



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**

**PROOF**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**RESULTS Australia**

**PROCEDURAL TEXT**

**Thursday, 15 September 2011**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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**Page** 92  
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### RESULTS Australia

RESULTS Australia

Senator CAROL BROWN (Tasmania—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (19:2 3): I had the privilege of delivering the keynote address at the RESULTS Australia National Conference fundraising dinner in Hobart a few weeks ago. I am told that the conference fundraising part of it, the dinner, was one of the most successful they have had yet.

I have no doubt that many in parliament have met with RESULTS in this place and have been involved in a RESULTS campaign in one way or another. This year's national conference was particularly special for RESULTS members, as 2011 marks the 25th anniversary of the organisation's work here in Australia. Over 150 people came together from across Australia to celebrate the achievements of RESULTS and to develop plans for future campaigns.

The conference agenda was packed with guest speakers and with workshop sessions aimed at boosting participants' awareness and advocacy skills, while also celebrating RESULTS campaign successes over the past 25 years. The main panel session at the conference included a remote address delivered by Brian Tisdall from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations in Geneva. Along with Nicole Cardinal from Save the Children and Maree Nutt and Rachel Achterstraat from RESULTS Australia, Brian and the panel shared their vision for what Australia can do over the next five years to support children living in extreme poverty.

I am pleased that the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services and the parliamentary secretary for Tasmania, the federal member for Franklin, Julie Collins MP, was able to participate in the Sunday session entitled 'You and your MP: what makes a good advocate?'

I have heard incredibly positive reports about the conference and have witnessed firsthand what a fantastic job the RESULTS team have done. I want to take this opportunity tonight to acknowledge the passionate advocacy and tireless efforts of RESULTS Australia and their committed volunteers: well done and congratulations to Maree Nutt; to RESULTS

National President, Aldo King; and particularly to Michael and Jeremy Picone from RESULTS Tasmania, who did such a tremendous job in pulling the national conference and celebrations together. Many senators and members would have had the pleasure of meeting Maree and her delegation as they made their way around parliament this week working on their campaigns.

Over the past 25 years, the RESULTS team have worked hard to empower everyday Australians to be 'extraordinary voices' for the end of poverty and to empower individuals across Australia to exercise their personal and political power. The organisation is made of up hundreds of passionate individuals from around Australia who are committed to lifting people out of extreme poverty and supporting sustainable development in our region and around the world.

I have had the privilege of meeting with members of RESULTS both here in Canberra and in Tasmania and also of working with RESULTS to share in key milestones in their campaigns. RESULTS has played a pivotal role in campaigning for Australia to increase our overseas aid commitment to 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015, for Australia to increase its pledge to the global fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and for an end to tuberculosis in the Pacific, including the adoption of the Xpert diagnostic testing tool, and also as champions for microfinance initiatives under the Strategy on Financial Services for the Poor 2010-2015.

Each year, March 24 marks World TB Day, and this year as part of raising awareness of World TB Day members of this place joined together to pass a motion—and I know that Madam Acting Deputy President Pratt is well aware of it as she co-sponsored this motion—calling on Australia to increase overseas aid to 0.5 per cent of GNI to ensure that the resources for tuberculosis as well as AIDS and malaria were sufficient to achieve the goal of significantly reducing the number of people suffering from these diseases.

The motion also called for Australia to facilitate adoption of the new Xpert TB diagnostic testing tool in South-East Asia. The Xpert diagnostic tool is the first new diagnostic strategy in over 100 years, cutting the time for diagnosis of TB from several weeks to less than two hours with highly accurate results. As the World Health Organisation continues to develop a

road map for rolling out the Xpert test, I am pleased that Australia is still playing a lead role in fighting against tuberculosis in our region. Just last week on 9 September, the Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon MP, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, Richard Marles MP, announced that the Australian government was boosting support to Papua New Guinea to help the country respond more effectively to tuberculosis, particularly in the Western Province. The government has committed a further \$1.1 million to help improve health services in the South Fly area of PNG's Western Province, which is the region closest to Australia. Ultimately, this investment will mean that PNG is better equipped to treat those suffering from TB rather than having to send patients across the Torres Strait and into Queensland for treatment. This is just one example of the way in which Australia's aid contributions are helping to bolster the capacity of developing communities, highlighting the path to sustainable development in our region and beyond. In June this year at the pledging conference of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, the GAVI Alliance, in London, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Kevin Rudd MP, announced that Australia would contribute \$200 million over three years to the fund. This represented a renewal and redoubling of Australia's commitment, building on the 2010 increase, which was a 55 per cent increase on our 2008 pledge. The effect of Australia's GAVI pledge is that between now and 2013, Australia's contribution will fund an estimated 7.1 million life-saving vaccines for the children of the world.

A significant part of Australia's pledge can be attributed to the efforts of RESULTS, which was among the groups who lobbied fiercely for Australia to demonstrate leadership at the GAVI conference this year and expand our contribution. When I spoke with RESULTS members recently I learnt more about their ongoing campaign for Australia to expand aid for microfinance and for Australia to have high-level representation at the Global Microcredit Summit in Spain this year. Australia has long supported microfinance initiatives and is committed to further improving access to financial services to break down the barriers to economic participation by the poor.

Through AusAID, Australia already provides funding to support financial services to the poor in at least 15 countries. Australia's investment in the financial services for the poor strategy is coupled with an investment of up to \$20 million per annum from 2012-2013. The government has recognised that microcredit and microfinance initiatives are reaching out to hundreds of millions of the world's poor, particularly women. We are helping to work towards the Microcredit Summit Campaign goal of ensuring

that 175 million of the world's poorest families are receiving credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by the end of 2015.

The 2011 report on the Microcredit Summit Campaign goals for 2015 shows that some critical progress has been made towards this target, with microfinance institutions reporting that they had 190 million clients at the end of 2009. Most significantly, of those 190 million clients, 128 million families were among the poorest in the world at the time of their first loan and 81.7 per cent of clients were women. It is imperative that we continue to support these families, particularly the women in these developing communities, to break out of the poverty cycle. By equipping these women and their families with the initial tools and resources, they are empowered to build capacity for economic and social development in their own communities. Given the progress that has already been made through microcredit and microfinance initiatives, I look forward to working with RESULTS to lobby for an expansion of Australia's aid contributions to microfinance to \$45 million by 2012-14.

In addition to those initiatives I have already mentioned, it is also important to reflect more broadly on the steps that Australia has taken to address poverty and support sustainable development in our region and beyond. In 2010 alone we responded to more than 30 rapid-onset emergencies and conflicts, including the earthquake in Haiti and the Pakistan floods, assisting over one million people in crisis. Since 2008 we have achieved several key milestones in our region, particularly in Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Laos, the Solomon Islands and Samoa. A few of these achievements include helping to immunise 900,000 children in Papua New Guinea against measles and other diseases, helping to provide antiretroviral treatment for HIV in Papua New Guinea to 75 per cent of those who need it and helping to provide 600,000 people with safe water and 400,000 people with improved sanitation in East Asia and the Pacific.

We must meet our obligations to end extreme poverty and to support our developing neighbours. We can afford to assist those most in need and we must continue to do so.