
PROPOSAL 7 - INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE – A GENEROUS AUSTRALIAN AID COMMITMENT

The International Partnerships and Development Commission (*IPDC) and Social Justice Commission (*SJC) propose:

That the Synod:

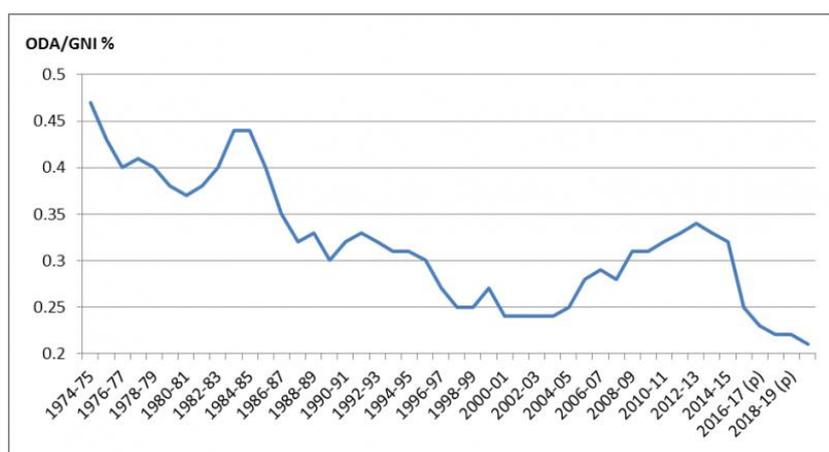
1. affirm that Australian development aid, funded by government, church and individuals, is an effective and powerful way of combating poverty and injustice throughout the world, thereby addressing the root causes of conflict, instability, people displacement and disease;
2. express profound concern regarding recent cuts to Australian aid, reducing it to the lowest levels in our history;
3. call on the Federal Government to
 - 3.1 begin restoration of overseas aid cuts from the budgets of the past six years; and
 - 3.2 commit to achieving the internationally agreed aid target of 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI) by 2030, beginning with a return to the top half of rich country aid donors by the end of next parliamentary term.

Mover: Susy Thomas

Seconded: Dr Elaine Ledgerwood

Rationale

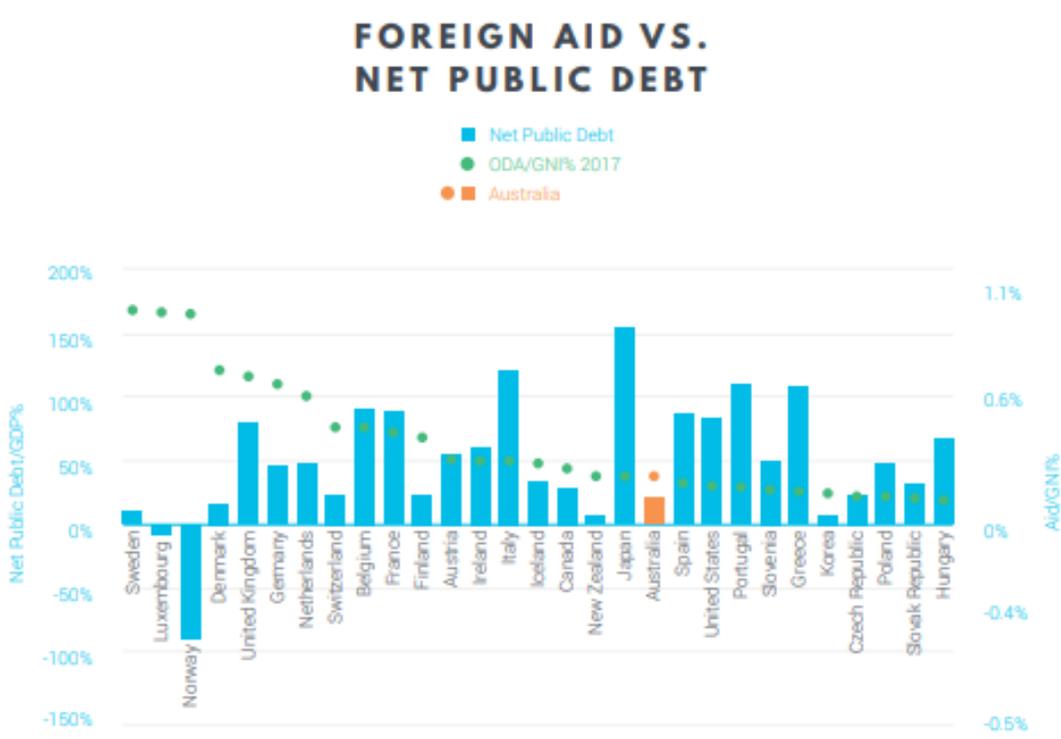
After a bi-partisan commitment in the year 2000 to increasing our foreign aid contribution to 0.5% of GNI by the year 2015, Australian aid reached its highest point in the 2012-13 period (0.34% of GNI). Since then, we have witnessed successive cuts to our aid program through the past six budgets.



¹ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/issues/australian-foreign-aid>

This is about more than just numbers on a screen. Each time the Government chooses to spend less than they promised on Australian Aid, real projects impacting real human lives are affected. Aid cuts are cuts to initiatives such as schooling, healthcare, immunization, and clean water programs that are helping people in need build a better future.²

Australians are the wealthiest people on the planet, when measured by median wealth, but Australia now ranks 19th among rich country aid donors. Australian government spending on overseas aid is \$4.0 billion dollars— 0.22% of our gross national income, or 22 cents in every \$100. This is set to drop even further to just 19c in every \$100 of GNI by 2021. Since 2013, in cumulative terms, the Australian aid budget has been cut by over 30 per cent.³



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Australia now ranks 19th among rich country aid donors. Australia should return to the top half of rich country aid donors⁵ by the end of the next parliamentary term, and commit to achieving the internationally agreed aid target of 0.7% by 2030. To achieve this first ask and return to a pathway towards achieving the 0.7% commitment, Australia would need to scale up its aid program to approximately 0.295% GNI by 2021-22.

The Uniting Church has a long-standing commitment to contributing to a just and peaceful world, and to the eradication of extreme poverty. The Statement to the Nation (1977) says;

“We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We affirm the rights of all people to equal opportunities. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.”

In response to the proposed 2019 budget, Uniting Church in Australia President Deidre Palmer said;

² <https://www.worldvision.com.au/get-involved/advocacy/australian-aid>
³ http://www.micahaustralia.org/agency/australian_aid
⁴ Micah Australia, *Voices for Justice 2018 resource*
⁵ http://www.micahaustralia.org/agency/australian_aid

“The bottom line in this Budget is there is less support for the most vulnerable people in the most vulnerable nations, and less support for the most vulnerable at home.”

National Director of UnitingWorld Dr Sureka Goringe said the Budget failed both generous open-hearted Australian people and the vision of genuine regional partnership;

“We need to build trust and solidarity with our regional neighbors, working together to address inequality and injustice, not just pursue a narrow self-serving agenda.”

Despite the proportion of undernourished people being almost halved since 1990 (now under 11%) there are still 821 million people—one in nine worldwide—going hungry each year.⁶ Due to protracted conflicts and rising populations, undernourishment and severe food insecurity have been increasing.

⁶ *FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO joint report The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018*