



**SAFER**

**WORLD**

**FOR**

**ALL**



**POLICY REPORT**

FEBRUARY 2024



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01

# WHAT FUTURE DO WE WANT?

GEREHU MARKETS PORT MORESBY, PAPUA  
NEW GUINEA. PHOTO: NESS KERTON



The world is at a critical inflection point. Without immediate action today's challenges will become tomorrow's catastrophes.



## **The pandemic didn't just halt progress toward fighting infectious diseases, empowering women and girls, and advancing education and economic prosperity. It reversed it.**

We now confront converging crises – dangerously hot weather, fuel shortages, hunger, violent conflicts, and mass displacements – each inflamed by the other. As a wealthy advanced nation, Australia's response is vital to the world and our immediate neighbourhood. But it is also paramount to our own future. Because Australia's security and well-being are inextricably linked to global stability. That is why development assistance is more than an act of benevolence. Through Australia's development program we can contribute to a stable and prosperous region where people's rights are respected, and they can live with dignity.

The decisions we make now will determine our own progress, peace, and prosperity. Reducing inequality, preventing dangerous climate change and addressing conflict, will improve our own lives as well as those of the broader human family.

Australia's national interest demands a multi-partisan consensus, committing us to Official Development Assistance (ODA) reaching at least 0.5% of gross national income. The UN target for wealthy countries' ODA is 0.7% of GNI. Even after a funding boost from the Albanese Government, Australia's ODA sits at a historic low, projected to be just 0.19% of GNI for 2023/24 and decreasing further in the coming years. This is well below the 2022 OECD average of 0.37%, placing Australia near the bottom in OECD rankings. Aid levels this low don't adequately protect our own citizens, let alone our neighbours. This should not be a partisan issue. National security has historically been common ground for Australia's parties of government.

Australia has used its aid to strengthen ties with partner governments and peoples in many countries since the 1950s. Australian scholarships have built relationships with students and future leaders. Australian leadership at the UN and regional



assistance missions to Cambodia, Timor Leste and the Solomons have helped restore peace and stability after conflict. Technical assistance has shared skills and knowledge in many different ministries and agencies with scores of countries, strengthening relationships and goodwill towards Australia.

We now live in one of the most contested geostrategic environments since World War II. Liberal democracies such as Australia should invest in aid if they wish to uphold the international rule of law, support democracy, and protect civic space. The rise of illiberal regimes coupled with increasing aid from authoritarian donors means that the aid space is competitive. Others will step in if Australia doesn't play a bigger role.

Greater human security is also a goal Australia should pursue. The UN Global Goals set 2030 as the target for ending extreme poverty and hunger. However, on our current trajectory around seven percent of the world's population – 575 million people – will live in extreme poverty. Some 600 million people will be chronically undernourished and a staggering 660 million will not have access to electricity. We owe it to the next generation to prevent this unfolding.

One in six children today live in a conflict zone, with the number increasing sharply over the past 20 years. By 2030, 300 million children or young people will leave school unable to read and write unless we change course.

Almost two billion people will rely on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking. In a world already beset by unprecedented weather disasters, these trends are alarming. Australia must make upfront and additional annual budget commitments of \$4 billion a year to meet our fair share of global climate finance contributions.

It's been 15 long years of fire, flood, heatwaves, droughts and famines since developed countries promised to give USD \$100 billion a year in climate finance to low-income countries on the front lines of disaster. But just 24% of that amount has been contributed. Without action, the costs for the global economy will be gargantuan. Climate financing needed for developing countries will be USD \$2.4 trillion by 2030 if developed nations and the private sector don't lift their game.

At the same time, the costs of supporting countries and communities to deal with the damaging impacts of climate change could reach up to USD \$671 billion. The widening chasm between the developed and developing world isn't restricted to climate change. Australia also needs to push in multilateral forums for sustainable solutions to the debt crisis.

Even before recent interest rate shocks, developing countries were being charged between 5% and 8% on loans compared with 1% for advanced economies.

Australia must use its status as a middle power to reform the world economy to focus on sustainable investment, debt relief, and easier capital access for developing countries. This would reduce climate crisis threats like food and water scarcity, and forced migration – all major drivers of war.

There are also financial benefits for Australia to boost its aid and development efforts. Ten of Australia's top 15 export markets are countries where we once provided foreign aid. The fate of our world hinges on our actions today. Inaction leads to catastrophe, while decisive steps can steer us towards progress, peace, and prosperity. It's imperative that we invest in creating a safer world to protect Australians and the global community.



CHILD AT A WELL, TARIN KOWT, URUZGAN, AFGHANISTAN. PHOTO: LORRIE GRAHAM

02

# WHO WE ARE



WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN GERUKA VILLAGE, CHANDRANAGAR RM, SARLAHI DISTRICT, NEPAL. PHOTO: DFAT



## **The *Safer World for All* campaign is being coordinated by the Public Engagement and Campaigns Committee (PECC) of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Micah Australia.**

ACFID is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action. The PECC is a formal committee of ACFID whose primary objective is to engage the public and campaign for better international development policy and practice by Australia.

Micah Australia is a coalition of faith-based international development agencies, empowering Australian Christians to advocate on the most urgent global justice issues facing our world today.

This report has been developed using extensive literature review and targeted consultations with diverse stakeholders across the development sector, foreign policy experts, think tanks, public servants and over forty Federal Members of Parliament.

The objective was to ensure that a vision of a *Safer World for All* is developed which accurately captures the imagination and starts a broader discussion into seeking to understand what Australia's role in both regional and global development efforts should be in responding to the polycrisis.

As such, we see the solutions set out in this report as vital yet not exhaustive. We endeavour now to work across other sectors of Australia – from business, industry, health, unions, defence, education, services, immigration, and more – to mobilise a truly 'whole-of-nation' approach to Australia's role in promoting sustainable development as a regional leader.



A GIRL READS AT THE KINDERGARTEN IN TIRIN KOT, URUZGAN.  
PHOTO: ELISSA BOGOS MIRZAEI

03

# OUR VISION



OLIVIA GIMBO, A BENEFICIARY OF THE PROTECTED RELIEF PROGRAMME WITH ONE OF HER THREE DAUGHTERS IN EPWORTH, HARARE. PHOTO: KATE HOLT

## Our call is for Australia to embrace a vision for building a safer world for all, built on:

### OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

- Everyone everywhere enjoys peaceful, prosperous and fulfilling lives, thriving in communities and countries that protect human rights, provide an adequate standard of income and where extreme poverty is eradicated.
- Opportunity and resources are shared equitably across geographies and for future generations: no-one is left behind (women and children, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQIA+, people living in modern slavery).



(TOP) CHILDREN LIVING IN THE FASI MOE AFI AREA OF NUKU'ALOFA TAKE PART IN A JUST PLAY SOCCER PROGRAM. PHOTO: CONNOR ASHLEIGH



(LEFT) STUDENTS OF MALA LIA GIRLS SCHOOL AT THE WELL, TARIN KOWT, URUZGAN PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN. PHOTO: LORRIE GRAHAM

### RESILIENT PEOPLE AND PLANET

- People thrive within the ecologically safe limits of the planet, ensuring the safeguarding of the environment for current and future generations.
- People and planet persist, adapt and transform in the face of change, able to withstand and recover from difficulties and challenges.

