

# Boost for neighbours

AID to other countries will increase by almost half a billion dollars next year, as the federal government works towards the goal of spending 0.5 per cent of gross national income on it by 2015-16.

Efforts to stop people smuggling will also be boosted through extra money for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The increase — from \$4.36 billion to \$4.83 billion — will take Australia's spend to 0.35 per cent of gross national income.

Most of the extra money will be spent in the Pacific region and east Asia. Aid to Indonesia will jump \$112 million to \$558 million, while aid to Papua New Guinea will rise \$28 million to \$482 million.

But aid to Pakistan will fall by \$27 million to \$92 million, while aid to Iraq will also drop. Aid to other Middle Eastern countries will increase by \$6 million to \$56 million.

There will also be an increase in aid delivered through agencies other than the government's overseas development arm, AusAID, from \$512 million to \$529 million. The most significant of these is the federal police, which will provide \$217.7 million of aid next year.

But money for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship will almost double next year, to \$65.9 million, to fund a crackdown on people smuggling through greater regional co-operation, particularly with Indonesia.

The department also said that over the next five years, the Asia-Pacific region will remain the most important to Australia, with Indonesia, PNG, Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and Vietnam to remain the largest recipients of aid.

Aid to Africa rose only slightly, to \$291.3 million.