



# White Paper Taskforce Submissions By RESULTS Staff, Advocates and Supporters

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## **Sue, Melbourne**

My family came to this 'lucky country' in 1946 from Austria via China and embraced the opportunity to live well. Now a retired pre-school teacher and a 'never-retired' mother and grandmother, I know we are one of the luckiest families on the planet.

I've studied how global aid and development programs work and I'm proud of Australia's past generous and successful aid. By partnering other wealthy OECD nations, we have, over the last 10 years, halved global poverty and the number of women dying during childbirth; access to clean water has doubled. In the 1960s 40,000 children died each day from preventable causes and now that number is 17,000; and since 2002, there's been a one-third decline in the number of people dying from HIV, TB and malaria.

However, Australians are embarrassed and in despair regarding the current low allocation of our taxes for aid.

Taxes are for maintaining our services, lifestyles and systems as well as providing assistance in aid for those less fortunate. Australia's fair share towards ending global poverty by 2030 is 0.7% of our gross national income – currently it's 0.22% of GNI.

This miserly approach runs counter to findings of Charity Aid Foundation's survey of 160 countries. Based on volunteering, helping strangers and donating money, Australians are the most generous.

Over the past 10 years public support for not-for-profit aid organisations has doubled, with 2 million households donating to aid organisations during 2012-13.

My vision for the Foreign Affairs Taskforce is that Australia actions sustained increases in overall resources for the aid program over the next 10 years. This will support independence and hope in the hearts of the poorest people on the planet and contribute to global security.

I thank the Government for the opportunity to influence political decisions that aim to end poverty.

## Ros, Canberra

*“Australians all let us rejoice for we are young and free...”*

I love being Australian and I have always sung our national anthem with pride. But it is becoming increasingly awkward for me to sing it out loud and proud. It's beginning to feel like I am flaunting a freedom that is being gained at the expense of others and in the face of other's poverty.

We are free, yes we are. Free to attend school and access medical help when we need it. There are inequalities within our own nation but we are able to access basic education and health care without financial ruin, unlike many of our neighbours in our region.

Despite Australia's continued economic growth for the past 25 years we are becoming less generous to our neighbours. In fact, with regards to Australian aid, we are the least generous we have ever been. I am not proud of that.

Some may ask how can we afford to look after our neighbours when our own health system is found wanting? The question really is, how can we afford not to? Insufficient action could be more costly than timely investment.

In an increasingly interconnected global community it makes sound political sense to invest into the health systems and countries that feed into our own economy.

Furthermore, it is in Australia's interests to protect our future health security. With flights in and out of every region in the world, air travel can enable infectious diseases to spread rapidly between countries and continents.

Evidence is mounting that public / private partnerships such as the global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, are the most effective way to deliver global health. The Republic of Korea is an excellent example of this model. Through the improved health of their citizens and improvements in their health system they have progressed from being an aid recipient country to an aid – donor country. South Korea now financially contributes to the Global Fund and is an increasingly significant trading partner for Australia. Healthy prosperous neighbours are good for our economy. ([See related opinion piece](#))

I recommend that more Australian aid dollars be invested in the Global Fund. I acknowledge that \$220 million dollars, over 3 years, was committed by Australia to the Global Fund Replenishment in September 2016. This fell \$80 million short of what was deemed our “fair share” as a global citizen however it's not too late to increase our contribution. Nor is it too late to plan to build on this contribution for the next replenishment in 3 years' time.

For every dollar Australia sows into the Global fund, another \$20 is ploughed into our regional health systems. There are not many investments where one is guaranteed a 20-fold return on the outlay. It is in Australia's best interests to heavily invest now if we are to eradicate epidemics such as malaria, and tuberculosis in our region. We are at a tipping point and cutting back on Australian aid threatens to lose the gains we have made.

Australia has pledged to play its role in achieving the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development. We must honour our commitment with actions not just signatures on a page and photographed handshakes. It is vital that the Australian Government reverse the trend of cuts to Australian aid and increase the percentage of GDP apportioned to aid to a level consistent with UN Recommendations.

Australia is an island but we are also global citizens, well able to contribute more to support the health systems, human capital and economies of our region.

Let's Advance Australia. This will only be done as we bring our neighbours with us, rather than leaving them behind to suffer the continued and multi-faceted impact of being denied access to testing and treatment of preventable diseases such as AIDS, TB and malaria.

Thank you for the opportunity to have my say in the future direction of Australian aid policy. When next I am invited to stand and sing the National Anthem I hope that it is with pride that I can sing Advance Australia Fair.

## Michelle, Sydney

I write this submission as someone with a long-standing interest in international development. This interest has led me into the developing world: countless times, for travel, particularly in our region; on several occasions to Bangladesh for work – on my first visit, as a then-AusAID Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) – and to both Timor-Leste and Myanmar, where I have been proud to serve as an Australian volunteer civilian election observer. It has led me, too, to further study in this field: first, a Master of International Public Health and then a PhD in Public Health. I also have experience as a Board member (of Oxfam Australia, 2008-12) and a grant-maker (for Graduate Women International). I am privileged enough to bring together my passion, experience and knowledge in my current job as the Global Health Campaign Manager for RESULTS International (Australia), an international development advocacy organisation. I am also a member of the RESULTS Sydney City group.

Thus it should be no surprise that my principal concern in this submission is the values and principles that underlie the official development assistance (ODA or 'foreign aid') component of Australia's foreign policy. I would like to speak to several of these briefly and in turn.

First, I want Australian ODA in particular – and our foreign policy in general – to be *courageous*. The politics of many high-income nations is particularly ill-served by the present 'inward turn', and Australia should forge a different path. We must engage more not less, and at all levels, with our regional neighbours and with nations beyond, seeking to understand them better. The opportunity for 'people-to-people contact' offered by the New Colombo Plan is one such example. In the past it was simple enough to speak of problems 'poor countries' that 'we' did not suffer: famine, social unrest, environmental degradation and extreme inequality. Increasingly, however, the futures of all who share this planet will be shaped by problems that are both 'here' and 'there': climate change, the challenges of raising sufficient national revenues to provide the levels of public services that citizens expect and increasing economic inequality, among others.

Courage can be demonstrated by, among other things, acting with *justice*, and this is the second principle that I want to have underpin Australian ODA. In particular, I believe that the main goal of Australia's aid programme should be ending poverty, and only secondarily promoting our national interest. The recent and deep cuts to our ODA must be halted and, in coming years, the Australian aid programme should be judiciously expanded. As ODA helps individuals, families and communities in our region reach their potential, the foreign policy of which it is part can assist in promoting cross-border initiatives in human security and international trade, to the benefit of both Australia and the nations near us.

The greatest practical and moral challenge facing humanity is surely climate change. It is at once a threat to Australia's prosperity, the stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the sustainability of the natural resources we all share – food, fuel and water. Keeping global warming below the crucial 1.5 degree Celsius threshold by meeting global emissions targets, by banning new domestic fossil-fuel power generation and transitioning to the use of the renewable sources of energy with which Australia is so abundantly blessed, and by using Australian aid to assist our regional neighbours to adapt to the impacts of climate change, are all in our collective human interest. Nations in our region newly emerging from poverty did not cause climate change, and it is not right that they suffer the very worst of its impacts.

Closer to home, I want to see Australia negotiate fair maritime boundaries with its neighbour Timor-Leste. Since Timor-Leste's independence in 2002, Australia has consistently refused to recognise a mid-line boundary between our countries, and enforced resource-sharing arrangements that rob

Timor-Leste of potential for future prosperity. This is to Australia's discredit, and should not be allowed to stand. A just border with Timor-Leste would both acknowledge that country's dignity as a sovereign nation and, by facilitating financial self-determination, assist Timor-Leste to help itself in precisely the way that Australia claims we want countries that receive our aid to do.

I am also concerned that Australia be just in its financial dealings with developing nations – both in our region, who are the major recipients of our aid, and those beyond. The Australian government, too, confronts revenue constraints as it seeks to continue delivering a certain standard of public services, but has at its disposal a sophisticated tax-collection system with skilled staff. Many developing countries are still working to build capacity in these functions of government. Australia could support a minimum tax on corporate income, thereby helping to stop currently-legal practices of questionable justice that permit corporations to shift profits – often several orders of magnitude larger than donor aid contributions – to low-tax jurisdictions.

The third principle I would like at the bedrock of Australia's ODA is *equality*. While it is impossible for our aid programme – or any other government endeavour – to guarantee equality of outcome, we can make certain that equality (sameness) of opportunity is one of its guiding tenets. This approach will also help ensure equity (fairness) in our dealings with nations that receive our aid.

Australia's ODA rightly emphasises economic empowerment for those who benefit as a result of our aid programme. But rising GDPs throughout our region often mask great economic inequality (a problem with which Australia, too, is grappling domestically) which, like poverty itself, can be a source of social instability. Economic opportunities for all – not just for those already well-placed to seize on new prospects – and inclusive growth is to the advantage of both the Asia-Pacific as a whole and Australia, as new markets are created and then expand.

Further, as Australia's ODA also emphasises the importance of women and girls, and in light of recent international political developments, we must commit to not ever again going down the road of tying funding for family planning and contraception – women's health and lives – to the exigencies of domestic politics. We have done so before, in the recent past, and it is to our shame.

Finally, Australia has a strong economy, a stable population and is in a position to welcome people from across the globe who seek refuge away from their home countries. We should look to expand our refugee intake and to resettle these new migrants onshore, with the kind of support services that will allow them to become full members of Australian society as quickly as possible. To class offshore detention facilities under the aid programme is to diminish it: offshore detention is not 'development', it is not just, nor is it in Australia's strategic interest.

'The interests of others' and 'national interest' – in that order, as the focus of our aid programme – need not be mutually exclusive. Helping to facilitate human flourishing is ultimately in everyone's interests and I want Australian ODA, as part of our wider foreign policy, to do this by being *courageous, just and equitable*.

**Bianca, Melbourne**

I think it is great that we can voice our opinions and hopefully be heard on the Foreign Policy White Paper.

I am a mother of two and I understand the challenges faced by parents because of the weaker immunity of children and how important and valuable medical assistance is.