# FIVE ARGUMENTS

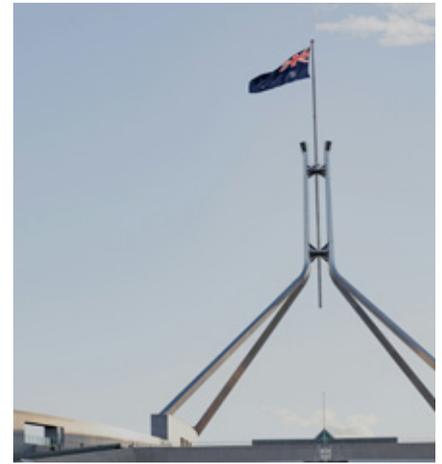


## FOR THOSE SHAPING AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

Poverty, inequality, and climate change make the world less stable. But a Safer World For All is possible if we act now.

## 01

**Australia has both a moral and strategic imperative to act on the ‘polycrisis’ currently threatening our world.** By redoubling efforts, we will foster peaceful, flourishing and equitable societies across our region and internationally.



## 02

**Australia’s aid and development efforts form a core aspect of our approach to security and stability** and must be central to Australia’s response to the polycrisis.

## 03

**Integrated crises demand integrated action.** Australia must champion ambitious global solutions with multiplying benefits.

- **Invest in Australian Aid:** a bipartisan commitment and plan to reach 0.5% GNI for ODA including meeting the OECD average of 0.37% by the end of the next parliamentary term (2027), to invest in health, education, gender equality and disability inclusion, child development, livelihoods, social protection, stronger justice systems, and humanitarian action.
- **Build a fairer global economic system:** to reduce inequality, forgive debt, provide better access to capital for developing countries to fend off cascading crises, and undertake economic reforms that prioritise wellbeing and sustainability.
- **Ensure a safer climate future:** by limiting global warming to 1.5°C, protecting and regenerating fragile environments, stepping up and contributing Australia’s fair share in climate finance for adaptation and mitigation programs, and providing robust financial support to communities for loss and damage.

## 04

**Partnership and collaboration are critical to tackling the polycrisis.** We must play our part to reinvigorate global cooperation in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, recognising the need for an Australian ‘whole-of-nation’ approach.

## 05

**Investing now will save millions of lives and trillions of dollars.** While investing today demands a significant shift, the trajectory we are on is unacceptable. Investing now provides insurance against a future that we do not want, cannot afford and is not in Australia’s interest.

(TOP) PARLIAMENT HOUSE. PHOTO: DANIEL MORTON

# WHAT HAPPENS IF WE FAIL TO ACT?



Several catastrophic scenarios become a distinct possibility if we fail to act on today's interconnected crises, each with severe potential consequences to Australia's own national, economic and health security.

## WIDESPREAD FORCED DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE

Sea level rise, extreme weather events, loss of fisheries, reduced crop productivity and constricted water availability, means the current number of forcibly displaced people (108.4 million at the end of 2022)<sup>1</sup> could dramatically increase. In 2022, an additional 19 million people were displaced, the largest ever annual increase<sup>2</sup>. This number could quickly be surpassed, increasing the risk of uncontrollable cross-border migration, instability and human trafficking.

CHIKOOK IDP CAMP, BAGHDAD, IRAQ.  
PHOTO: AUSAID

## DETERIORATING HUMAN HEALTH AS CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ENTER IRREVERSIBLE DECAY

An overall decline in human health through increased air pollution, diseases, hunger and lack of fresh water will be compounded by greater risk of pandemics. The probability of an infectious disease transmitted from animals to humans resulting in a pandemic like COVID-19 taking place within the next 10 years is between 22–28%<sup>3</sup>. Already, the combined effect of ambient air pollution and household air pollution is associated with 6.7 million premature deaths annually<sup>4</sup>. Approximately 1.42 billion people, including 450 million children, are currently living in areas of high, or extremely high, water vulnerability<sup>5</sup>.



1. UNHCR – Global Trends. Forced Displacement in 2022 ([www.unhcr.org/global-trends](http://www.unhcr.org/global-trends))
2. Ibid.
3. Centre for Global Development Talks. What's Next? Predicting the frequency and scale of future pandemics. July 2021 ([www.cgdev.org/event/whats-next-predicting-frequency-and-scale-future-pandemics](http://www.cgdev.org/event/whats-next-predicting-frequency-and-scale-future-pandemics))
4. World Health Organisation. Newsroom/Factsheets/Detail/Household air pollution. December 2023 ([www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/household-air-pollution-and-health#:~:text=The%20combined%20effects%20of%20ambient,\(COPD\)%20and%20lung%20cancer.](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/household-air-pollution-and-health#:~:text=The%20combined%20effects%20of%20ambient,(COPD)%20and%20lung%20cancer.))
5. UNICEF. Reimagining WASH. Water Security for All. The world is in a water crisis, and children's lives and futures are at risk. March 2021. ([www.unwater.org/news/new-unicef-publication-address-water-insecurity](http://www.unwater.org/news/new-unicef-publication-address-water-insecurity))

## WIDESPREAD AND CONTAGIOUS STATE FAILURE

One in six children today live in a conflict zone, with the number increasing sharply over the past 20 years<sup>6</sup> As natural resources become scarcer, tensions over resources will fuel conflict. Even countries which are comparatively better off face escalating challenges due to polarisation, rising illiberalism and unresolved regional tensions, all within an international system increasingly struggling to prevent and resolve conflict.



**Development has a proven track record in making friends and influencing people, so we should use it. This is not a ‘nice to have’ luxury. This is a core strategic investment for Australia.**

SUREKA GORINGE, CEO UNITINGWORLD

## UNFATHOMABLE CLIMATE COSTS FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

There is a 66% chance the annual global average temperature will reach 1.5 °C above pre-industrial temperatures within five years.<sup>7</sup> Should the current warming trajectory continue, our very existence will be threatened.

Amongst a range of severe impacts, this temperature rise will result in increased ocean acidification impacting marine life and food sources, sea level rise increasing coastal flooding and decreased availability and quality of natural resources including fresh drinking water and quality soils for growing food.

The costs of responding will also continue to mount. In 2022, weather disasters in developing countries caused more than US\$109 billion in losses<sup>8</sup>. The actual figure is likely much higher if smaller events, slow-onset impacts and non-economic costs are included. By 2030, however, “the costs of supporting countries and communities to deal with the damaging impacts of climate change could reach up to USD \$671 billion annually, with the majority of the costs currently being borne by low-income and highly climate-vulnerable countries who simply cannot afford it.”<sup>9</sup>

6. Stop the war on Children. Let children live in peace. Save the Children, 2023 (<https://data.stopwaronchildren.org/>)
7. World Meteorological Organisation, Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update for 2023-2027 ([https://hadleyserver.metoffice.gov.uk/wmolc/WMO\\_GADCU\\_2023-2027.pdf](https://hadleyserver.metoffice.gov.uk/wmolc/WMO_GADCU_2023-2027.pdf))
8. The Loss and Damage Finance Landscape. A discussion paper for the Loss and Damage community on the questions to be resolved in 2023 for ambitious progress on the Loss and Damage Fund. Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung, Washington DC, Loss and Damage Collaboration, May 2023 ([https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/605869242b205050a0579e87/6462710b127e29f1b1e74ee7\\_The\\_Loss\\_and\\_Damage\\_Finance\\_Landscape\\_HBF\\_L%26DC\\_15052023.pdf](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/605869242b205050a0579e87/6462710b127e29f1b1e74ee7_The_Loss_and_Damage_Finance_Landscape_HBF_L%26DC_15052023.pdf))
9. Embedding Equality in the new loss and damage fund. Lessons from the Pacific and Asia. Paper 1. Centring equity, additionality and polluter pays in the Fund. Oxfam, July 2023. ([www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Oxfam-Australia\\_Loss-and-Damage-Report-1\\_July-2023.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Oxfam-Australia_Loss-and-Damage-Report-1_July-2023.pdf))

## THE ALTERNATIVE

We must take prudent, concrete action now and invest in a transition plan at the national political level to create a safer world for all. This plan must address immediate and urgent needs (current resilience) while also solving the structural and systemic issues that underpin the way the world currently operates (future resilience). Solutions that build current and future resilience are deeply interlinked.

