means preventing violence and actively cultivating conditions for human flourishing – like good governance, economic activity and social engagement.
- 6.12.6. A human security approach would have the advantage of providing a conceptual frame to maximise the potential of the integrated Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)—bringing coherence and clarity to the mutually reinforcing nature of the work being done within diplomacy, development and trade.

6.13. Promoting gender justice

- 6.13.1. All women and girls have the right to live free from violence and abuse – but 1 in 3 are denied this right. Australia can lead the world to end violence towards women and girls.
- 6.13.2. Women and girls everywhere should have the same opportunities we enjoy in Australia. If women and girls – who represent half the world's population – had equal access to education and employment, they, their families and their communities would have the chance to thrive. And we know that when women and girls empowered, everyone benefits. If we're serious about ending poverty, we must focus on women and girls.
- 6.13.3. We need more women and girls in political and

economic leadership, to shape decisions that affect them. This is vital if we want to ensure gender equality and a more prosperous future. Australia should use its influence to increase the number of women and girls in decision-making roles – at home and around the world.

6.14. Ethical and fair trade

- 6.14.1. Australia should advocate for mandatory due diligence in trade policy, including in supply chains. Australian should ensure that trade agreements prioritise the security and rights of workers, landholders and communities and do not produce detrimental environmental or social outcomes. Providing guidance to Australian companies on managing these requirements while also holding companies to account legally when they violate the rights of people overseas.
- 6.14.2. Australia should negotiating trade agreements that consider and prioritise the social and environmental impacts of its trade equal to the economic outcomes and incentivises trading partners to do the same. This includes removing fossil fuel subsidies, promoting economic diversification, and adhere to the approximately 20 targets within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on trade.
- 6.14.3. Australia should take a whole of government approach to sustainable development where all government policies that affect developing countries – such as our environmental, migration, taxation and trade policies – are consistent with achieving the SDGs.
- 6.14.4. Australia should advancing the inclusion of women and other marginalised groups in the economic, social and political spheres through diplomacy, within trade, and through development.

7. Australian aid and international development are a key foreign policy tool to deliver a fairer, more sustainable and peaceful world

- 7.1. Aid and development is a statement of our values overseas and key mechanism to achieve our foreign policy objectives.

A weak aid budget reduces the Australian government's ability to achieve its foreign policy. Aid and development must be a key pillar of foreign relations. The massive cuts to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) over the past the years has weakened Australia's ability to fully realise its foreign policy.

- 7.2. Australian aid is at its lowest level ever (as a percentage of GNI) while the need for global cooperation has never been greater. Australia should follow the UK's lead and legislate an aid budget of 0.7% of GNI and prioritise poverty reduction and meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It's time we recognised the crucial role aid plays in creating the kind of world we want.
- 7.3. The main goal of Australian aid should be ending poverty and helping achieve the SDGs. The purpose of aid is to break down the barriers of poverty that stop vulnerable people from reaching their potential. Australia can help the world reach the Sustainable Development Goals, and it's time we did so.

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