Around 9.7 million children die each year of easily preventable or curable causes such as diarrhoea and pneumonia, particularly in countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines and South Africa. Simple therapies such as rehydration therapy, use of existing low cost materials and knowledge could save millions. Antibiotics cost less than \$0.30c to treat pneumonia and rehydration therapy is a simple solution of salt, sugar and potassium to treat diarrhoea .

I would like to see Australia offer more aid to countries where access to health care and education is poor. Whether it be by training and education of persons in these countries or through the funding of vital basic medication, especially for children, I think we need to help these children where we can and give them a chance.

I think Australia, by its own example, has a lot to offer other countries and can assist greatly, particularly through the provision of advice and information.



## **Michelle, Dhia, Pooya, Mahsa, Jonathan and Daisy, Sydney**

We are a group (RESULTS Sydney City) of committed and passionate everyday people who have joined together for this submission because we have shared values about what Australia's foreign policy should look like.

We are both men and women, aged from our 20s to our 50s, with family backgrounds from China, Iran, Vietnam, Iraq and Ireland. We are students, professionals, business owners and retirees. Many of us have personal or professional experience of poverty and its consequences. All of us have strong beliefs about Australia's foreign policy.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute our beliefs and suggestions in this submission. As members of RESULTS International, we in the Sydney City group share the organisation's values and goals. Our primary focus is use our voices to influence political decisions to eradicate global poverty. We strongly believe that we can end global poverty and build a better world if we unite with other nations. We also strongly believe that poverty elimination is an important broader foreign policy goal, independent of our direct and immediate national interests.

As we mentioned above, individually, we are responsible Australian citizens who care about the development of our country in various fields especially Foreign Affairs and Trade, Health, Social and Human Services. We use our voices and bring them together in order to express our concern and hope about how Australia can be a better nation ourself.

Furthermore, we see ourselves as responsible global citizens and our country, Australia, as an influential player in regional and international organisations. The United Nations is primary among these organisations, and we see our endorsement of the Sustainable Development Goals is primary among our commitments. We play an influential role in the worldwide issues, and our foreign policy has powerful impacts on the global scale. Also, our national foreign policy reflects our long-term focus on sustainability and security, and brings opportunity for Australia as a leading and prominent country in the world. The Foreign Policy White Paper aims to assess the ways in which Australia could respond to the diverse and complex challenges we face in our foreign policy.

We see the elimination of poverty as an issue that should be at the top of our foreign policy agenda. Countless aid programs have been implemented by Australia and many other developed countries over the past several decades. These programs have succeeded in reducing poverty in certain situations but, unfortunately have failed to reach the ultimate goal of prosperity, stability and sustainability across most developing countries.

It could be argued that a reason for the above shortcoming is due to focusing on addressing the effects of the problem rather than the root causes that underlie extreme poverty. Lack of security and stability, wars, terrorism, corruption, mismanagement, authoritarian regimes, poor education systems and environmental degradation are some of the most important factors that cause extreme poverty and related problems. Focusing on both causes and effects are essential to achieve sustainable outcomes and succeed in ending extreme poverty and related challenges in the foreseeable future.

Australia must ensure that we design and implement our foreign policy (and specifically our aid programs) to address both the causes and effects of the challenges facing regional countries. Ensuring that our foreign policy have as a key objective the elimination of both the causes and effects of extreme poverty would be in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, which we have endorsed.

In terms of the causes of poverty, what we are most concerned about is that the resources for Australian Aid are increased, to ensure and facilitate the fairest distribution of wealth in our region, and to reduce inequality. This is a long-term commitment, which involves the allocation of grants to non-government sectors, including business, universities and NGOs. On the other hand, to address the effects of extreme poverty, we need immediate actions especially in terms of health issues (such ending the world's worst epidemics including malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS, and polio), education (supporting child development through education), and social justice.

If these important areas of need are under-resourced, Australia will face outcomes for our region such as the degradation of health and education, and an increase in political instability. Australia is an influential global player with one of the most prosperous economies. Its record of a quarter of a century without economic recession is an impressive, if not unique, achievement compared to the rest of the world.

Moreover, Australia's GDP per capita figure is a clear demonstration of its strong economy, which puts it among the top 15 global economies and thus, a member of G20. However, the current level of foreign aid (0.23% of GNI) does not reflect Australia's prosperity or its influence in the global community.

That is why we believe the aid level should be raised to at least 0.7% of Gross National Income.

This is a crucial step towards our moral commitment to global prosperity and the well-being of all human beings.

As the Foreign Policy White Paper is being developed we encourage clear action that ensures an improvement for the future of every individual. With well-structured policies and decisions, we can strengthen the structural foundations that allow for every person to have access to food and education in accordance with Australia's commitment to sustainable development with the United Nations.

Additionally, the complete eradication of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, polio, HIV, and AIDS are well within reach and will be successfully eliminated through increased contribution and support. With each policy considered by the Australian Government in the White Paper, we encourage that the potential diseases eliminated, children that can be fed, and the lives that can be saved, are never forgotten.

## **Dina, Sydney**

To whom it may concern,

I am Dina, a 17-year-old first year, Bachelor of Law and Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) student. Although I have just begun my journey with RESULTS, my passion for social justice has always been innate. The world is full of many problems in the likes of: War, poverty, hunger, displacement and climate change, so I am thrilled to be one of thousands of Australians who have pondered upon the all-important question of: 'What do I want Australia to do in 2017 and beyond?'

Our security, prosperity and influence can only be ensured when we contribute to overcoming global challenges. It is pivotal for our national interests to be in concert with those of other nations, so that we can strive to achieve a common goal to shape a future where Australia – and the rest of the world – can flourish.

Today, 800 million lives are still characterised by persistent, absolute poverty. Poverty stops people from achieving their potential, from contributing fully to society, and from enjoying basic health. Poverty's twin is inequality: in 2017, 8 billionaires own the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world – 3.6 billion people. We must eradicate absolute poverty and inequality to create a fairer world. The gap between the super-rich 1% and the rest of the world is only getting bigger. Australia must help make the world fairer – by helping other countries develop strong and inclusive systems for education and justice. We must also abolish trade barriers that keep rich countries rich and poor countries poor.

Australia should prioritise fair trade because it enables people in developing countries to reach their potential, and protects their human rights. The goal of all trade negotiations should be higher living standards and a positive difference in the lives of working people. Fair trade protects workers' freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, the right to be free from discrimination, and eliminates forced child labour.

We need more women and girls in political and economic leadership, to shape decisions that affect them. This is vital if we want to ensure gender equality and a more prosperous future for all. Australia should use its influence to increase the number of women and girls in decision-making roles – at home and around the world.

Education is vital to breaking the cycle of poverty. But conflict, teacher shortages, scarce learning resources, lack of disability support, and the need to work for an income keep about 60 million children out of primary school. Australia must support access to quality education for all girls and boys, no matter where they live.

The main goal of Australian aid should be ending poverty, not promoting Australia's interests. The purpose of aid is to break down the barriers of poverty that stop vulnerable people from reaching their potential. Australia can help the world reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and it's time we did so!

The Asia-Pacific region is the most disaster-prone region in the world, accounting for 47% of disasters in 2015. In the same year, Australia announced a 5% cut to humanitarian and

emergency aid! We must increase our ability to respond to emergencies in our own region by boosting our humanitarian aid budget.

Australian foreign policy should empower communities to reach their potential and actively contribute on the world stage. This means promoting and contributing to initiatives that deliver human security, freedom from violence and other basic needs. The resulting stability will greatly benefit Australia.

Australia should continue honouring its responsibility to the global community by contributing Defense Force resources to UN operations and peacebuilding.

I want Australia to be known for treating all people with dignity and respect, supporting all to reach their fullest potential. I urge our leaders, those who we've entrusted to be the action behind our voices, to step up and champion a movement to promote the equality, justice and sustainable global progress that we all hope to see.

Sincerely,

Hopeful University Student.

## Idan, Melbourne

Hello,

My name is Idan. I am 42, a father of two boys. I am happy to be an Australian citizen, and thankful to have been welcomed into this country.

My country of birth is Israel. In my three decades living there, I have seen, often at first hand, the impact of conflict, prejudice and economic inequality on everyone. When fences proliferate, it gradually becomes hard to tell whether you are being fenced in or out.

I thus firmly believe that it is in Australia's national interest (as well as its moral duty) to reach out to the world, especially to countries – in our region as well as outside it – which are still struggling to provide basic education and health services to their population. Increased insularity, suspicion and animosity now seem poised to become the global trend. Against that backdrop, Australia can and should aim to shine as a developed country that welcomes engagement rather than puts up defences. As an Israeli, I feel confident in saying that fences cannot achieve long-term security peace and prosperity.

In the next 10 years, I would like to see Australian foreign aid increased – at least to its former levels if not beyond – and used to help eradicate illiteracy and innumeracy, provide basic food security and clean water to all, reduce the incidence of preventable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, and help fight the spread of antibiotic-resistant infection strains.

I believe that this perspective is applicable to (and in fact synonymous with) economic relations. With the current US government announcing that it will aim to retreat into its own economic shell (and other developed nations appearing to follow suit), an opportunity arises for Australia to become a partner that developing nations can trade with and trust.

The Australian economy is reliant on trade; we can't keep selling houses to each other *ad infinitum*. We can export our raw materials, our technology, our educational institutions and our cultural products. For all of these, we would benefit from a global population that is able to use these things, and happy to accept them preferentially from us.

Thank you for your attention.

## **Linley, Adelaide**

To whom it concerns.

I am a 38 year old Australian who has led a privileged life. I've always had enough to eat and a comfortable place to sleep each night. I have two university degrees, something that many women around the world can't even dream of because they leave school for a wide variety of reasons, some simple and some complex, but all too early and most before education can even give them a chance to discover what their full potential might be.

My studies and values are aligned with a Bachelor of Education and a BA in Environmental Management and I'm so very fortunate to now work as an Environmental Educator. In my spare time, I advocate for the end of poverty for a wide range of reasons. One experience that motivates me to this day is flying in a small plane over Madagascar in 2005. I travelled there to appreciate the biodiversity and abundance of wildlife on this stunning island. I was crushed to realise, during that night flight, that all the orange dots we could see below were forest-clearing fires. My distress was compounded by later discovering that each patch of newly cleared land is used for only a short time, perhaps 3 cropping seasons, before the soil is no longer fertile, it is abandoned and more incredible forest is burned. The population of the island is too high for these practices to be sustainable. The key driver of this environmental destruction was poverty. Poverty left people with few other options besides subsistence farming and poverty denied access to education to learn the broader and longer term consequences of their actions.