- **Current resilience:** meeting immediate needs, i.e. providing education, social safety nets, food, healthcare and humanitarian assistance.
- **Future resilience:** solving the underlying structural issues which led to the crisis developing in the first place.



**Australia's security and influence relies on playing our part in these challenging times.**

AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

GENEXPERT CARTRIDGES SUPPLIED TO VANUATU BY WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION WESTERN PACIFIC AND DFAT DURING COVID-19 RESPONSE. PHOTO: DFAT AND WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION





A MOTHER FROM HOUANGMEUANG VILLAGE STANDS IN FRONT OF HER HOME. PHOTO: DFAT

# HALF-WAY TO 2030

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN PERIL

A safer world for all is one where the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), developed by the United Nations to be the world’s “shared blueprint for the peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”, are embraced and implemented. Australia’s commitment was renewed to this end in its new International Development Policy in 2023.

*The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition* revealed that at the midpoint to 2030, the SDGs are in deep trouble due to the compounding effects of the polycrisis. Of the 169 targets that underpin the 17 goals, half are moderately or severely off track; and over 30 per cent have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.



## We reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the globally agreed framework for international development.

AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### WHAT 2030 COULD LOOK LIKE IF WE FAIL TO SHIFT:



#### Goal 1 – No Poverty

575 million people (around 7% of the world's population) will still be living in extreme poverty with only about one third of countries having met the target to halve national poverty levels.



#### Goal 2 – Zero Hunger

600 million people will be chronically undernourished.



#### Goal 4 – Quality Education

84 million children will be out of school due to underinvestment and learning losses.



#### Goal 5 – Gender Equality

At the current rate it will take 286 years to close gender gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws.



#### Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy

660 million people will still lack access to electricity and close to 2 billion people will still rely on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking by 2030.

# IDENTIFYING THE DRIVERS OF THE POLYCRISIS



Three root causes explain the increasingly unsafe world we are living in.

- 1. INCREASING INEQUALITY**
- 2. LIVING BEYOND THE LIMITS OF OUR PLANET**
- 3. FAILURE TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES IN A GLOBALLY COORDINATED WAY**

# 1. INCREASING INEQUALITY

INEQUALITY: THE STATE OF NOT BEING EQUAL, ESPECIALLY IN STATUS, RIGHTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES<sup>10</sup>



**[There are] deep discrepancies of opportunity and wealth which disfigure our world, and which mean that some people live in grinding misery, fear and poverty, but they know because of globalisation that there are other parts of the world where people live in great luxury and wealth and success.”**

UK INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
SECRETARY ANDREW MITCHELL

Inequality of opportunity happens when circumstances beyond an individual’s control affects the individual’s potential outcomes. Often, inequality of opportunity leads to an inequality of outcomes, where individuals do not possess the same level of material wealth or overall economic conditions. In today’s world, both types of inequalities exist – within countries and between countries – and continues to grow.

*“We know that high inequality undermines all our social and environmental goals. It corrodes our politics, destroys trust, hamstringing our collective economic prosperity, and weakens multilateralism.”<sup>11</sup>*

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the largest rise in between-country inequality in three decades<sup>12</sup>. However, it was rising pre-COVID and continues today. In 2022, the richest 10% of the world’s population received 52% of the global income while the poorest half of the world’s population received only 8.5%<sup>13</sup>. Since 2020, the richest 1% globally have captured nearly two-thirds of all new wealth created, worth \$42 trillion<sup>14</sup>.

Inequality is further compounded by gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity and religion. Some 80% of people living with a disability live in developing countries<sup>15</sup>, where vital support is limited.

10. Concepts of Inequality. Development Issues, No. 1. Development Strategy and Policy Analysis Unit, Development Policy and Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, October 2015 ([www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess\\_dev\\_issues/dsp\\_policy\\_01.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_dev_issues/dsp_policy_01.pdf))
11. Setting Serious Goals to combat inequality. *Open Letter to the United Nations Secretary General and President of the World Bank, July 2023* ([www.oxfamfrance.org/communiqués-de-presse/setting-serious-goals-to-combat-inequality-open-letter-to-the-united-nations-secretary-general-and-president-of-the-world-bank/](http://www.oxfamfrance.org/communiqués-de-presse/setting-serious-goals-to-combat-inequality-open-letter-to-the-united-nations-secretary-general-and-president-of-the-world-bank/))
12. Sustainable Development Goals, The 17 Goals, Goal 10: reduce inequality within and among countries. Accessed January 2024 ([www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/))
13. World Inequality Report 2022, World Inequality Lab, (<https://wir2022.wid.world/>)
14. Times of crisis, time of change: Science for accelerating transformations to sustainable development. Global Sustainable Development Report, 2023. ([https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/FINAL%20GSDR%202023-Digital%20-110923\\_1.pdf](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/FINAL%20GSDR%202023-Digital%20-110923_1.pdf))
15. Poverty and Disability, CBM 2023, ([www.cbm.org.au/poverty-and-disability](http://www.cbm.org.au/poverty-and-disability))



A YOUNG GIRL COLLECTS CLEAN WATER FROM A SUPPLY AT HER HOME NEAR KAWEMPE IN UGANDA. PHOTO: KATE HOLT

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND INEQUALITY

The climate emergency is also worsening inequality. Climate change is both a crisis of unequal making and unequal suffering. Developed countries contributed an estimated 92% of excess historical emissions, while low-income countries contributed just 0.5%.<sup>16</sup> The bottom 50% of emitters, who generated just 12% of global emissions, experience 75% of all relative losses, and own only 2% of all [global] wealth.<sup>17</sup>

The greatest costs of the climate emergency are shouldered by low income and highly climate vulnerable countries. For developed countries, economic losses in more than four-fifths of disasters between 1970 and 2021 involving extreme weather was less than 0.1% of GDP.<sup>18</sup> For least developed countries this figure is more than 5 per cent and up to 30 per cent.<sup>19</sup> For small island developing states, some disasters are causing economic losses above 100% of their GDP.<sup>20</sup>



**From its causes to its impacts, the climate crisis is fundamentally unequal... the poorest individuals who have contributed the least to climate change experience the vast majority of its impacts and have the least capacity to respond.<sup>21</sup>**

OXFAM AUSTRALIA

16. Embedding Equality in the new loss and damage fund. Lessons from the Pacific and Asia. Paper 1. Centring equity, additionality and polluter pays in the Fund. Oxfam, July 2023. ([www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Oxfam-Australia\\_Loss-and-Damage-Report-1\\_July-2023.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Oxfam-Australia_Loss-and-Damage-Report-1_July-2023.pdf))

17. Ibid.

18. Economic costs of weather-related disasters soars but early warnings save lives, World Meteorological Organisation, May 2023, (<https://wmo.int/news/media-centre/economic-costs-of-weather-related-disasters-soars-early-warnings-save-lives>)

