

Pledging to play their part – a first step to building a relationship and support for the Global Fund.

Our superb grassroots advocates have been working hard to gain the commitment of their parliamentarians to play their part in ending epidemics – here we have Kevin Andrews MP with Olly and Maria from RESULTS Melbourne, and Anthony Albanese with Michelle, Suhad and Lucinda from RESULTS Sydney City, taking our Pledge. How many more parliamentarians and candidates can we get to Pledge before the election?

Download the [Election Toolkit](#) and [Call to Action](#)

Global poverty and health issues are not major election issues, but we can still shine a light on them.

Global issues like extreme poverty and global health aren't generally high priority topics for discussion in the lead up to an election. This is understandable, as our political representatives like to be seen doing things for their constituents. They would be very wary of making large cuts to education or health funding as virtually everyone in Australia at some point will send their child to school or need to go to a hospital, and voters intuitively see these as things governments 'should' fund. Thus they, more than global issues, are hot topics during elections.

People in countries that receive Australian development assistance can seem a long way away, and they don't vote in our elections. It's easy for our political representatives to claim that global poverty and disease aren't 'vote-winners' for them. So it's up to us to demonstrate popular support for equitable, cost-effective and sustainable Australian aid and action to end epidemics. Making our voices heard will generate momentum for development in our region and help ensure everyone has opportunities to access good health, education, and economic opportunity.

The May 3 Federal Budget made cuts to Australia's aid program for the fourth consecutive year. ***The 2016-17 aid budget was cut by \$224 million and makes aid the least generous ever: 0.23% of Gross National Income, well below the OECD average of 0.3%***

Some of the major changes to the aid budget include:

- *Reduced support to vulnerable countries* (those affected by conflict, poor governance and poverty): there were reductions in assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- *Very small increases in humanitarian aid*: Fiji and Nepal will receive more funds for post-disaster reconstruction, and there are small initiatives related to Syria and climate change.
- *Reductions in health and education funding*: spending in these areas will be cut by 16% and 9%, respectively.

In a climate where global issues are not hot election topics, and Australian aid has faced substantial cuts, it is a challenging time to be advocating for a strong Australian pledge to the Global Fund.

But we are committed to ensuring Australia plays an effective role in combating poverty, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and ensuring healthy lives for everyone.

So we will use the election period as a platform to raise our voices and ask our candidates to commit to playing their part in achieving this vision.

The election presents an opportunity to have our voices heard by our representatives and candidates.

As a step towards building support for the Global Fund, and securing a strong Australian contribution in September, we must let MPs, Senators and candidates know the issues matter to us and encourage their commitment to do something about them.

You likely have a relationship with your sitting MP and perhaps even some Senators, so they may already know something about RESULTS. Candidates probably won't know anything about us, so talking to them is an opportunity to introduce the organisation and your group, build a relationship, and lay a foundation for further action with us if elected on 2 July.

The 2016 election campaign will be an especially long one. That means lots of opportunities to build relationships with MPs/Senators and candidates, raising awareness of 'our' issues as part of the effort for a world without extreme poverty. Examples of these events include:

- *Meet with the candidates/find them on the campaign trail:* candidates are usually happy to meet with interested voters. Begin with an introduction to RESULTS, brief them on the topics in our Call to Action, and ask them questions about where they stand.
- *Attend candidate forums and ask a question:* many electorates have a debate during the campaign, usually with time for questions from voters. These are a great chance to get the candidates' views on development in a public forum, and ask for their commitment.
- *Letters to the Editor;* the Election will be a hot topic in the media, so have your voice heard by writing a letter. If you attend a forum, or meet a candidate, write a letter about it!

More details on all of these activities and others are available in the [Election Toolkit](#).

Take action:

1. Download and read our [Election Toolkit](#) and [Call to Action](#).
2. Find your MP, Senators or candidates on the campaign trail (at electoral forums, at campaign events and out and about in the community) and ask for their commitment to:
 - a. Reversing the \$224m cut to Australian aid made in the 2016-17 Federal Budget, as the first step toward rebuilding an adequate and effective aid programme that addresses regional health challenges.
 - b. Continuing and increasing Australia's contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and Gavi The Vaccine Alliance, to help end diseases of poverty and discrimination in our region.
3. Ask your MP, Senators and candidates to [sign our Pledge](#) and share a photo on social media.
 - a. Check out our [Who Can We Reach?](#) list of people for you to target - how many Pledges do you think we can get during the election? 50 Pledges would be an awesome outcome, and a great base of support to build on post-election as we ramp up our efforts.

Remember, we are offering our potential elected representatives the chance to do something positive for the world - and who doesn't want the opportunity to do that?

The impact of your action can be multiplied if RESULTS knows about it, so please tell your Group Leader what action you take, and the outcome. Don't have a group? Need help? Email us: info@results.org.au