On the positive side, I am motivated to work to end poverty by the fact that the number of children who die, mostly of preventable issues, has dropped from 30,000 to 16,000 per day. Whilst the current number still beggars belief, the difference between the numbers is a great achievement and one that gives me hope. Similarly I am motivated by the Sustainable Development Goals – those 17 goals with achievable targets in each that are for every country, that help us to see that our problems are shared and interlinked and must be addressed simultaneously. Terrestrial and marine environments need better management and climate change must be addressed whilst also providing quality education, nourishment and medical care for everyone everywhere.

In order to achieve the SDGs and further reduce child mortality, this is no time for Australia to shrink from its responsibilities as a wealthy nation. I think Australian spending on aid needs to rise in order to build on the positive gains of previous development efforts. Our aid spending should be incrementally rising towards 0.7% of GNI as agreed with the UN years ago and already achieved by other nations of similar wealth. Australians cannot consider themselves to be generous when our aid spending is at the lowest percentage it has been since Australia began development work abroad.

I also think that Australia's foreign policy needs to focus on ensuring basic rights are met so that people's capabilities are not constrained by poverty; so that communities can help themselves, escape the vicious cycle of poverty and nurture their surroundings too. Education and health, through access to nutritious food and quality medical care, including vaccinations, are critical and Australia has the power to provide assistance in these areas.

Right this minute people in parts of Yemen, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan are suffering greatly and I do not believe that Australia's aid should be exclusively delivered to our near neighbours.

Australia's international development efforts are currently focused on the Indo-Pacific, yet the benefits to communities of such development work do not differ by their distance from our shores.

Whilst I acknowledge that the private sector can achieve much in the eradication of poverty, I do not wish to see the Australian Government passing responsibility. We should as a nation, contribute to the betterment of people's lives through increased giving and greater efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Marina, Brisbane**

I am a 35 year old international relations graduate who majored in security and conflict resolution and economic development. I was born in Bulgaria and spent the last 15 years studying and working in the U.S., Argentina, France, China, India and Qatar. My husband, an Australian from Canberra who spent the last 8 years in the Middle East, and I recently moved to Brisbane, and we both look forward to settling down and starting a family in this beautiful place.

Growing up in Bulgaria, I benefited from a high quality, free public primary and secondary education, which enabled me to win a full scholarship to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in one of the U.S. top liberal arts colleges, and to have a successful career. I am thus particularly interested in Australia's aid program and how it responds to global challenges in today's interconnected world, specifically as it relates education.

I believe that we should all have the same capabilities to achieve the life we value, which in turn will enable us to better contribute to the development of our immediate as well as global communities. I believe in a non-zero-sum world where we can all be winners and I wish for a more sustainable, equitable and collaborative international development.

These beliefs have been the motivation for my choice of education, career, as well as volunteer activities with RESULTS Australia, where I campaign for a world where:

- Quality and affordable healthcare is accessible to all
- Malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS, and polio belong to the past
- Every child's development is based on good nutrition and access to quality education

In today's global world, where one country's level of development and security affects all others, realising the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals should be central to Australia's foreign policy. As one of the most important investments with a long-term impact, education should receive particular attention, especially now that global commitments for education financing are declining.

Even though the Minister for Foreign Affairs has described education as a "central pillar" of Australia's Aid program, it is astounding that in 2015-16, the share of education in Australia's aid fell from over 22% to 19.4%. Australia must repair its aid budget to maintain support for education at a minimum of 20% of total official development assistance, and should also continue and increase support for the Global Partnership for Education.

Access to affordable quality education is key to realising one's potential to build a dignified life. I have been very fortunate to benefit from an excellent public primary and secondary education system in my home country, Bulgaria, as well as from a generous and inclusive university financial aid in the U.S. I wish for every child, irrespective of where she is born, to have the same opportunity to develop to her full potential with the capability to contribute to a more prosperous and equitable world.



As a country built on the principles of inclusiveness and diversity, Australia's growth and prosperity can only benefit from such a world and Australia's strong, decisive and committed support to education should be a key pillar of its foreign policy.

## **Bruce, Canberra**

I would like to make a submission to the Foreign Policy White Paper.

I am now retired. I grew up in New Zealand but have spent most of my life living and working in Australia. I am very proud of this country and the role it plays in global affairs.

The world is changing rapidly and I believe our foreign policy strategies should consider trends in global security, population growth, health, education and especially the prosperity and security of our Pacific region.

Australia has always played a leadership role in our region and I strongly support the continuation and development of our leadership role. We must lead by example and adherence to human rights, compassion and social justice for all people. Above all, Australia's actions should be built on an evidence base and implemented with transparency and truth.

I am dismayed with the current trend of decreasing Australia's foreign aid spending with a corresponding increase in the defence (especially the military) budget. There is plenty of evidence to show that well directed foreign aid is more effective in promoting security and world peace than is military muscle. I would like to see this white paper develop a strategy towards furthering the education and health of women and children living in under-developed countries in our region. Further efforts are also needed to eradicate poverty, provide access to clean water and focus on the elimination of easily preventable diseases in these populations.

The outstanding results that Australia's aid programs have already achieved need to be continued. This is the direction we must take to maintain political stability and security in our region.

## Wallis, Melbourne

Dear Sir/madam,

It is easy for one person to ask themselves what difference does my voice make, who cares what I think? I pondered this and asked myself the question from the perspective of those suffering from poverty, starvation, displacement and inequality...Who is listening, Who cares?

The truth is we all care, even if we don't demonstrate this in positive and uplifting ways, deep down at the core of our own being-ness our own centred-ness, we are caring of others. If we can for one moment step back from the chatter, the influences, the egos need to posture and prance, we will reconnect with our human brothers and sisters around the world.

Sounds too good to be true doesn't it, some might label this white washing in its simplicity, but the truth is we are connected to one another, we are responsible and custodians of humanity and its transformational step forward. The burning question is, will we set the example, will we as Australians embrace the change, stand in our own power and intrinsic understanding of what is fair and right, will we?

We have International laws that govern human rights, we have politicians that pontificate right and wrong, and we have opinions about border control, terrorism, wars, displacement, boat people, white Australia, who pays for whom and so on, the list is endless and complex if we make it complex. Can we not with our huge ability for solution solving, after all we can send people to space, create amazing technology and medical breakthroughs, can we not solve this one?

I maintain we can, we as a collective consciousness can rise to meet this challenge that is before us, we can make the world a better place for all of us to live in, we can embrace and be all encompassing of those in need, whether for a place to live, more food on the table or fresh water and education for children, we owe it to them. Let's stop being entitled, we don't own the outcome, we own the process, let's choose wisely, not poorly. Don't let future generations accuse Australia of being followers, not leaders, let's lead the way, be brave and stand out, humanity will thank us.

## Tom, Adelaide

*“Australia as a Responsible Global Citizen – the Case for starting to Increase our Official Development Assistance (ODA), in the 2017 Budget and Beyond”*

The Minister, the Hon. Julie Bishop has rightly described Australia’s aid program as “The Flagship of our Foreign Policy”. So, let’s take a closer look at the recent history of our ODA funding, its successes, objectives – and, an opportunity to save more lives and livelihoods, and thus to raise Australia’s status, among fellow aid donors in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Minister Bishop and her staff must have been called to make some tough decisions recently, as to which of Australia’s aid projects could continue, and which had to be curtailed – with the consequent waste of scarce resources, required to scrap or modify uncompleted programs. While the ALP started to retreat from the previous bipartisan commitment, to allocate 0.5% of Australia’s GNI (gross national income) to development aid funding, the current Government has “accelerated the retreat”, and successively cut ODA funding to an all-time low, relative to GNI – now around 0.2%, and linked to Australia’s CPI (Consumer Price Index – which wouldn’t apply, in the recipient nations) – less than 1% of total government expenditure (“TGE”).

One justification that some commentators, and elected representatives make, for cutting overseas aid, is that “Charity begins at home”. This argument creates a false conflict between assisting the poor overseas, and the people in need in Australia. In 2016-17, Government spending on defence and overseas aid (the internationally-focused programs) will be about 8.5% of the federal budget. Even if this were to increase to 10%, due to a significant increase in aid funding, 90% of the budget would still be spent on domestic programs. By targeting these more closely to Australians most in need, the Government could more than compensate for any small reduction in the proportion of the budget for domestic programs.

I’ll concentrate on the area of our aid funding, which (at around 1% of TGE) has suffered about 25% of recent budget savings. Another well-quoted argument is that “We need to fix our budget deficit, before we can consider being more generous with our overseas aid funding”. This is rather like saying that “Anyone with a mortgage shouldn’t donate to charities”. By the Government’s own figures, Australia’s ratio of net Government debt to GNI is the fourth-lowest in the OECD. However, we have declined to around 15th (depending on source – 13th to 19th), out of the (28) OECD aid donors, in terms of our ODA to GNI ratio.

Australian-sponsored aid programs have been extraordinarily successful, especially among our near neighbours, in the Indo-Pacific region – in 2014 alone, for example (from DFAT’s 2014 Annual Report) Australian aid enabled:

- Almost 900,000 women to give birth, with the aid of a skilled attendant,
- 1.3 million children to be vaccinated against several killer diseases,
- 2.3 million additional children to enroll in primary schools,
- 2.9 million people to gain access to safe drinking water, and
- Some 25 million people to be assisted, in emergency relief situations.

Taking into account the \$11 billion plus, in cuts to our ODA (aid) budget, over the past three years or so, the human costs of these budget savings become obvious. Australia's (former) reputation of "giving everyone a fair go" would seem to have been totally abandoned. However, there are some promising signs. There were no further cuts to the aid budget, in the recent 2017 MYEFO (Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook). Last year, Australia's pledge for replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria was a 10% increase on the previous three-year funding commitment, at \$220 million (although, this was not "new money").