19. Ibid, 16.

20. Ibid, 16.

21. Ibid, 16.

## INEQUALITY IN THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM

In its current state, the global financial system is contributing to inequities between countries. There is not enough finance available, either from traditional lenders or from new sources. In 2022 investment per person in low-income countries averaged US\$175 per person, compared with US\$11,535 per person in high income countries.<sup>22</sup> There is an estimated USD 4 trillion gap<sup>23</sup> between the annual funding needed to achieve the SDGs and the funding available. Just as progress to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 has hit significant headwinds, this is being compounded by the donor community failing to fully deliver on its commitments to providing aid in the form of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

In the face of mounting challenges due to the polycrisis, countries are increasingly turning to borrowing, fuelling a debt crisis. Servicing debt restricts spending on the building blocks of development, such as health systems, education, and social services. It is currently estimated that 3.3 billion people, across 48 countries, are directly affected by underinvestment in education or health due to large interest repayments on national debt.<sup>24</sup>

This is largely being driven by unfairly high rates of borrowing. The *UN SG SDG Stimulus*

*Paper of February 2023* noted that, “Even prior to the recent rise in interest rates, least developed countries borrowing from international capital markets often paid rates of 5 to 8%, compared to 1% for many developed countries.”<sup>25</sup>

The “great finance divide” as the UN Secretary General calls it, means many countries have limited means to invest in sustainable development, including addressing the impacts of climate change.<sup>26</sup>

*“As added debt burdens prevent poor nations from making climate investments, by 2030, poor nations will need \$2.4 trillion per year each year to mitigate and adapt to climate change and maintain biodiversity. While around half of the required financing is expected to come from domestic sources, around \$1 trillion per year of external finance will be required to meet the financing needs.”*<sup>27</sup>

Servicing such debt can become impossible, especially in a crisis such as a natural disaster. Globally, one in three countries is at high risk of a fiscal crisis and more than 40% of people experiencing extreme poverty live in countries afflicted by severe debt.<sup>28</sup> Public debt in the Pacific is expected to almost double by 2025, compared to 2019.<sup>29</sup>

22. Sustainable Development Report 2023. Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Solutions Network. (<https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/chapters/part-1-how-to-achieve-the-sdgs-the-sdsn-framework>)

23. SDG Investment Trends Monitor. United Nations UNCTAD, September 2023, Issue 4. ([https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diaemisc2023d6\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diaemisc2023d6_en.pdf))

24. A world of debt. A growing burden to global prosperity. United Nations Global Crisis Response Group 2023 (<https://unctad.org/publication/world-of-debt>)

25. United Nations Secretary-General’s SDG Stimulus to Deliver Agenda 2030, February 2023 ([www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SDG-Stimulus-to-Deliver-Agenda-2030.pdf](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SDG-Stimulus-to-Deliver-Agenda-2030.pdf))

26. With trillions needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, world leaders gather to set out bold solutions to urgently scale up investments. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, September 2023 ([www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SDG-Stimulus-to-Deliver-Agenda-2030.pdf](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SDG-Stimulus-to-Deliver-Agenda-2030.pdf))

27. NGO Committee on Financing for Development submission to the 2023 IATF Report ([https://financing.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Input%20to%20the%202023%20IATF%20Report%20outline%20\\_NGO%20Committee%20on%20FFD\\_updated%20.pdf](https://financing.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Input%20to%20the%202023%20IATF%20Report%20outline%20_NGO%20Committee%20on%20FFD_updated%20.pdf))

28. Press Release, Secretary General, ‘No time to lose’ for closing financing divide, as multifaceted crisis devastates world’s poorest countries, Secretary-General tells Economic and Social Council Forum, April 2023 (<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21765.doc.htm#:~:text=One%20in%20three%20countries%20is,but%20not%20to%20the%20richest.>)

29. Australia’s International Development Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade August 2023 ([www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australias-international-development-policy](http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australias-international-development-policy))

# SPOTLIGHT ON OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA)

The SDGs calls on developed nations to achieve ODA contributions of 0.7% of GNI<sup>30</sup> by 2030, to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere.<sup>31</sup> However the international community is far from meeting this target.

Australia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world yet our generosity as a nation continues to decline. In the May 2023-24 Budget, ODA comprised just 0.70% of the total government spend.<sup>32</sup> Despite temporary increases during the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional \$1.4 billion over four years in the October 2022 Budget, and a more recent increase to the ODA baseline<sup>33</sup>, Australia's ODA as a percentage of GNI is currently at an all-time low, projected to be 0.19% for 2023-24. This is estimated to decrease to 0.18% by 2026-27 and decline further to 0.14% by 2034-2035.<sup>34</sup> At 0.19%, our ODA contributions are well below the current OECD average of 0.37%,<sup>35</sup> we rank almost last on the OECD rankings for aid generosity (28th out of 31)<sup>36</sup> and we are 17th on the Commitment to Development Index (13 positions lower than 2021)<sup>37</sup>. Given that 22 of our 26 nearest neighbours are developing countries, our aid must be greater.

30. SDG 17.2: developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries.

31. SDG 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day

32. 2023-24 Federal Budget. Facts and Figures. ACFID, 2023 (<https://acfid.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ACFID-Budget-Analysis-2023-24-1.pdf>)

33. Australian ODA, Development Budget Summary, 2023-24, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, May 2023 ([www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/oda-development-budget-summary-2023-24.pdf](http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/oda-development-budget-summary-2023-24.pdf))

34. Labor promises not to cut aid. DevPolicy Blog, Development Policy Centre, ANU, May 2023 (hyperlink: <https://devpolicy.org/labor-promises-not-to-cut-aid-20230510/>)

35. Official Development Assistance, OECD, accessed January 2024 ([www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/ODA-2022-summary.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/ODA-2022-summary.pdf))

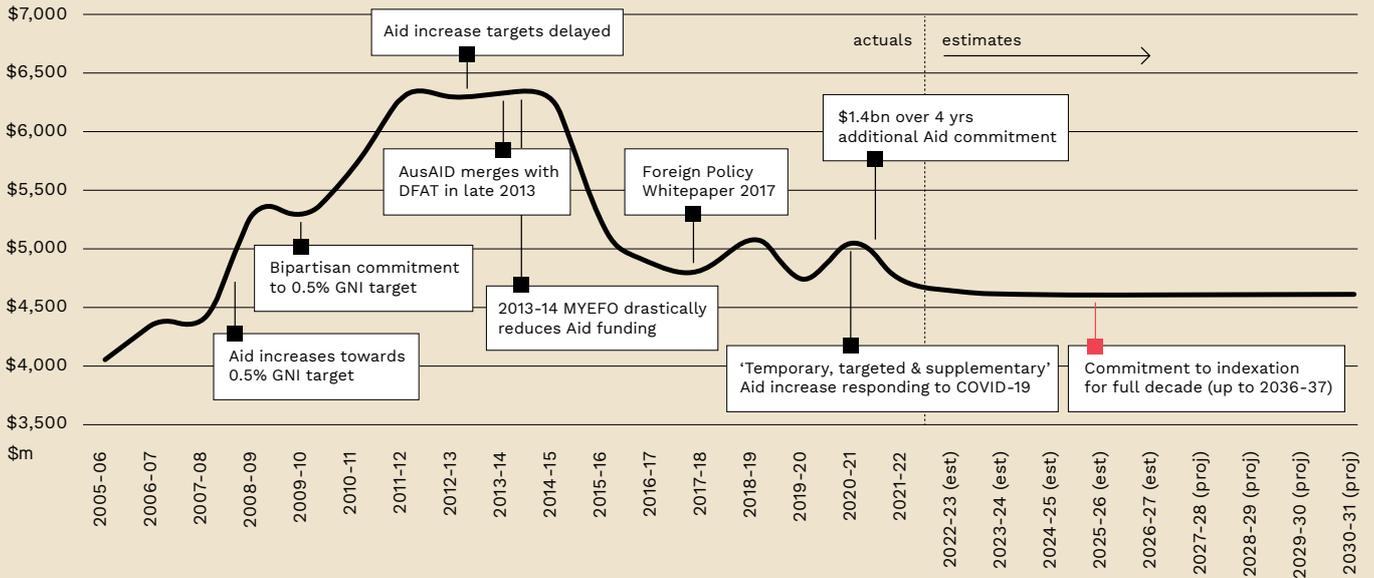
36. Official Development Assistance, OECD (accessed January 2024) ([www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm#:~:text=The%202022%20ODA%20total%20is,the%200.7%25%20target%20in%202022](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm#:~:text=The%202022%20ODA%20total%20is,the%200.7%25%20target%20in%202022))

