

Australian aid, Australian values? Responding to the Federal Budget.

Last month we learned about [relationships](#), and how to incorporate our [story of self](#) into a one on one conversation. This month we are responding to the latest round of [aid cuts in the Federal Budget](#) by writing to our MPs, and asking others to take action with us.

The Good Aid Budget News:

- Increasing contributions to humanitarian programs by \$60 million in 2017-18
- Reinstated funding for multilateral health and education programs, which were reduced significantly in 2016-17.

The Bad Aid Budget News:

- The Budget delivers the amounts that we had expected in 2017-18 and 2018-19, but then freezes the aid program at just over \$4 billion in the following two years. **This is effectively a reduction of \$300 million from what we were expecting.**
- This is likely to mean that the majority of country programs and multilateral contributions will remain at the current low level in dollar terms over the next three years,
- Reduces the prospect of increased pledges by Australia to the next replenishments of *Gavi the Vaccine Alliance*, the *Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria*, or the *Global Partnership for Education*, which are due between 2018 and 2020.

The Unknown:

- Little detail about TB programs in Papua New Guinea, support for completing polio eradication and medical research into infectious diseases.
- **What effect the aid freeze will have on Australia's future commitments** to multilateral health, education and environment initiatives.

Is it fair? We think not.

- Cuts to aid over the past 4 years have brought aid spending down to **record-low levels**, despite a once-bipartisan agreement to increase aid.
- Cuts have reduced aid by 30%, despite aid accounting for less than 1% of total government spending. As [DevPolicy noted](#), "*Aid has been singled out for cuts that are **disproportionate** relative to other areas of spending.*"
- Cuts to aid have been justified as necessary because of Australia's "debt and deficit emergency", yet **overall government spending has increased**.
- Cuts to aid have been applauded by some parliamentarians, because "charity begins at home". Regardless of where you stand on this, it is **inaccurate** to portray Australia as having to choose between helping impoverished people in Australia, and those overseas.

What about you?

We urge you to consider your own values. Where does Australia's aid program fit in with those values? Is it about justice, fairness, generosity, equality, opportunity, empathy, charity? **What values guide your actions in response to poverty, disadvantage, inequality and injustice?** What values do you want to guide the government's response? Are these values being upheld? Why or why not?



Contact RESULTS

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Take Action Now

- Write to your Federal Member of Parliament, responding to the Budget, and asking that they write to the Treasurer and Minister for Foreign Affairs on your behalf sharing your concerns and seeking answers to your questions.
- Build on the relationships you built last month through one on one conversations; ask those people to join you in taking this action.

Writing to your Federal Member of Parliament

- **Who are they?** Find out who your MP is by entering your postcode at OpenAustralia.org.au, or you can use electorate.aec.gov.au to find out your electorate, then use OpenAustralia or aph.gov.au to see who the MP is for your electorate. Still stuck? Email info@results.org.au
- **Where are they?** Find your MP's address at aph.gov.au - this will also tell you how to address them, E.g. Mr, Ms, Dr, The Honourable, Minister, etc.
- **What do I say?** Be EPIC.
 - Engage - tell your story. Who are you? What values do you hold dear?
 - Problem - what is the problem? Why do aid cuts go against your values?
 - Inform – give more information. What solutions exist? Why is this urgent?
 - Call to action - what do you want the MP to do about it? What do you yourself commit to doing about it? What questions do you have and want answers to?
 - Ask your MP to write to the Treasurer (Hon. Scott Morrison MP) and Minister for Foreign Affairs (Hon. Julie Bishop MP) to convey your concerns and seek answers to your questions.
- **Is there anything else?** Include your full name and address so your MP can write back.
- **What else can I do?** It's important to keep writing to the media, and you can amplify your own voice by having others take action too. Who can you ask to take action?

Asking someone to take action with you

- **Who do I ask?** Think about people you know - friends, family, workmates - who seem as riled up about the budget as you are, or who you think would be interested. Then expand your thinking a little further - who in your community might be interested? Church leaders? Social justice groups? The mothers' group you are part of?
- **The Four Cs of getting a commitment:**
 - **Connect** - talk to them! Share stories.
 - **Context** - what has happened? Why does it matter? What do you want them to do? How is their action powerful and needed? Why is it urgent?
 - **Commit** - ask the question. Get a yes or no answer. What is it, exactly, you are asking them to do? When will they do it? Do they need help?
 - **Catapult** - if the commitment ask was met with enthusiasm, catapult the commitment. What is something they can do to make their action extra powerful? Here are some ideas: Send your letter to a newspaper, get a friend to write too, attend the next RESULTS meeting, introduce you to another community leader, speak about this at the next church service, include your letter in the next newsletter, post your letter on Facebook to prompt discussion with network, etc.

Report your action at www.results.org.au/Report

Don't Forget: Join our Action Call on May 28. Meeting ID 646 924 3921.

Join at <https://zoom.us/j/6469243921> and turn video on so we can see you.

Connect to audio via your computer when prompted, or by phone by calling 02 8015 2088.