The Global Fund is a very effective, transparent and accountable public / private partnership, which has saved an estimated 20 million plus lives, since its inception in 2002 (with the aid of a very generous donation from the Gates Foundation). The Global Fund "ticks all the boxes" – for every \$1 that Australia contributes to the Global Fund, around \$15 is invested by the Fund into diagnostics, prevention and treatment of these three devastating diseases of poverty, in our Region. This raises another point – it is also estimated, from various sources, that for every \$1 that Australia spends on overseas development assistance, many times more financial benefits return to Australia, in terms of trade and investment.

And best of all perhaps, in 2015, Australia (among practically all other nations) endorsed the new UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development (the SDGs). The 17 new goals (superseding the eight Millennium Development Goals, MDGs) have the ambitious aim of eliminating extreme poverty, in all its forms, permanently by the year 2030. Also in late 2015, Australian parliamentarians joined with those from 18 other nations in our Region, to form the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' TB Caucus, aiming to address the huge human and economic consequences that this disease causes. The tuberculosis bacterium has morphed into several new strains, that are resistant to traditional treatments (especially in our Region), making the disease much more difficult and expensive to treat. We now have a "window of opportunity" to accelerate progress towards eliminating TB, before multi-drug-resistant (MDR) and extensively drug-resistant (XDR) strains become common.

The United Nations is not "perfect", of course, but it remains the best international forum, for progress towards health, education, social stability and economic capacity, for people in the world's poorest communities. Former British PM, David Cameron (quoting Ban Ki Moon, as I recall), in defending the UK's bipartisan commitment to spending 0.7% of its GNI on development aid funding (which is now under review), was correct in pledging that his country "will not balance our books on the backs of the poor". Although much progress has been made since the 1980's, when more than 40,000 children under five were dying each day from easily-preventable causes, the need is still great, in the developing world. Many developing nations are still unable to trade their way out of poverty, and will require a "hand up" (not a "hand-out"), for several years to come.

The under-5 child mortality rate (U5MR) is an excellent indicator of development progress – this figure is now a little less than 18,000 children per day (dying from, for example pneumonia, diarrhoeal diseases, malaria, measles, whooping-cough and chronic under-nutrition) – still far too high. Hence the transition from the MDGs to the new SDGs – the question now becomes "Why stop half-way?" We can eliminate the worst aspects of extreme poverty, and reduce the U5MR to near-zero, within our lifetimes! And, Australia could take a

leadership role, in our Region and beyond, towards adequately resourcing the new SDGs, by starting to “reverse the decline” in our ODA funding, seen in recent years.

While “isolationist” policies are on the ascendancy (as recently witnessed, for example in the US, and with our own One Nation “phenomenon”), the United Nations recognises that the only way forward, towards achieving global stability, health, education, adequate nutrition, economic opportunity and freedom from extreme poverty, is to strive for the ambitious targets set by the new Global Goals.

To summarise, my point is that it is not only clearly in Australia’s national interest, to increase our allocations for international development assistance (or ODA) – starting now and continuing over the coming three years of this Government – it is our humanitarian obligation, as a responsible global citizen. We are currently in the “lower league” of OECD aid donors, but our economy remains buoyant (despite low commodity prices, funding the NDIS and national infrastructure projects, the situation of asylum-seekers, and increasingly extreme weather events). Many of these current issues are inter-connected, and now is the time to “redress the balance” for our development aid funding, and to work towards fully resourcing the Global Goals for Sustainable Development, on our way to their 2030 target.

## **Ruby, Melbourne**

I am 26 years old woman, a privileged Australian. I am white, heterosexual, middle class - bought up in a stable home with enough income to keep us clothed, homed and fed. I have not had to struggle, ask for support from the government or flee persecution.

Privileged.

I have been able to access high quality, government funded, medical assistance and medication when I've needed it. This is something all Australians benefit from, and often, take for granted. We take these services for granted because as a privileged society we see it as fair. Completely in accordance with our human rights – because we should have access to such services.

Privileged.

I can't begin to imagine, and I suspect neither can you, how hard it would be living, or raising a family without access to medicine, dentists, doctors and emergency services. How would you cope raising a child in such a place - knowing that if they get the flu or an infection they might die? Losing a child to a preventable or treatable sickness should be a thing of the past, but it's not, not yet.

Each year diarrhoea kills around 760,000 children under five – that's over 2,000 a day! Children dying from something that we, in Australia have not considered be a deadly illness for generations.

This is an example of something that is not hard to fix. Immunisations for rotavirus, access to clean water and proper hygiene practice would change these numbers dramatically. Making medical treatment accessible and affordable could save thousands of lives every day.

Australia's aid program could make that difference. We are a privileged country able to save thousands of lives each day if we commit greater funding to our aid budget.

I work and volunteer in an industry focused on human rights. These days much of our work is guided by the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG's gives us a map for how to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. And it's not impossible, we just have focus on the underlying issues, access to clean water being one of them.

I am calling on the Australian Government to consider the impact our aid program can have on achieving those goals. It's not just about children dying, it's about lifting communities out of poverty.

It's about empowering women. It's about access to education. It's about more than living, it's about having a life worth living.

Australia can be a leader in aid, in compassion and in making the world a fairer place. Our aid can save lives and change them.

Children dying by the thousands every day is not something that we can allow to happen.

I am calling on our government to increase our aid budget. And not limit it to 'our region'. We are all human, we all share this one world. No matter where you live in this world you should be able to live a life free from poverty. With clean water and access to medication when you need it.

Having a life worth living is surely a human right, not one reserved for the privileged.

Thank you.



**Alyssa, Sydney**

To whom it may concern,

I am Alyssa, University of Sydney Masters of Human Rights student living in the Inner West of Sydney.

I have recently returned from a six month stint working at the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), which has heavily impacted my view on foreign policy and aid. Working in the Asia Pacific regional office gave me insight into Australia's position in the region from a diplomatic perspective. This was enhanced by UNISDR's position as a multi-disciplinary organisation and provider of technical assistance rather than a programme implementer. As a result, I was able to work with ministers and key stakeholders from around the AP region.

At my core, I am a proponent for fairness. I don't believe however that the rhetoric of the White Paper needs to appeal to benefit of saving lives - this work speaks for itself. Rather, in order to be prioritised by the private sector and the concept adopted across Australian social classes, aid needs to be redefined as investment or 'good' trade. This is an extremely important message I believe needs to be communicated and returned to throughout the paper, as I'm sure you are aware, aid is often thought of as 'charity' - making its worth difficult to justify in the public realm. The reality however, as mentioned in the foreword of Australia's current foreign policy paper, is that aid is not best thought of as strictly charity but an enhancer of Australia's International presence and power.

Aid is indeed powerful, especially given Australia's geographic position as a 'Westernised' OECD country in the AP region. This was illustrated to me by UNISDR's largest funder being DFAT, and because of this, a generous proportion of my time there went towards compiling reports and completing work as stipulated by Australia's priorities and targets. I evidently therefore believe that this kind of aid needs to continue.

Further, at the AMCDRR 2016 that I was lucky enough to attend, I rapporteured a technical session for which DFAT's Andrew Egan was the chair. His deep knowledge of coherence, between DRR, Climate Change Adaptation, and the SDGs, was impressive, especially given the wealth of knowledge and experience of other speakers on stage.

This, to me, demonstrated Australia's commitment to aid that is preventative and resilience building over the traditional forms of reactive 'humanitarian aid'; which is a position I very much agree with. The cross-cutting issues emerging from the post-2015 development agenda highlights priorities to end extreme poverty and build resilient institutions and systems; developing a narrative that can be internationally supported by a wider range of treaties, documents, and agencies. Australia's knowledge of these cross-cutting issues must remain a priority, and be heavily integrated into our foreign policy.

Further, our position in the Pacific was often praised by our colleagues, and I commend DFAT for providing assistance to this region to the extent that Australia is now seen as an extremely valuable and positive force.

Despite this however, I saw that Australia's presence in Asia is lacking. The region is a rapidly emerging power, and Australia had little impact or influence among key leaders.

I believe, following many discussions, that this is due to our tendency to give bilateral over multilateral aid. And while I do believe bilateral aid plays a very important role in furthering our position in the AP region, our failure to increase our aid budget - such as demonstrated by recent cuts to Australian Aid, and only small increase to our Global Fund pledge - has bolstered the image of neighbouring countries on the international stage meanwhile Australia falls behind as we quietly commit to country-specific programs or awarding significant grants to undergraduate students whose work is yet to be informed or diplomatically inclined.

I also believe that a big challenge in the region right now is health, and subsequently, education. Health is a key driver of economy, and whilst dealing with such damaging epidemics as tuberculosis, the region will not be able to contribute within the international space to the level that it should. More investments need to be made in health systems and institutionalisation of health care to build resilience to these diseases. Further, immunisations and vaccines should be more readily accessible and available (through support of such multilateral donor programs as Gavi and the Global Fund, for example).

Education also unfortunately lacks funding globally, with 61 million and 65 million children not in lower or higher education schemes respectively. Further, over 250 children finish their schooling without basic literacy or numerical skills - UNESCO concerningly noting that less than one third of all countries meet Global Education Goals.

I have personally worked in schools in rural India, and after experiencing the levels of education provided by the Government schools, I strongly believe that disadvantaged students coming out of this system will not have the capacity or opportunities to meaningfully contribute to international discourse due to lacking critical thinking skills. Further, and in reference to my last point, children would often miss school due to illness, or more often, the illness of their parents resulting in their inability to pay school fees. Principles of social protection such as insurance need to be strengthened and enforced - the private sector needs to be consulted and innovation in loans and insurance systems sought.

Further, I believe our focus on the private industry, and SMEs especially, is lacking; which is an extremely significant contributor to Asia's economy. A significant gap currently exists between SME owners and resilience building practices, and this space, albeit challenging, is one that requires attention and innovation.

I therefore believe that our foreign policy should be guided by two main considerations:

1. We increase our aid budget generally to become competitive internationally - especially in Asia. We are in a very powerful position, at an extremely significant time, and we need to use our economic capacities to cement our importance in, and help to grow, a rapidly changing region that we need to be considered a part of. Further, this would allow investment in the future, with the aim of positioning Australia in Asia much in the way we are in the Pacific. This should focus on resilience building to poverty-related thematic inequalities.