37. The Commitment to Development Index 2023, Center for Global Development ([www.cgdev.org/cdi/#/](http://www.cgdev.org/cdi/#/))

# A ROCKY DECADE FOR AUSTRALIAN AID

Australian aid over time (2023 prices \$AUD millions)

Data: Aid Tracker, ANU Devpol

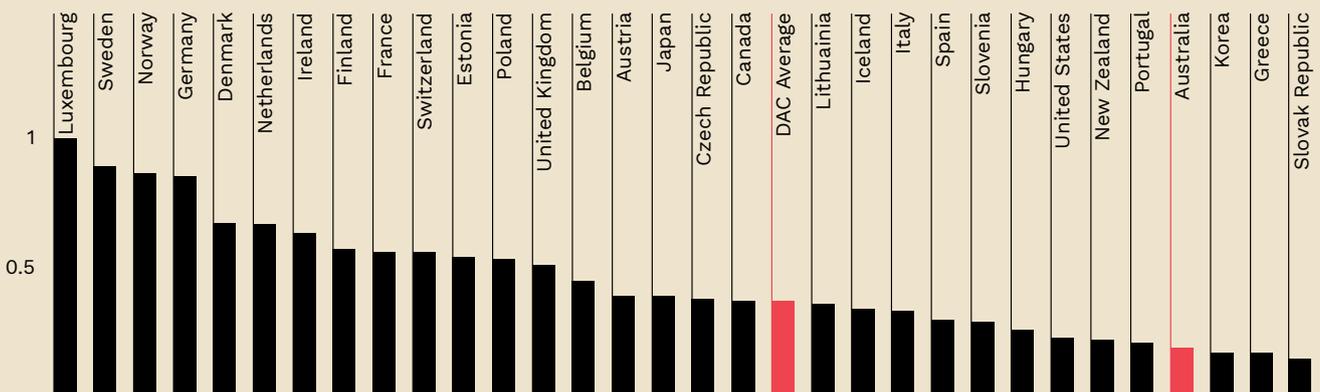


## COMPARING AUSTRALIA'S AID GENEROSITY

Australia has fallen from the 14th most generous OECD donor in 2015 to 28th in 2022.

Aid as a percentage of gross national income, OECD Donors 2022

Data: OECD DAC Data



TWO GIRLS WATCH ON AS THEIR OLDER SIBLINGS AND MOTHER TRAIN IN THEIR LOCAL NETBALL TEAM, TONGA.  
PHOTO: CONNOR ASHLEIGH



Humanitarian aid is a core component of ODA yet global funding has consistently fallen short of what is needed. Over the last five years the average shortfall is an astonishing 44.35%,<sup>38</sup> yet demand for humanitarian funding continues to grow. In 2024, nearly 300 million people require humanitarian assistance and protection, an increase from 274 million at the beginning of 2022.<sup>39</sup>

Australia's fair share of humanitarian funding in 2024 is \$1.08 billion. The ODA Budget should map out a pathway to meet this over time, including through investments in disaster preparedness, protracted crises, conflict prevention and root causes.

The Humanitarian Emergency Fund (HEF) is the key source of funding for the Australian Government to respond to humanitarian needs as they emerge. It has not increased from \$150 million per annum in the last six years despite a significant rise in global humanitarian need.



**The global humanitarian system is on the verge of collapse. Needs are rising. And funding is drying up. Our humanitarian operations are being forced to make massive cuts. But if we don't feed the hungry, we are feeding conflict.<sup>40</sup>**

38. Global Humanitarian Overview 2024. Humanitarian Action: Analysing needs and response. UN OCHA Services (<https://humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2024>)

39. Global Humanitarian Overview 2023, July Update (Snapshot as of 31 July 2023). UN OCHA. ([www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2023-july-update-snapshot-31-july-2023#:~:text=Requirements%20for%20the%20Global%20Humanitarian,three%20other%20types%20of%20plans](http://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2023-july-update-snapshot-31-july-2023#:~:text=Requirements%20for%20the%20Global%20Humanitarian,three%20other%20types%20of%20plans)).

40. Secretary General's Address to the General Assembly, 19 September 2023 ([www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2023-09-19/secretary-generals-address-the-general-assembly](http://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2023-09-19/secretary-generals-address-the-general-assembly))

## 2. LIVING BEYOND THE LIMITS OF OUR PLANET

Climate change, loss of biodiversity and unsustainable use of natural resources are an existential threat to humanity. We have exceeded six of the nine planetary boundaries, unbalancing our planet's ecological systems and severely pressuring global systems such as food, trade, and security.<sup>41</sup> We are at increased risk of humanitarian disasters, resulting in mass migration, rising poverty and increased global instability.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

Pacific leaders have described climate change as “the single greatest existential threat facing the Blue Pacific.”<sup>42</sup> There is a 66% chance that the annual global average temperature will hit 1.5 °C above pre-industrial temperatures at some time in the next five years.<sup>43</sup> Should that trajectory eventuate, our very existence will be threatened because of:

- increasing ocean acidification impacting marine life and food sources, already in a precarious state. More than a third of global stocks were overfished in 2019 with the worst overfishing seen in the Southeast Pacific.<sup>44</sup>
- rising sea levels increasing coastal flooding
- decreasing availability and quality of fresh drinking water
- increasing land loss and land degradation, decreasing availability and quality of soils for growing food
- extreme weather events
- unpredictable weather patterns

41. Planetary Boundaries, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University, accessed January 2024, [www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html](http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html)

42. Communique of the 51st Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting, Suva, Fiji, 11-14 July, 2022 ([www.forumsec.org/2022/07/17/report-communique-of-the-51st-pacific-islands-forum-leaders-meeting/](http://www.forumsec.org/2022/07/17/report-communique-of-the-51st-pacific-islands-forum-leaders-meeting/))

43. World Meteorological Organisation, Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update for 2023-2027 ([https://hadleyserver.metoffice.gov.uk/wmolc/WMO\\_GADCU\\_2023-2027.pdf](https://hadleyserver.metoffice.gov.uk/wmolc/WMO_GADCU_2023-2027.pdf))

44. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf>)

NATURAL WETLANDS SUCH AS THIS AREA IN NORTHERN VIETNAM SUPPORT MILLIONS OF LIVELIHOODS. PHOTO: BRUCE BAILEY



**We must be determined to tackle the most immediate threat to our future: our overheating planet. Climate change is not just a change in the weather. Climate change is changing life on our planet. It is affecting every aspect of our work. It is killing people and devastating communities. Around the world, we see not only accelerating temperatures, we see an acceleration in sea levels rising – glaciers receding – deadly diseases spreading – the extinction of species –and cities under threat. And this is only the beginning.**

