

Our volunteers have been hard at work building commitment to an epidemic-free world

The second-longest election campaign in Australia's history is nearly over!* It's been a dizzying contest of policies and promises, stunts and sledging, and in just over two weeks Australia will have a new government. The field of issues has been crowded and RESULTS Australia advocates and staff have been hard at work engaging with candidates, informing them about our issues and sharing why they matter to us. So far 19 MPs and candidates have signed our Pledge to help put an end to the world's worst epidemics by 2030; we have a target of 50 signed Pledges by the election.

Well done everyone, and let's keep going!

'Optimism is a political act. Those who benefit from the status quo are perfectly happy for us to think nothing is going to get any better. In fact, these days, cynicism is obedience.' - Alex Steffen

*A prize for the first person on the Fact & Action Call who can tell us when the longest Australian election campaign was run, by whom it was called and how many days it lasted!



The new Government will pledge to the Global Fund on September 16. How much will be given?

In the federal Budget, brought down just prior to the election announcement, the aid budget was cut again - the fourth time in a row - bringing it to an historic low of 0.23% of Gross National Income (GNI). This does not bode well for an increased contribution to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

So far during the campaign, however, Labor has announced it intends to reverse the most recent cuts (\$224m) and the Greens have committed to increasing the aid budget over the next decade to the OECD-agreed target of 0.7% of GNI. Good news! As a non-partisan organisation we call on all parties and candidates to make a similar commitment.

Have you written to your Labor and Greens candidates to thank them for these promises?

Elections are always focused on domestic issues: people are naturally concerned about local health services and educational institutions. Plenty of candidates have nobody talking to them about big issues for our region, the issues beyond Australia's borders that aren't solely within our control but that require our input.

Lots of candidates will have no idea what *The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria* is, or that investing parties - among them, Australia - will be making their pledges to the Global Fund in Montreal on 16 September 2016. This will be the first test of the new Government's commitment to creating a healthier, fairer world.

During the election campaign, we have the opportunity to talk to candidates from many different political parties, build our relationships with them, and start a dialogue about the Global Fund. We have asked them to Pledge to play their role in ending the world's worst epidemics.

Post-election, we must work quickly to build on this initial commitment, asking our Members of Parliament to meet with us and take action encouraging an Australian contribution of \$300 million to the Global Fund in September.

'Some of us believe that our elected officials should be mind readers. They aren't! We believe they should know everything we want. They don't! You could say that members of [Parliament] know everything we ever asked them to know - which...isn't very much.' - Sam Daley-Harris, Founder of RESULTS

We are asking all parties for two key commitments to ensure good health across our region.

RESULTS' two election asks, as detailed in our [Call to Action](#), are:

- 1. Reverse the \$224 million cut to Australian aid made in the 2016-17 budget, as a first step to rebuilding an aid program that is adequate and effective in addressing regional health challenges.** The Asia-Pacific region, which is the primary focus of Australia's aid, is home to 60% of the world's poor and undernourished people. Although significant progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty and addressing health challenges further action is required in the coming years. These challenges affect regional health and security, as well as Australia's.
- 2. Ensure Australia continues and increases contributions to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and Gavi The Vaccine Alliance, to end diseases of poverty and discrimination in our region.** In the last decade the world has made enormous progress in containing and reversing the spread of major epidemics. Polio has nearly been eradicated globally. But over 6 million children still die annually from preventable diseases. Australia's contributions to international mechanisms help ensure that the means for prevention and treatment are available everywhere, and that local health systems are strengthened to provide and manage care for their own people.

These commitments can be asked for in meetings with candidates, in letters, in op-eds, at candidate forums, or in any other opportunity you have to speak to candidates in the lead up to the election. See the [Election Toolkit](#).

After the election we will ramp up our actions before the September 16 replenishment, asking our MPs to sign our Sign-On Letter, make speeches, co-sign op-eds, and write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Stay tuned!

Take action: Write to your new or returning Member of Parliament.

As soon as the result is declared in your seat, write a card to your new MP - perhaps include a memorable quotation or photo of your group at the RESULTS 30th Anniversary National Conference. Include a copy of your published letter to the editor. We want to be the first people they hear from and amongst the first people they meet with!

Congratulate them on their victory and ask for a meeting. You're going to be working with them for the next three years, so you need to do some research and figure out what you can appreciate about them, and what you have in common. This is your chance for a fresh start to build a productive relationship: either they're a new MP, or they're very relieved to have been returned.

It's going to be a close election. For some of you, your MP be someone new, either because your existing MP is retiring or they are voted out. Think about what it would mean for someone you've built a connection with to be gone after the election - all the more reason for you to send a note quickly to start building afresh with their replacement!

Some other things you can do:

- **Right now:** talk to your local candidates, if you haven't already, about why aid matters to you and ask them to sign the [Pledge](#).
- **Any time before the election:** Write a letter to the editor and make your voice heard: be memorable in other voters' minds in the lead-up to polling day, and remind candidates that there is public support for strong Australian commitments to improving the health and wellbeing of our world.

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