2. We adopt a whole of society approach that is in line with the cross-cutting issues illustrated between the SDGs, Sendai Framework, and the Paris Agreement. This includes a focus on measures to reduce extreme poverty within which all stakeholders are considered. When implementing or guiding local and national level policy we must be always thinking of such key stakeholders as the private sector, science and technology, academia, multilateral-agencies, religious organisations, civil society, gender groups, disability, and safe schools initiatives. The building of coalitions and support of UN agencies and bodies should be a priority.

And finally, I believe in respect to my earlier comment, that this be accompanied by a national educational scheme to shift the understanding of aid away from purely charity, and away from 'cure', to focus on resilience and investment. I understand how difficult this would be, however, aid needs to be prioritised and rethought of as a means of empowering us, as well as those we serve.

**David, Canberra**

To Whom it May Concern

The deadline for submissions fast approaches and my ability to present a submission has been impaired by my despair at the state of Spaceship Earth. Here are my comments for you to consider as you start to prepare Australia's Foreign Policy White Paper:

Most of us have traditionally seen ourselves as passengers, not as crew, on Spaceship Earth. More recently, a number of people began to get up out of their passenger seats and walk up to the flight deck. It was then that they realised that there was nobody in the pilots' seats and that they needed to try to influence the direction in which Spaceship Earth was travelling. I am one of those people.

My life belongs to the community on Spaceship Earth, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. The more of a contribution I make, the more I live, and the more I rejoice in seeing positive change. As George Bernard Shaw wrote, "this is the true joy of life, being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy".

However, there is growing inequality, isolationism, and nationalism across the World - and we know from recent history that that leads to conflict, misery, and humanitarian disasters. We may live on an island but we are part of a community of nations on Spaceship Earth. If we do not help our fellow passengers, then most assuredly we will all suffer. Maybe my contributions have been wasted and maybe the light at the end of the tunnel to which successive Governments have referred has been turned off? After one look at Spaceship Earth v.2017, any objective alien visitor would have to say, "this is appalling! I want to speak to the Manager - NOW!"

More people have died as a consequence of hunger in the past 10 years than have been killed in all the wars, revolutions and murders in the past 150 years. The devastation is equivalent to an Hiroshima Atomic Bomb drop every three days. But hunger is not inevitable, and no-one dies of hunger because there is not enough food to go around.

Everyone "knows" that people will always starve in the same way that everyone knew that man would never fly. At one time in human history, everyone knew that the World was flat, that the Sun revolved around the Earth, that slavery was an economic necessity, that running a four-minute mile was impossible, that polio and smallpox would always be with us, and that no one would ever set foot on the moon - until courageous people challenged the old beliefs and smashed these persistent fake-truths.

We were all children once but some children never grow up to their potential, and some never grow up at all. Every day in our World, 16,000 children die from preventable diseases. I am a proud and fortunate grandfather of four happy healthy young Australians. I have two grandsons aged 9 and 7 and two granddaughters aged 7 and 5. I can't imagine the pain of

having to watch one of them die from a preventable disease, and yet that is what the parents of 16,000 children around the world must do each and every day.

Each death is the death of a child who had a personality, a potential, a family, and a future - 16,000 each and every day, more than 100,000 each and every week, a child each and every 5-6 seconds. And behind every child who dies, many more live on with malnutrition – unable to grow normally in body or in mind. By any measure, this is the greatest tragedy of our times. But because it happens every day, it simply isn't news.

Where you live shouldn't determine whether you live or die. Living in Australia, Senator Corey Bernardi had successful treatment for tuberculosis - if he had lived in a developing country, his chances of surviving if at all would have been greatly reduced. He now has the luxury of the support of top-quality health and education systems, and the right to bang his drum of hate - a freedom that he has inherited only by virtue of his place of birth. Why can't tuberculosis sufferers around the world expect this basic human right?

But despite the appalling numbers above, we have made and can make a significant difference through our overseas aid programs. When I first committed to this cause in the early 1980's, around 40,000 children died every day from preventable diseases - now the number is 16,000! What a return on investment!

In the past, when fighting inequality poverty and hunger seemed hopeless, Australia and the First World was off the hook. But if I am right, and the statistics would suggest that I am, Australia and the First World can make a difference - we must step up and do something. As Dante warned us "the darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis." As Martin Luther King once said, "true compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it's not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring". And as the second verse of our national anthem suggests, "for those who've come across the seas, we've boundless plains to share".

So what future would I hope for my grandchildren and their children? A world where Australia is a bastion of compassion and human rights - instead of a bunch of greedy, brawling, mean-spirited, self-absorbed, bigoted red-necks. A world where Australia treats others as Australia would like to be treated!

Australia signed up to the Millennium Development Goals and significant improvements were made. Australia signed up to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development. Let's put our money where our mouths are. Australia needs to provide foreign policy leadership and vision, practice greater global engagement and compassion, and invest more resources in the less well-off fellow passengers of Spaceship Earth.

Thanking you for the opportunity to make a submission supporting a more compassionate Australia.

## **Lindsey, Hobart**

For the last three years I have been an active volunteer for RESULTS Australia, an organisation dedicated to ending extreme poverty all around the world. During that time I have been devastated by the knowledge of so much suffering that we allow people to endure, but also heartened by the news that there are solutions to our global problems that will let every person live a healthy and dignified life.

I believe the Australian Government can do no better than base its foreign policy on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, goals that will lead us towards a world that eradicates poverty and starvation, ensures healthy lives and adequate hygiene for all, educates every child and combats climate change. I believe that, when speaking globally and in the long-term, "Australia's best interests" is synonymous with the world's best interests.

Because of my volunteer work, I am especially interested in Australian Aid and the life-saving and life-improving results it can achieve.

One of my interests is health. In Australia, we enjoy a good-quality health system, our children have access to vaccines and we suffer no epidemics. The rest of the world cannot say the same. Currently, 1.5 million children die every year from vaccine-preventable diseases, 3 million people die from HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria every year, and too many people have no access to properly stocked and staffed health care centres. Australian Aid can help to develop new vaccines and medical equipment, deliver them to where they are most needed, and save lives by treatment or prevention.

Along with an interest in health comes a concern about starvation. Hunger is one of the world's leading problems, and too often the people to suffer most are children. In 2014 it was estimated that 52 million children were suffering from acute malnutrition. This affects their mental and physical development and can, in the most severe cases, take their lives. This is unacceptable. We need to, and can, do more to ensure that everyone has this most basic need for survival.

After their health and nutrition, the most important thing we can give children to set them up for life is a quality education. Currently, 57 million children are not in school, and another 250 million leave school without basic numeracy and literary skills. A quality education empowers individuals, contributes to economic growth and produces healthier, more stable societies. Australia can improve the health and safety of the world by fighting for a quality education for every child, everywhere.

With so much good that Australia can do through its aid program, I am astonished and saddened to find that, instead of upping our game, aid funding is at its least generous that it has ever been, at only 0.23% of GNI. I want my country to be known throughout the world as a fierce protector of everyone in that world, as a champion for children, as an innovator of new methods and technologies that will ensure a good and healthy life for everyone, regardless of race, religion or gender. If the Australian Government wishes to take its global responsibility seriously, it must work towards rebuilding Australian Aid, aiming for the UN recommendation of 0.7% of GNI.

As an individual I endeavour to live by the principle that, if I can do good, then it is my responsibility to do so. I hold my country to the same principle.

## Maree, Sydney

I am pleased to be able to make a submission to the Foreign Policy White Paper process. I am also pleased to be one of thousands of Australians who have taken the time to ask the important question of themselves: 'Who do I want Australia to be in the world in 2017 and beyond?'

I would like to note from the onset that I currently hold the position as CEO of grassroots anti-poverty advocacy organisation, RESULTS International Australia. However I would also like to note that I have been an advocate on these issues for almost 30 years and mostly as a volunteer. I emphasise that the opinions expressed in this submission are also my own. I note that the world (and as a consequence, Australia) is very different to the place it was in 2003 when this consultative process was last undertaken.

What has changed in those intervening 13 years? Here are a few examples:

- 2003 was the year before the launch of Facebook which now has more than 1.6 billion users
- In 2003 just over 10% of the world's population had access to the Internet. Today that percentage is close to 50%.
- International travel has seen strong and steady growth. For example, the number of short-term departures from Australia in 2016 was 10 million – double what it was 10 years ago.
- Global terrorism is rising (though I found it surprising when doing my research that Nigeria consistently records the most terrorism related deaths)
- At more than 65 million people in 2016, the world is witnessing the highest levels of forced displacement of people from their homes in recorded history.
- There can be no doubt that the global climate is changing. NASA reports that 2016 was the hottest year on record and the rise in sea levels in the last decade is nearly double that of the last century.

Clearly these and other changes make the world a very different and more connected place than ever – truly a global village where actions for better and for worse often have impacts across many nations, continents and the world more broadly. I am pleased to make a submission to the White Paper process because it is also a chance for Australia to challenge those politicians, media and social commentators who proclaim that international cooperation and support for other countries is not in the national interest. On the contrary, the White Paper is a chance for Australia to emphasise that international cooperation and assistance is also in our national interest.

Due to my almost 30 year history of interest and passion for international development my submission focuses largely on the foreign policy impacts, opportunities and priorities of the Australian aid program. However, I would like to make 2 brief points on other areas:

- The global crisis of displaced people as mentioned above requires Australia to also respond more generously 'with boundless plains to share'. I believe the current crisis requires us to increase our refugee intake and release those who are in currently



detention into supported community conditions. History has shown that Australia reaps long term benefits from its migrant and refugee intakes.

- Australia must show greater leadership in responding to the challenges of climate change globally. Given our high per capita carbon foot-print, we should increase our national efforts to reduce fossil fuel dependency and greenhouse gas emissions well beyond our current commitments. This would also help show solidarity with neighbouring Pacific island nations who are literally facing oblivion from rising sea levels. Australian aid to mitigate the impact of climate change must also be increased.

With regards to the international development I was concerned that the terms of reference for the White Paper refer to how Australia can promote prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific through development assistance, but without specific reference to reducing poverty. It would be equally or even more concerning if reducing poverty is seen a valid aid objective, but is seen to be less relevant to broader foreign policy goals. Clearly poverty reduction IS an important foreign policy goal as demonstrated by Australia's endorsement along with 192 other countries of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. It is worth noting that Australia's contribution to the success of the SDGs relies on sound domestic and international policies in the area of trade, the environment, migration and security.