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, UN SECRETARY GENERAL



## RESOURCE SCARCITY

We already face scarce natural resources, consuming 1.7 planets worth of Earth's resources each year, up from 0.9 in 1960.<sup>45</sup> Resource extraction has more than tripled since 1970, including a fivefold increase in the use of non-metallic minerals and a 45% increase in fossil fuel use.<sup>46</sup> However, demand for resources continues to grow, with some estimates seeing that by 2030 demand for food will be up 25%, fresh water 40% and energy 50%.<sup>47</sup>

The stress on freshwater resources is an example of a system at risk. Approximately 1.42 billion people, including 450 million children, are currently living in areas of high, or extremely high, water vulnerability.<sup>48</sup> Increased water pollution is also a concern. More than 17 million metric tons of plastic entered the ocean in 2021, a figure projected to double or triple by 2040.<sup>49</sup>

Food security is also in major peril. In 2022, about 9.2% of the world population was facing chronic hunger, equivalent to about 735 million people – 122 million more than in 2019. An estimated 29.6 per cent of the global population – 2.4 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure, meaning they did not have access to adequate food (391 million more people than in 2019).<sup>50</sup> Nearly half the world's people depend on fish for protein but, as noted above, over-fishing has led to the depletion of over one third of global fish stocks.<sup>51</sup>

45. The Dasgupta Review – Independent Review on the Economics of Biodiversity. Interim Report, April 2020 ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/882222/The\\_Economics\\_of\\_Biodiversity\\_The\\_Dasgupta\\_Review\\_Interim\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882222/The_Economics_of_Biodiversity_The_Dasgupta_Review_Interim_Report.pdf))

46. Global Resources Outlook. 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want. UNEP, International Resource Panel 2019. ([www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook](http://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook))

47. Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds, National Intelligence Council |USA, 2012 ([www.dni.gov/files/documents/GlobalTrends\\_2030.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/GlobalTrends_2030.pdf))

48. [www.unwater.org/news/new-unicef-publication-address-water-insecurity](http://www.unwater.org/news/new-unicef-publication-address-water-insecurity)

49. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf>)

50. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>)

51. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>)

# 3. FAILURE TO RESPOND TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN A COORDINATED WAY

Nationalism and protectionism are on the rise while global cooperation declines. Countries are retreating inwards when complex problems demand cooperation and partnership.

In 2021, most of the world's population (88%) were living in countries where civic space is closed, obstructed, or threatened.<sup>52</sup> This limits the ability of citizens to meet and debate and contributes to "rising illiberalism, and democratic backsliding". A "backlash against human rights defenders" is also occurring.

Global commitments and agreements are failing. The SDGs, unanimously adopted in 2015, remain largely aspirational: only 12% of the SDG targets are on course to meet the 2030 deadline, over 50% of the SDGs have experienced weak and insufficient progress and we have stalled or gone into reverse on more than 30% of the SDGs.<sup>53</sup> Significantly, progress to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 has halted. On current projections it is unlikely that the target of eradicating extreme poverty will be met by 2030,

aided by a failure of the donor community to fully deliver on financial commitments.<sup>54</sup>

Without global cooperation, the world is increasingly being divided into haves and have-nots.

Increasing competition for resources and rising cost of living pressures such as, higher food and energy prices are leading to countries and communities retreating inwards, focusing predominantly, or even only, on protecting their population or that of their immediate region. An insular approach causes further stress on a multilateral system already struggling with the increased demands being placed on it and where the complex problems of today can only be solved by cooperation and partnership. As countries retreat, increased polarisation of opinions and views are formed, fuelled by disinformation.<sup>55</sup>

52. CIVICUS Monitor 2021 (<https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org/in-numbers.html>)

53. Warning Over Half of World Is Being Left Behind, Secretary-General Urges Greater Action to End Extreme Poverty, at Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report Launch, UN Secretary General Press Release, April 2023 (<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21776.doc.htm>)

54. Global Progress in Reducing Extreme Poverty Grinds to a Halt. Press Release. The World Bank. October 2022 ([www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/05/global-progress-in-reducing-extreme-poverty-grinds-to-a-halt#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20Oct.,a%20new%20World%20Bank%20study](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/05/global-progress-in-reducing-extreme-poverty-grinds-to-a-halt#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20Oct.,a%20new%20World%20Bank%20study)).

55. Secretary-General's address to the General Assembly, 19 September, 2023, (<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2023-09-19/secretary-generals-address-the-general-assembly>)

SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING.  
PHOTO: DFAT



**Rising illiberalism, shrinking civic space, and other conflicts and crises erode state resilience and are fed by fragility and corruption. The majority of those now living in extreme poverty are living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.**

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

07

# WHAT AUSTRALIA CAN DO

HEALTH SUPPLIES DELIVERY IN  
THE SOLOMON ISLANDS AS PART OF  
AUSTRALIA'S INDO-PACIFIC HEALTH  
SECURITY INITIATIVE. PHOTO: DFAT



# SOLUTION #1

# INCREASE INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIAN AID

## THE ASKS

**1. Additional investment in high-quality aid to help end poverty, reduce inequality, and fight climate change.**

- A bipartisan commitment and plan to reach 0.5% GNI for Official Development Assistance including meeting the OECD average of 0.37% by the end of the next parliamentary term (2027).
- Aid to be invested in health, education, climate adaptation and mitigation, gender equality, child development, disability equity, livelihoods, social protection, justice system strengthening, safeguarding civic space and humanitarian action.

**2. Provide Australia's fair share of humanitarian aid to prevent and respond to more frequent and severe crises.**

- An immediate doubling of the Humanitarian Emergency Fund (from \$150m to \$300m per year) as the primary flexible mechanism that enables humanitarian response to crisis in our region and in protracted crises globally.
- Build a pathway to Australia's fair share of humanitarian funding through an allocation of an additional \$350m per year, to go towards investments such as disaster preparedness, protracted crises, conflict prevention and addressing root causes of humanitarian issues.



**Every ODA dollar we spend is an investment in a stronger, more stable region in which Australians are safer, and can cooperate and trade.**

MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PAT CONROY

## WHAT THE SOLUTIONS WILL DELIVER

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is most effective when invested in the building blocks of development – health, education, justice, gender equality, disability care and children. This fosters prosperity and stability. Ten of Australia’s top 15 export markets today are countries where we once provided foreign aid,<sup>56</sup> a powerful return on investment. Increasing humanitarian assistance to save lives in the aftermath of conflict or disaster boosts preparedness and resilience, and insures against risks multiplying into crisis.