It is therefore essential for these policy objectives that Australian overseas aid in the White Paper makes poverty reduction the highest priority, followed by the priorities of building inclusive prosperity and enhancing human security. Also, security goes beyond defence and public safety, and can include provision of basic needs such as shelter and protection against disease.

An aid program that values inclusive prosperity must reflect that value with a strong emphasis on ensuring equitable access to health and health services, as well as increasing the literacy of children, especially girls. It must also prioritise addressing infectious diseases, particularly tuberculosis, which is not only most prevalent in the Asia Pacific region but in people of working age where long and debilitating treatments often perpetuate entrenched poverty. The Australian aid program must also emphasise that ensuring adequate nutrition of babies in their first 1000 days (from conception to 2 years of age) would also prevent the otherwise irreversible cognitive impairments known to be a direct consequence of under nutrition. World Bank president Dr Jim Kim frequently points to good nutrition as a key determinant of normal brain development and the ability to learn and subsequently earn an income.

I know that global investments in international aid have contributed to great progress. I have been proud to observe (and be a part of) the progress made globally in the last 25 years with the number children under 5 dying each day dropping from 40,000 to less than half that number, but more still needs to be done if we are to achieve the SDGs by 2030. This consultation is therefore very timely.

I do acknowledge that Australia has been a strong supporter of key global mechanisms such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, Gavi - the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Partnership for Education. These have been investments with positive global and regional impacts.

Unfortunately, Australia's ability to maintain let alone increase much needed support is hampered by the significant and severe cuts to the aid program that we have seen in recent years.

[After taking inflation into account the Australian aid program has reduced by nearly 30% over the last four years. The 2016-17 aid program is at its lowest level in real terms since 2007-08, and is also at its lowest proportion of the Gross National Income (GNI) on record.]

First and foremost, these are cuts have impacted the health, well-being and livelihoods of people. It must be noted that these cuts also portray Australia as a nation that, despite 25 years of economic growth, has turned inward and become a less generous global citizen. I strong believe this is an international relations and foreign policy failure.

It is therefore essential for Australia to commit to a growth path that initially reverses cuts to the aid program and significantly increases aid levels to approximately \$10 billion per year by the mid 2020s. Only by doing this can Australia contribute to each of the important objectives for the aid program without 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' by having objectives compete with each other for scarce resources.

The Sustainable Development Goals are also critical to our aid and our foreign policy as they identify the key priorities for our international development and the framework measuring our progress towards achieving them.

Australia is no longer 'down under' but increasingly connected to the region and the world every minute of every day. To be seen by others as the regional and global player we believe we are, we need to be acting more like one.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. I look forward to following the process through the Department and the Parliament in coming months

## **Elisha, Melbourne**

My Name is Elisha and I am making a submission.

Amidst the context of Australia's disheartening and severe budget cuts to AusAid, it is promising to see the Turnbull government turning a corner and encouraging Australians to reflect on the way we engage with international aid and development by commissioning a Foreign Policy White Paper.

The White Paper presents an opportunity for Australia to reflect on our role affecting the eradication of unemployment, poverty and the social and economic exclusion of vulnerable people around the world. Living within a developed nation such as Australia makes it easy for many of us to overlook the growing inequality in wealth and income within and between nations states.

3 billion people around the world live in extreme poverty on less than \$2.50 a day and children make up half of this shocking number. While this may sound like a distant problem, many of the world's poorest people are Australia's next door neighbours, residing in countries closely located to us in the Asia Pacific region. By leading and contributing to the development of our neighbouring countries, Australia ensures we foster a safe and prosperous Asia Pacific Region which we as a country can thrive in for the future.

While I would like to see Australia significantly increase our contribution towards developing countries in the Asia Pacific Region, I would also like to see us be generous with Africa. Some of my family comes from Kenya, so African poverty breaks my heart and makes me cry. I would like to feel proud to say I'm Australian again, I would like us to start contributing our fair share towards international poverty alleviation measures.

I feel strongly about this issue, so I wrote two letters to the editor about the White Paper ([Maitland Mercury](#) and [Bendigo Advertiser](#)).

I have also contacted my local MP about our international aid agenda as well.

Can Australia start contributing more funds towards international aid and development again?

## Christine, Sydney

My name is Christine and I am a 23-year-old Social Work student with a background in Psychology. Since I was in school, I knew that I wanted my life and career to be revolved around helping people. And, since taking on my Masters in Social Work, I have a greater awareness for the social injustices that exist not just within our nation, but in many other countries that have even less resources to support their citizens than we do.

The world is full of problems without passports: war, poverty, hunger, displaced people and climate change know no boundaries. Our security, prosperity and influence can only be ensured when we contribute to overcoming global challenges. We need to seek our national interest in concert with other nations, to shape a future where Australia – and the rest of the world – can flourish.

Today, 800 million lives are still characterised by persistent, absolute poverty. Poverty inhibits people from achieving their potential, contributing to society, and experiencing basic human rights such as access to quality health care, education, security and sustainable employment. Poverty's twin is inequality: in 2017, 8 billionaires own the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world, which consists of 3.6 billion people.

As a proud, privileged and well-resourced nation, Australian overseas aid has already assisted millions of people overcome the barriers that contribute to poverty. As a child of Vietnamese migrant parents who struggled terribly growing up in poverty-stricken Vietnam, I was proud to read that Australia's aid program contributed to a remarkable reduction in poverty rates, from 60 percent to 20.7 percent in the last 20 years. I am certain that these positive trends are occurring in other countries benefiting from Australia's compassionate aid efforts.

However, Australia's aid program has been the disproportionate victim of the Coalition's government "budget savings measures" since formation in 2013. As Fairfax's Matt Wade reports, while only about 1% of budget expenditure, it has made up around 25% of all budget cuts by the government for the period 2013-14, to 2018-19. The Lowy Institute's Jonathan Pryke reports that these cuts have seen Australia tumble in international rankings, and left our nation at an all-time low when it comes to its generosity, as measured by aid as a proportion of Gross National Income (GNI). According to calculations by the Development Policy Centre at ANU, the government's budget cuts mark both the largest ever multi-year aid cuts (33%) and largest ever single year cut (20% and \$1 billion in 2015-16). This will see Australian aid fall to 0.22% of GNI in 2017-18, the lowest level in Australian history. This can be compared to Sweden, which spends over 1% of GNI, and the United Kingdom, which allocates 0.7% of GNI to aid.

The purpose of the aid program should not be to promote Australia's "national interests" – the purpose of international aid should be to promote the interests of the nations that desperately need our help to survive. In order to truly achieve this and fulfil our title of being the land of the fair go, our leaders need to aim to reverse the drastic reduction in aid, and gain cross-party support for a return to sustained growth in aid as proportion of GNI to reach 0.7% by 2030. We need to prioritise poverty eradication and meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This means a commitment to ensuring that funding accomplishes its

impact on improving health, education, economic growth, access to financial services and protecting people's right to live free from violence and abuse.

I want to keep believing that Australia is a 'giving' country – a country that embraces multiculturalism, and treats all individuals with dignity and respect. As social inequities continue to rise and certain cultural groups continue to be discriminated against and marginalised, I hope that our leaders can step up and champion a movement to promote equality, justice and sustainable global progress.

**Barbara, Sydney**

To Whom it May Concern

I am a sixty three year old female Australian, born in Ireland.

I have lived in this country for almost thirty years now.

One of the first things I noticed on settling here was the degree to which everybody helped each other. Someone was sick, a range of meals were organised. Someone was pregnant - prams, cots clothes etc. miraculously appeared.

In recent times however, we have become increasingly begrudging as a government with aid to those outside our own borders. I know people say "aid begins at home" but I say it should not end there.

So in our Foreign Policy White Paper I would like to see a return to the Australian values of helping those in need.

We are one of the wealthiest countries in the world and as signatories to the "Sustainable Development Goals" we need our Foreign Policy to address the issues therein.

So, as well as dealing with international diplomacy the paper should cover aid to help achieve:

The goal of universal health care

The goal of universal education at least to primary school level at this stage

The goal of reducing major epidemics by 2030

The goal of ending poverty

to name but a few.

The upside of us for this is that healthier, wealthier neighbouring countries creates benefits for us all.

Aid works, just look a South Korea, once a recipient of foreign aid, used that aid to educate and develop its nation and as a result is now an aid contributor.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

**Ryan, Adelaide**

See Ryan's submission [here](#).

## **Carolina, Melbourne**

My name is Carolina and I am from São Paulo, Brazil. I am currently studying a Master Degree in Development Studies at the University of Melbourne and I am also an Australian Awards scholarship awardee. Aside from my studies, I am one of the volunteer co-leaders of the RESULTS Melbourne City chapter, which is part of an international organisation that advocates for the end of poverty. Furthermore, I am also involved in community development mentoring refugee children and their families at Tomorrow Foundation. Finally, I am contributing as a Social Impact Advisor to SOMOS 21, which is an organization inspiring action and collaborative engagement with and between Australian and Latin American professionals to deliver positive personal, professional and social impact.

As a Global Citizen, I am particularly interested in studying and working in Australia in the International Development area to better understand and address the global challenges we are facing nowadays, as well as to enhance connections and collaboration between Australia and Latin America, especially in the political and educational sphere.

Brazil and Australia has developed a successful commercial, business and political partnership. Nevertheless, there still many spaces to grow investments, aid and cultural relations among the countries and the whole region. Brazil and most of the Latin American countries are key players to move us towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. However, we need to work in partnership with developed nations such as Australia to address issues like access to clean water, improving health and vaccinations, combat deforestation and global warming, and guarantee access to quality education for all.

As an international student of the University of Melbourne, in Australia, I noticed that there is a lack of attention to Latin America since the priority is given to neighbours in the Asia Pacific region. I appreciate and encourage aid and political support for all the regions, but urge in this opportunity that more focus must be given to Latin American countries as well through international scholarships, aid, research and innovation and community development programs adapted for each reality.

In 2015, the Hon Julie Bishop M.P went to Brazil to sign up a Memorandum of Understanding on Education, Research, and Vocational Education and Training between the Australian Department of Education and Training and the Brazilian Ministry of Education, represented by the Hon Renato Janine Ribeiro. In this context of bilateral cooperation, I strongly urge for this commitment not to stay just in the paper but rather can be translated into efficient actions to unleash the human potential of both countries.

As an Endeavour Scholarship awardee, I am eternally grateful to Australia Aid in higher education to support international talents to undertake studies in the top-notch Australian universities, such as the University of Melbourne. My studies, volunteer and social experiences here provide me a unique opportunity to develop myself as an inspiring leader and ambassador for Brazil and Australia. A role that I will be always pleased to work for.



Therefore, my goal and main message here is to encourage Australia Foreign Policy to work hard and include more people and students of the Latin America region to achieve their dreams by increasing cooperation, diplomacy, partnerships, investments and funds in their favour, which is beneficial for the progress of both regions. Thank you and congratulations for this extremely relevant consultation.

## **Diana, Sydney**

As an Australian who has done a lot of travelling I feel very passionate about our role in Global Issues. I therefore feel compelled to contribute my aspirations for Australia's Foreign Policy Taskforce. I am a mother with healthy, well-educated children who have a positive future ahead of them. We live in Sydney and can therefore benefit from everything that this stable economically strong and wonderful democratic country can offer: The Lucky Country. Yes so true and it is also a fact that many in our world are not so lucky. They are born into conflict, poverty and limited resources. It is with this observation that I therefore question why the recent Governments of Australia have backed away from the moral position and the importance of our Australian Aid. Australia should continue to build the futures of all those in our region through a stronger, better funded Aid program.

An imperative component of our Foreign policy is our Australian Aid Program. Australia signed up to the Sustainable development Goals. These goals are foundations for a better future for all who share this fragile planet. If Australia is to make a significant contribution to meeting these goals, part of this must be providing higher and more predictable levels of Aid.

Australian Foreign Policy should empower communities to reach their potential through better health, education, nutrition, security and economic stability. The results will greatly benefit Australia. There is so much detail to a Foreign policy I cannot even attempt to try to disseminate it, however I do believe that the key components within international development should include alleviating poverty, reducing the disastrous effects of climate change, promoting gender equality, access to strong education and health care programs, human rights and conflict responses and ensuring that new technologies and innovations are shared between countries to raise overall economic security and strength. In summary these are the guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals and therefore I believe these goals must be the foundations our Foreign Policy.

I feel compelled to send this submission. I have been a member of RESULTS for 9 years now and I strongly believe we must speak up and contribute whenever the opportunity arises. I sincerely hope that the submissions will be informative and show a strong trend that Australians care not only about their own interests but also about the world we share and the futures of all our children.

## Jeremy, Hobart

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the 2017 White Paper on Foreign Policy. Like many other everyday Australians, foreign policy is of equal concern to me as any matter of domestic policy, as the global and the local are impossible to separate and so impact on our lives in equal measure. I am a University of Tasmania graduate with majors in political science, social ecology and economic policy. I have held professional roles as an educator on topics of sustainable development, global health, food security, and diversity, and have been a volunteer with RESULTS International (Australia) for the past 11 years.

I recognise equality to be the most central of Australian values. Extending from this, I believe that fulfilling human rights and reversing climate change belong at the centre of Australia's foreign policy, and that current policy is in need of urgent change where it is in conflict with these aims; this White Paper presents a welcome opportunity for such changes.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent the international consensus for how to fulfil human rights without over-reaching 'planetary boundaries' (refer to Stockholm Resilience Centre for background). As such, I believe they provide the most appropriate framework for Australia's foreign policy, and that their targets and deadlines should form its basis. Likewise, it is most appropriate that scientific consensus and the need to reduce atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> to below 350 parts per million should guide foreign policy as it relates to climate change. Climate change is causing displacement, food insecurity, natural disasters, and ecosystem destruction; it is a foreign (and domestic) policy issue of the highest concern.

The Australian Aid program should be accountable against the SDGs, particularly the SDG 1 target of ending extreme poverty by 2030. As per the 2006 White Paper, 'Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability', official development assistance should remain untied, and should explicitly target poverty reduction as its primary objective. This means reaching the hardest to reach people and those bearing the highest burden of poverty, wherever they live – with particular attention to targeting women and girls, and people with a disability. As such, the geographic focus of Australian Aid should not be exclusively Indo-Pacific, but also wherever the greatest development challenges remain, including Sub-Saharan Africa.

As per SDGs 2, 3 and 4, three of the most important aid investments with a long-term impact are nutrition (especially for children in the early years of life), ending epidemics (especially tuberculosis, HIV, malaria, and already vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio), and education (especially basic education), and these deserve particular attention within the Australian Aid program.

The official development assistance budget should also be of sufficient magnitude that Australia is always able to contribute its proportional fair share to the full funding of *Gavi the Vaccine Alliance*, the *Global Fund to Fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria*, the *Global Polio Eradication Initiative*, and the *Global Partnership for Education* – all essential to the achievement of the SDGs, and demonstrably cost-effective investments of Australian Aid. This will require higher and more predictable levels of aid, so an indicative growth path should be set out for the Australian Aid program for the next 10 years, increasing from the current

historical low-point of 0.23% GNI to the international benchmark of 0.7% GNI. Such spending targets already exist for Defence, and it makes no sense to not yet have the same for aid.

Official development assistance should not fund projects that are at cross-purposes to fulfilling human rights or reversing climate change. Consistent with this, a commitment should be made to funding no new fossil fuel projects – oil, coal, and gas must be left in the ground, and renewable energy promoted in its place. Aid should also not be used as a bargaining chip for the offshore detention of asylum seekers; processing and settlement should occur in Australia for all who seek asylum here.

I look forward to following the White Paper process as it progresses, and hope the end result will be the turning point Australian foreign policy so urgently needs if we are to leave a better world for future generations.

## **Mark, Brisbane**

### *Introduction*

I am pleased to have an opportunity to provide input to the Australian Foreign Policy White Paper, as a member of the public who has a long-time interest in Australia's contribution to increasing living standards and reducing poverty through its engagement with other countries. Over many years, I have worked as both a volunteer and paid advocate for Australia to increase its contribution to reducing poverty globally.

The preparation of the White Paper this year is timely for the following reasons:

- Many changes in the world's economic, political and humanitarian challenges have taken place since the previous Foreign Policy White Paper in 2003;
- In Australia and other countries, increasing numbers of commentators and elected representatives present international cooperation and support for other countries as being contrary to the national interest. The White Paper is a chance for Australia to emphasise that international cooperation and assistance is also in our national interest.

The White Paper is intended to be a statement of direction in the various aspects of Australia's foreign policy, so the following sections do not set out detailed policy and funding proposals. However, they do include some specific policy and funding priorities to increase Australia's contribution to poverty reduction and increased living standards in the coming years.

### *Increasing action on poverty reduction*

Australia is one of the 193 countries which has endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call for the elimination of extreme poverty, as well as ensuring healthy lives for everyone, and promoting universal access to education and lifelong learning.

The policies which will contribute to achieving the SDGs include international development assistance, trade, environment, migration and security policies. Therefore, increasing and improving Australia's overseas aid is one of the range of actions Australia needs to take to support countries in the Asia-Pacific region achieve these ambitious and important goals.

It is essential for the policy objectives for Australian overseas aid in the White Paper to make poverty reduction the highest priority, so the objectives of the aid program would be to: reduce poverty; build inclusive prosperity; and enhance human security.

Supporting these goals will also require rebuilding the level of Australia's development assistance. In recent years, the Australian aid program has been reduced after inflation by nearly 30%, and in 2016-17 is at its lowest level in real terms since 2007-08, and is also at its lowest proportion of the Gross National Income (GNI) on record.

If Australia is to make a significant contribution to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, it will be essential for Australia to commit to a growth path which initially reverses cuts

to the aid program in recent years, and increases development assistance to a level of approximately \$10 billion per year by the mid 2020s. This will enable Australia to contribute to each of the important objectives for the aid program without these objectives competing with each other for scarce resources.

- *Recommendation 1 – The objectives for Australian aid to be slightly revised to be: reduce poverty; build inclusive prosperity; and enhance human security.*
- *Recommendation 2 – That Australia commit to sustained growth in the resources for overseas aid, reaching \$10 billion per year by the mid 2020s.*

#### *Priority actions for reducing poverty internationally*

Development assistance to multiple sectors (health, education, rural development, small enterprise development, water and sanitation and transport) contributes to reducing poverty and building inclusive prosperity. The following sections outline actions which should receive an increase in the share of resources for development assistance:

- Ensure that Australia's health assistance is adequate and effective in addressing regional health challenges.
- Supporting child development through nutrition and education.

#### *Priorities for health assistance*

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. Examples of the challenges for the Asia-Pacific region are:

- The region is still home to two-thirds of the world's poor, over 750 million people.
- Timor-Leste has the highest proportion of underweight children in the world. Malnutrition weakens the immune system and can lead to a heightened risk of illness and disease.

Overcoming these challenges requires improving health systems in the region, so each country has an increased capacity to both prevent and respond to the toll of diseases.

#### *Specific initiatives to improve health outcomes in the region are:*

*Making increased contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria: The Global Fund has been the leading contributor to the reduction in deaths from HIV, TB and Malaria by half since 2000.*

In the last 13 years, Australia has contributed \$610 million to the Global Fund, and in turn the Global Fund has invested \$8.75 billion in total in the Asia-Pacific region, showing the leverage of Australia's contribution.

Since 2002, the Global Fund's investment in the Asia-Pacific region has

- supported distribution of 142 million mosquito nets to prevent malaria;

- 5 million tuberculosis treatments; and
- helped 3.2 million people access anti-retroviral HIV medicine.

With drug resistance becoming an increased problem for both TB and malaria, Australia needs to increase its support for disease prevention and treatment by the Global Fund, and research into improved testing and treatment for each disease.

To ensure the Global Fund meets its goals of increasing access to treatment and saving lives, it is important for Australia to provide continued and increased support for the Global Fund during and beyond the current replenishment for 2017 to 2019.

- *Recommendation 3: That Australia continue and increase its support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria beyond 2020.*

*Increasing support for vaccinating children worldwide:* Nearly 6 million children die every year, mostly from preventable diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria. Gavi, The Vaccine alliance carries out the two actions we can take to prevent these avoidable, deaths: first, vaccinate against dangerous diseases, such as pneumococcal pneumonia and rotavirus diarrhoea; and second, strengthen the capacity of local integrated health systems to provide and manage their own disease prevention and treatment systems, including routine immunisations.