While Australia’s new development policy reflects on the diversity of the issues and outlines a commitment to tackle development, the funds remain unchanged. In the May 2023-24 Budget, ODA comprised just 0.70% of the total government spend.<sup>57</sup> If we are serious about our belief that aid and development is a critical tool of statecraft for responding to the challenges in our region, this amount must increase. By way of comparison, for every \$10 we spend on defence we spend only \$1 on development. This ratio is projected to double by 2032-33, when for every \$1 on aid we will spend \$20 on defence.<sup>58</sup>



**Australia’s current aid budget settings reflect neither our relative wealth, nor consecutive governments’ assessments of the more complex strategic and development context within which we are now working.**

DEVELOPMENT POLICY CENTRE, ANU CRAWFORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY SUBMISSION

56. Micah Australian Women Leaders Network, Parliament House, Canberra, The Hon Pat Conroy MP, 7 September 2022 (<https://ministers.dfat.gov.au/minister/pat-conroy/speech/micah-australian-women-leaders-network-parliament-house-canberra>)

57. 2023-24 Federal Budget. Facts and Figures. ACFID, 2023 (<https://acfid.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ACFID-Budget-Analysis-2023-24-1.pdf>)

58. Show me the (development) money. DevPol Blog, Development Policy Centre, ANU, 22 September 2023 (<https://devpolicy.org/show-me-the-development-money-20230922/>)

STUDENTS STUDY AT SHREE SAHARA BAL PRIMARY SCHOOL, POKHARA, NEPAL. PHOTO: JIM HOLMES



**Australia's security and influence relies on playing our part in these challenging times.**

AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY



# SOLUTION #2

## SUPPORT A FAIRER GLOBAL ECONOMY



**The world is running out of time to fix its international financial system that is broken, outdated, infested with short termism and downright unfair. Too many countries are being prevented from fighting the climate crisis and from creating decent opportunities for billions of people – their citizens. If countries cannot access the finance they need at rates they can afford, the world will lose the battle, not simply the countries. What is good for the North is good for the South, East and West! This is the best development strategy for the people of the developing world. This is the best development strategy for the planet.**

PRIME MINISTER MIA AMOR MOTTLEY OF BARBADOS.

(PREVIOUS) RAJ KOT UNION COUNCIL, NEELUM VALLEY, MUZAFFARABAD DISTRICT, PAKISTAN-ADMINISTERED KASHMIR. PHOTO: GIACOMO PIROZZI.

A MOTHER CARRYING A CHILD TO COLLECT WATER FROM A LOCAL STREAM, TAOUN VILLAGE, LAMAN DISTRICT, NEAR SEKONG, LAO PDR. PHOTO: JIM HOLMES



## THE ASK

1. **A fairer global economic system so developing countries have the resources to achieve sustainable development in the face of cascading crises and rising debt risks.**

To achieve this Australia should support global efforts on:

- **Debt sustainability**
- **Reforming taxation**
- **Transforming international finance institutions**

NOTE: The *Safer World for All* coalition is still in the process of developing more specific recommendations on the most effective policy steps and interventions Australia can take on this issue.

## WHAT THE SOLUTIONS WILL DELIVER

A reformed financial system focused on sustainable investment, debt relief, fair taxation and easier capital access for developing countries will reduce inequality. This helps countries meet their needs, including investments in the building blocks of development, such as health systems, education, and social services. It also lessens climate crisis threats like food and water scarcity and forced migration. By increasing sustainable investments and using public finance only in these areas, we can significantly achieve rapid, large-scale decarbonisation.



LAKHMANIA RAISES HER HAND IN THE PUTI KALATSHA COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION CLASS. TIRIN KOT, 2012. PHOTO: ELISSA BOGOS MIRZAEI



# SOLUTION #3

## ENSURE A SAFER CLIMATE FUTURE



**Climate change is the greatest shared threat to all countries. It is a global systemic crisis that is disrupting trade, causing water and energy shortages, increasing risks of pandemics, conflict and displacement, and reversing progress in the fight against poverty. It is challenging enough to address a single climate impact, such as food insecurity, but hazards will occur simultaneously and more frequently as our climate continues to change.**

AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

AN AUSAID MANGROVE REHABILITATION PROJECT IN TIEN LANG DISTRICT, HAI PHONG CITY, VIETNAM. PHOTO: DFAT



(PREVIOUS) OLIVE SABILA CHEMUTAI TENDS TO HER TOMATOES ON HER HOMESTEAD IN KAPSEROR VILLAGE, KAPCHORWA, UGANDA. PHOTO: KATE HOLT.

## THE ASKS

**1. Make upfront and additional annual budget commitments of \$4 billion per year by 2025 to meet Australia's fair share of global climate finance contributions in addition to new aid funding.**

This should contribute to both multilateral efforts and support locally led partners to deliver diverse and inclusive adaptation and mitigation programs.

**2. Make an initial contribution of \$100 million to the Loss and Damage Fund in addition to new aid funding.**

- Support low-income and highly vulnerable communities to access financial support for a range of loss and damage, including displacement and migration, biodiversity and ecosystem losses and food security.
- The Fund should cover rapid and slow onset events, economic and non-economic losses and damages, and be accessible to all developing countries, including the most climate vulnerable.
- Proactively advocate in global negotiations for new and additional equitable contributions to climate finance and the Loss and Damage Fund based on polluter pays, capacity to pay and historical responsibility.

- The Fund should be locally-led and participatory – striving for decision making at the most local possible level. This should include a direct funding window for community sector organisations, civil society and capacity building.

**3. Protect the right to a healthy environment for current and future generations.**

- Advance a global, just, and equitable phase out of coal, oil and gas through endorsing the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- Ensure that the expansion of renewable energy and climate change mitigation measures are not built on human rights abuses, such as forced labour and the illegal seizure of First Nations people's lands and resources.<sup>59</sup>
- Deliver on universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
- Protect the global environmental commons by supporting regenerative practices and embracing a nature positive future.

59. Christian Aid, *Getting Down to Business: putting human rights at the heart of a just and equitable energy transition*, October 2023.

## WHAT THE SOLUTIONS WILL DELIVER

These solutions will deliver climate justice for those who did the least to cause the crisis but are paying the highest price. They respond directly to the calls by countries in our region for a global, just and equitable transition to a safer climate for all.<sup>60</sup>

These solutions also deliver a range of related benefits. These include recognising and respecting local knowledge, making participatory and transparent decisions, and an increase in green jobs such as regenerative projects, planting mangroves, restoring coastal erosion, ecosystems and wetlands. Other benefits include improved mental health as people reconnect to nature, consume healthier foods, access clean water and live with clean air.

TUVALU IS A GLOBAL LEADER IN CLIMATE ACTION. PHOTO: SAMUEL PHELPS



60. See for example the Port Vila Call for a Just Transition to a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific, signed by Kingdom of Tonga, the Republic of Fiji, Niue, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and the Republic of Vanuatu

08

FINAL

WORD

PULALI IS ATTENDING A WORKSHOP FOR PREGNANT MOTHERS AT A BRAC RUN BIRTHING CENTRE IN KORAL SLUM. PHOTO: CONOR ASHLEIGH



## **Solving the polycrisis needs a whole of nation approach – government, businesses, non-profits, faith groups, research institutions, trade unions and diaspora.**

The expertise and experience of First Nations Australians on sustainability is particularly important. We welcome the aims of Australia's First Nations foreign policy focus, "to embed Indigenous perspectives, experiences and interests into our foreign policy"<sup>61</sup>.

More should be done to leverage broader Australian expertise and experience and to drive greater philanthropy and private investment to implement sustainable solutions.

In September 2023, the halfway point of the SDGs, countries at the UN Sustainable Development Goals Summit, recommitted to the SDGs. Australia's new development policy (August 2023) also asserted that Australia is committed to achieving sustainable development, recognising the SDGs as the collective vision for a better world.

*"We reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the globally agreed framework for international development. The SDGs reflect the interconnected nature of the world we face. We have made progress. But we must step up our efforts if we are to meet the SDGs, and the global commitment they reflect, by 2030. We all have a role to play in shaping the world for the better."*

Time is running out to achieve the 2030 goals, and if we are to avoid a far more complicated and uncertain world emerging, what we do now matters. Building a positive future, characterised by opportunity for all on a regenerating, resilient planet, requires a fundamental shift in our levels of coordination, financing, and action. But, by setting a bold vision, being clear on the drivers and committing to implement a comprehensive set of interlinked solutions, which reflect our responsibilities to respond, 2030 and beyond can become a future where people and planet thrive. This is a safer world for all.

61. Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Ambassador for First Nations People Joint media release with:

- The Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians
  - Senator Patrick Dodson, Special Envoy for Reconciliation and Implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- 21 September 2022 (hyperlink: <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/ambassador-first-nations-people>)

09

# KEY CONCEPTS

A WOMAN WAITS TO RECEIVE FOOD RASHIONS  
AT THE IFO REFUGEE CAMP IN DADAAB, KENYA.  
PHOTO: KATE HOLT/AFRICA PRACTICE



## SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS

The SDR is an international reserve asset created by the IMF in 1969 and used to supplement the official reserves of its member countries. The SDR is not a currency. It is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. (IMF)

“SDRs are basically coupons that countries can then buy or sell with other countries for hard currency such as dollars, pounds, or euros, when they need immediate funds to acquire essential supplies and support their economies.” (Global Citizen)

The IMF distributes SDRs to its 190 member countries in proportion to their IMF share and relative economic standing in the world economy.

The IMF released \$650 billion to support the global economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. G20 countries received \$442.8 billion (68%) while the poorest 44 countries received \$45.5 billion (7%). (Global Citizen)

In October 2021 the G20 committed to rechannel (redistribute or recycle) USD100 billion of SDRs (around 20%) to countries most in need.

Australia has rechannelled 3 billion of its SDR allocation (20%).

Australia has also committed an additional SDR\$1 billion (US\$1.32 billion) in ‘subsidy resources’ for these facilities and SDR\$167 million (US\$220 million) in new deposits and reserves.

Australia’s Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Pat Conroy, says that this pledge equates to 39% of Australia’s additional SDR allocation, or around AU\$4.6 billion in new development lending.

## INVESTMENT BY PRIVATE SECTOR

Both Bridgetown and the SDG Stimulus call for an increase in long-term financing, enabling the multilateral development banks to massively scale up affordable and long-term financing. The SDG Stimulus calls for an increase of least \$500 billion per year to be invested in the SDGs.

The Australian Government, through its Australian Development Investments Facility has been established with a budget of \$250 million.

## SDG STIMULUS

The SDG Stimulus has three areas for action:

1. a massive surge in finance for development, enabled by a transformation in the business model of Multilateral Development Banks;
2. a new initiative on debt, under which short-term debt could be exchanged for longer-term instruments at lower interest rates; and
3. the expansion of contingency financing to all countries in need.

“We welcome the Secretary-General’s efforts to address the SDG financing gap through an SDG stimulus. We will advance the Secretary-General’s proposal, in a timely manner through discussions at the United Nations as well as other relevant forums and institutions, to tackle the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress, to enhance support to developing countries and to massively scale up affordable long-term financing for development and expand contingency financing to countries in need.”

Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly A/HLPF/2023/L.1

## NEW FORMS OF REVENUE

Options for new forms of revenue include:

- taxing polluters and carbon users such as shipping (ie a maritime tax or levy), frequent flyers, fossil fuel companies and fossil fuel production;
- introducing a wealth tax;
- Increasing the global minimum corporate income tax rate

## SUSTAINABLE TRADE AGREEMENTS

Sustainable trade agreements include:

- Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement
- ASEAN Green Future project
- Just Energy Transition partnership in Indonesia

## ECOLOGICAL OVERSHOOT

Overshoot: consuming more resources than what can be renewed.

The global economy has been in a state of overshoot for over half a century, diminishing its resource base and its capacity to regenerate. Globally, it has surpassed six out of the nine planetary boundaries that delimit a safe space for societal development. It is facing critical challenges to its survival due to the prospects of diminishing net energy and raw materials.

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMONS

The global environmental commons are the Earth's shared resources and comprise:

- the atmosphere
- the hydrosphere
- the global ocean
- the cryosphere
- polar regions
- large-scale biomes and natural resources systems such as forests, land, water and biodiversity.

These are things we all share and that are vital for human survival and well-being.

The Future is Now. Science for Achieving Sustainable Development, (GSDR, 2019)

## GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS

Global public goods are “global in nature, in that they cannot be adequately provided by any one State acting alone, and they concern the welfare of humanity as a whole.” They include global health, information, the global economy, a healthy planet, science, peace, and the digital sphere.”

Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General, 2021

## TRANSBOUNDARY IMPACTS

“Any effect – intended or not – originated in one country that crosses national borders through flows of capital, goods, human and natural resources, and that is able to affect positively or negatively the sustainable development prospects of another country.”

OECD, Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, OECD/LEGAL/0381

## INTRAGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

“Intragenerational justice includes relationships between present individuals, between states

(international), among people of different states (global) and between community members or citizens (communitarian or nationalist). Intersectional justice considers multiple and overlapping social identities and categories (for example, gender, race, age, class and health) that underpin inequality, vulnerability and the capacity to respond. Achieving intragenerational justice means minimizing significant harm caused by one country to another, one community to another and one individual to another.”

Rockström, J., Gupta, J., Qin, D. et al. Safe and just Earth system boundaries. *Nature* 619, 102–111 (2023).

## INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

“Intergenerational justice examines relationships and obligations between generations, such as the legacy of greenhouse gas emissions or ecosystem destruction for youth and future people. Achieving intergenerational justice requires recognizing the potential long-term consequences of short-term actions and associated trade-offs and synergies across time. We define two types of intergenerational justice: (between past and present; I2a) whether actions of past generations have minimized significant harm to current generations and (between present and future; I2b) the responsibility of current generations to minimize significant harm to future generations.”

Rockström, J., Gupta, J., Qin, D. et al. Safe and just Earth system boundaries. *Nature* 619, 102–111(2023).

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## WHOLE OF NATION

“Whole of nation” moves beyond the more familiar “whole of government” approach by recognising that foreign affairs should involve, as the name suggests, all facets of Australian life: business and investment, science and technology, education, sports, culture, media and civil society.”

The Conversation, What is ‘whole of nation’ foreign policy and what does it mean for Australians?  
<https://theconversation.com/what-is-whole-of-nation-foreign-policy-and-what-does-it-mean-for-australians-217907>

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## WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT

[AN] “effort which harnesses specific experience, skills and knowledge across a range of Australian Government agencies to help reduce global poverty and improve prosperity and stability in our region.”

DFAT, Whole of Government, 2023

## ALL TOOLS OF STATECRAFT

All tools approach to statecraft is an approach which “realis[es] the multiplying effects of various instruments and actors working together in concert.”

<https://asiapacific4d.com/idea/all-tools-of-statecraft/>

The measure of Australia’s statecraft is how well it can harness, operate and coordinate the sum of the country’s national assets and resources. This starts with understanding what tools of statecraft Australia possesses in order to defend or promote its national interests. A “tool of statecraft” is an instrument or lever through which the government can generate international effects to its advantage.

AP4D, What does it look like for Australia to... Use All Tools of Statecraft in Practice, 2023

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## RULE OF LAW

UN definition of rule of law: the rule of law is a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of the law, equality

before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency. The rule of law is a core element of the humanitarian and human rights agendas.

UN and the Rule of Law

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## NATURE POSITIVE

Nature-positive is defined as halting and reversing nature loss, measured from 2020 levels, by increasing the health, abundance, diversity, and resilience of species, populations, and ecosystems so that by 2030 nature is visibly and measurably on the path of recovery.

To put this more simply, it means ensuring more nature in the world in 2030 than in 2020 and continued recovery after that.”

Nature Positive, Home, 2023



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