Gavi has had a significant impact in our region, including the rollout of the locally-produced five-in-one vaccine in Indonesia, and the introduction of pneumococcal vaccine in Papua New Guinea and Laos recently. By 2015 Gavi had immunised half a billion children, resulting in more than nine million lives being saved by the end of the current decade.

Recently Gavi launched an initiative to improve cold chain systems and equipment such as fridges in health care centres and refrigerated trucks or containers used to move vaccines. *Without these, children in the poorest and most remote communities will not have access to life-saving vaccines.* The cold chain needs are greatest for countries with large numbers of people living in rural areas such as Cambodia, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, India and Bangladesh.

- *Recommendation 4: That Australia continue and increase its financial support for Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance beyond 2020.*
- *Recommendation 5: The Australia provide support for improved vaccine supply chains in the Asia-Pacific region.*

*Ensuring polio is eradicated:* Since the Global Polio Eradication Initiative began in 1988, the number of new cases of polio has fallen from 350,000 per year to only 37 in 2016. It is likely that new cases of the poliovirus can be stopped by mid-2017. This initiative has seen nearly three billion children immunised, and has spared ten million children from paralysis and deformity.

Polio has the chance to be only the second disease after smallpox that humans have ever eradicated globally. This would set a precedent which may inspire work towards eradicating other diseases. The work which has been done to eradicate polio will also strengthen health

systems, assisting to prevent other diseases and ensuring that no country in the world will ever have to spend money on treating polio again, saving billions of dollars.

Within the period covered by the Foreign Policy White Paper, the final stage of the polio eradication campaign is a short-term priority. However, the impact of eradicating polio in strengthening health systems and freeing resources for other programs makes this a task that Australia and other countries must complete.

- *Recommendation 6: That Australian maintain the level of its contribution to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative for another two years, to support finishing the task of polio eradication.*

#### *Priorities for education and nutrition assistance*

*Investing in education:* Increasing the participation in and quality of education has multiple benefits for individuals and their societies, including improved employment and income earning prospects, better health outcomes and increased social participation.

However, today 61 million children are *not* in primary school and 65 million adolescents are *not* in lower secondary school. A further 250 million children who are in school are graduating without having learnt even basic numeracy and literacy skills. Despite these shortfalls in education delivery and demand for education rising steadily, global commitments for education funding are declining.

Successive Australian Governments have recognised the value of education, especially basic education, as part of Australia's development assistance. However, Australia's assistance for education has been reduced as part of the overall reduction in development assistance in recent years.

Therefore, in the coming years, Australia should recommit to providing a minimum of 20% of total official development assistance (ODA) to education. As part of a focus of resources on basic education, Australia should continue and increase support for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which has an important role in supporting developing countries to ensure that every child receives a quality basic education, with a priority for the poorest, most vulnerable and those living in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

- *Recommendation 7: That Australia maintain education support at a minimum of 20% of ODA and increase support for the Global Partnership for Education.*

*Increased support for nutrition:* Malnutrition in all forms is directly or indirectly responsible for approximately 3 million of the 6 million deaths of children under the age of 5 each year, making it one of the largest causes of child mortality.

In 2014, an estimated 159 million children were stunted, or too short for their age. Most countries are making progress in reducing the number of children who are stunted, but overall progress remains slow. Approximately 8% of children under the age of 5 have severe acute malnutrition (SAM), which leads to wasting (the child is severely underweight for their



height). While a child may recover, with sufficient help, from wasting, the impacts of stunting are irreversible.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific have among the highest rates of malnutrition in the world. For example, 49% of children in Papua-New Guinea and 58% of children in Timor Leste have had their growth stunted. This means more than half of an entire generation of children in these countries will fail to reach their full physical or mental potential.

Nutrition accounts for a small proportion of aid spending by most donors. In 2014, Australia spent \$23 million per year on nutrition-specific measures (which address directly adequate food and nutrient intake, feeding, caregiving and parenting practices, and minimising infectious diseases), and \$97 million per year on overall nutrition measures, including broader factors such as food security; access to health services and a safe and hygienic environment.

To reduce the impact of malnutrition, particularly for countries in our region, Australia needs to increase its investment in both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programs, which would ensure our support for programs such as water and sanitation and agriculture complemented direct action to address nutrition.

- *Recommendation 8: Australia should increase its support for both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive measures in Australian development assistance.*

## **Martin, Sydney**

Thank you for your invitation to contribute to the policy development process.

I am a migrant, brought to Australia in the 1980s by reason of a high tech skills gap at the time, combined with ambitious initiatives for indigenous system development in place of buying overseas.

I would like Australia's ordinary migration programme to continue, pretty much as it is. I see the benefit of bringing in skilled and educated people from all over the world every day both at work and out in public and I am quite sure this programme contributes enormously to Australia's progression.

One area of migration where I would like to see improvement is refugees. I am appalled by Australia's failure to honour the convention on refugees, and would like that corrected completely and at once. I could not care less if people arrive by boat, follow a particular religion or have non-Anglo customs and language. I welcome diversity.

I am anxious that Australia's aid programme continue, and at the same time be enhanced. As a rich country placed where it is I see a huge ability for Australia to contribute and at the same time make a decisive difference to regional public health challenges as well as the elimination of extreme poverty at the very least.

I pay quite a lot of tax, and see substantial benefits to Australia in the use of that tax to fund aid. My money is where my mouth is: I have been a monthly Oxfam Australia donor for many years. Please use the tax I pay in a statesman-like way, honouring how Australia is viewed and valued globally.

**Steve, Hobart**

It is an unfortunate truth that only 0.23 percent or 23 cents in every \$100 of national income now goes to programs to help eradicate global poverty. The Federal Government in early 2016 announced another quarter billion dollar cut to the aid budget, to follow the one billion dollar cut in the 2015 budget. Australian overseas aid has now been cut by nearly one third since 2012. After adjusting for inflation, overseas aid is now at the lowest level since 2007-08 and is also the lowest proportion of the GNI on record. Health, education and humanitarian aid programs will bear the brunt of the cuts. Increased sickness, child mortality and global poverty will be the outcomes. It is hard to reconcile that as our nation prospers our national identity is becoming more mean spirited and unsympathetic. Restoring overseas aid must be a government priority. It is essential for Australia to commit to a growth path which initially reverses cuts to the aid program in recent years, and increases to a level of approximately \$10 billion per year by the mid 2020s.

## **Gina, Hobart**

I am a 30 year old Science graduate who majored in Psychology at university and now works with RESULTS Australia to train and support everyday people to be powerful voices for the end of poverty. I currently train 80 such people around the country. I was born in Australia and have lived here all my life, having spent the last 11 years volunteering and working to rid the world of poverty and inequality.

As such I am particularly interested in Australia's aid program, and how we respond to global challenges.

I believe that where you live shouldn't determine whether you live. This belief has been the motivation for my choice of career and volunteering activities, as well as how I personally live my life. It would be a sound value to underpin Australia's approach to foreign policy. I want Australia's foreign policy to reflect my vision of Australians as compassionate and smart people leading the way to building a fairer and more sustainable world where everyone has equal access to the things they need to build a dignified life.

Ending poverty, reducing inequalities and addressing climate change should be top foreign policy objectives of the Australian Government. Australia should be a passionate advocate for, and leader in realising, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Our aid program should be sustainable, equitable and collaborative. I do not believe Australia's national interest should be prized above all other outcomes, but rather should include the interests of those our aid program seeks to serve. Our aid program should be a force for overcoming the worst aspects of hunger and poverty, including improving the health and educational outcomes of the people in most need.

The issues I am most concerned about are - broadly - health and education. I am inspired by the example of South Korea, which transitioned from a poor country receiving aid to a wealthy aid giver by investing in its only natural resource - its people. Investing in education and health lays the foundation for a country to thrive. Without it, even the soundest and best-intentioned interventions will be undermined.

In particular Australia's aid program should be better resourced to respond to the challenges it exists to respond to. As a country that has experienced 25 years of uninterrupted economic growth, it is astounding that we are at our least generous ever in our aid program. Australia must repair the aid budget and get back on track to investing 70 cents per 100 dollars of Gross National Income on aid. If spending targets are appropriate for defence, then they are appropriate for aid.

I urge strong, decisive action and bold policies to stamp out the world's worst epidemics including malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS, and polio, which is on the brink of being eradicated. I urge the same to ensure every child can eat good food that set both body and brain up for life, and that every last child attends a high quality school. Every. Last. One.

Australia's own growth and prosperity will be hindered as long as poverty and inequality are allowed to hold back such a significant portion of the global population. Until these are overcome, we are driving with the handbrake on.

## **Monique, Sydney**

Hi my name is Monique and I'm a mother. I have a career in public relations and over the last twenty years I've run my own consultancy and worked for a variety of non-profit and for profit businesses.

I'm one of the world's more fortunate women. I'm educated, I live in safety, I've never gone hungry (except when doing the 40 Hour Famine) , I've always had a roof over my head and access to education. All the things I take for granted for myself and my family are in fact luxuries for a great many people in the world.

Being born in Australia is like winning the birth lottery. You're automatically a head of the pack because you have access to all the things listed above. Not that we don't face challenges and difficulties but they're not the kind of challenges someone without enough food or access to clean water and sanitation faces.

I'd like to think that if I actually won the lottery I would share my winnings. I wouldn't be the sort of person who hoarded that money in the bank, I'd look around and see who I could help and I'd help them. Knowing I had more than enough, I'd like to think I'd enough to look beyond myself and my good fortune.

I'm writing to the White Paper because that's how I want Australia to be – the lucky country who looks beyond its borders to see what it can do with its immense good fortune to help others.

There are millions people in the world living below the poverty line, and far too many of them live in the Asia Pacific region. I know we can do more to help them. Our contribution to international aid is at an all-time low, which I find disappointing, and I hope we see a swift reversal of this trend.

The world is getting smaller and smaller with technology, people that once seemed so far away now seem closer and closer.

No parent should lose a child because they couldn't get to a hospital or doctor because their child didn't get a simple vaccination, these are the sorts of programs Australia should be funding. We have the skills and resources in this country to make this happen and I hope we make these things a priority in the coming years.