

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL BUDGET 2021-22

Global Citizen Australia Pre-Budget Submission



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From: Global Citizen Australia
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About Global Citizen

Global Citizen is an Australian-grown not-for-profit organisation dedicated to ending extreme poverty by 2030. We do this by encouraging people to learn and take action on our platform, and those actions seek new funding commitments to international development initiatives. These actions can be as simple as a tweet, signing a petition, making a phone call or sending an email. By taking action, these Global Citizens are rewarded with access and tickets to our music festivals and other events around the world. More than 23 million actions taken by Global Citizens have unlocked more than USD \$48 billion in commitments by world leaders, USD \$22 billion of which has already been disbursed, reaching 880 million lives so far.

Summary

This year, the Australian Government has stepped up for the Asia Pacific with the highest investment in Australian Aid for years, firmly recognising the unprecedented global need to address strains on health, education, sanitation and hunger across the world in light of COVID-19.

Australia has shown leadership both in its domestic and international responses to this fast-moving and unpredictable pandemic. Australia's initiatives throughout this year have reinvigorated a sense of Australian leadership in our region.

More than a billion dollars in additional aid investments this year will secure a supply of vaccines for our region and will save lives while protecting Pacific communities, including our own.

Australia's \$80 million investment in Gavi's COVAX Advance Market Commitment was world-leading and signalled a continued commitment to the Pacific's health security, while additional aid packages including the \$304.7 million COVID-19 response package was a much-needed early intervention to safeguard livelihoods across our region.

Australia's investments into the Pacific this year embodied the spirit of Australian Aid and reaffirmed our position as regional safeguards for our neighbours. We'll continue to see these investments pay off as our region prospers, economies grow and outcomes for vulnerable people in our region improve.

Australia must recognise the enormous benefits of its recent increases to ODA spending, which will improve outcomes, economic output and regional prosperity and confirm this support by making permanent those recent increases to Australia's ODA spend.

In doing so, Australia can reaffirm its steadfast commitment to ensuring the livelihoods, health, education, and dignity of everyone in our region and continue in its role as a central partner for regional economic growth.

If Australia's international development investments fall to pre-pandemic levels, we put at risk the great impact Australian Aid has had in recent months.

Australia's recent leadership has shielded many in our region from the worst of the pandemic by supporting their health systems and leading by example to contain outbreaks of the virus. This prospect is especially alarming when considering the Pacific's progress towards meeting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which remains far too slow. With additional support from Australia, we can ensure that our region achieves the Global Goals by 2030.

In this document, Global Citizen set out several fundamental principles which should apply as part of Australia's consolidated support of Australian Aid and our Pacific neighbours, each of which are expanded upon in this document.

- 1. The COVID-19 pandemic is not over for anyone until it's over for everyone. We must continue to lead on the global effort to stop the pandemic and prevent it from occurring again.**
- 2. Australian Aid should always be people-focused. Prospering people build prosperous economies.**
- 3. Australian Aid should meet the ambition of the Australian people. Recent increases in aid spending will save lives — we must continue these increases toward the international benchmark of 0.7% of GNI.**
- 4. Australian Aid should protect both people and the planet. We must do more to address climate change and its many secondary impacts, promote nature-based solutions and secure our region's future with new climate change adaptation initiatives for the Asia Pacific.**
- 5. Multilateral health and education programs are the most effective way to deliver strong outcomes for the Pacific. Australia's support must continue.**
- 6. Transparency and effective communication are at the heart of a well-supported aid program. We must commit to demonstrating the value of Australian Aid.**

A properly financed, people-focused Australian Aid program is the best way to save lives, support Pacific nations and economies and secure Australia's place as a regional and global leader.

Global Citizen recognises that the impacts of COVID-19 extend far beyond the immediate health crisis. In 2020, the global development agenda was set back by years, effectively eliminating a great deal of progress made by Australia and other countries around the world in alleviating poverty and working to achieve the Global Goals.

This document sets out a number of specific recommendations which can shape Australia's investment in international development to maximise its power to alleviate poverty and suffering and to assist all people alike in recovering better together as we return from this pandemic.

1. The COVID-19 pandemic is not over for anyone until it's over for everyone. We must continue to lead on the global effort to stop the pandemic and prevent it from occurring again.

Throughout 2020, the world scrambled to respond to COVID-19 in an effort to get ahead of the virus and end the acute phase of the pandemic. We came together in record time to pave the way for the development of a successful vaccine and ensure that the vaccine can reach the most vulnerable people across the world to truly end this global pandemic.

Global health organisations like the World Health Organization, The Global Fund to Fight HIV Aids, TB and Malaria, Unitaid, UNICEF and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, among others, came together to develop the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. From vaccine development and distribution across the world to bolstering the supplies of protective equipment and the development of new therapeutics to tackle the virus's many symptoms, the ACT Accelerator has become the central global effort to end the pandemic for everyone. It was early support from nations like Australia, who has made more than \$220 million dollars in contributions to the project, that ensured the success of this effort.

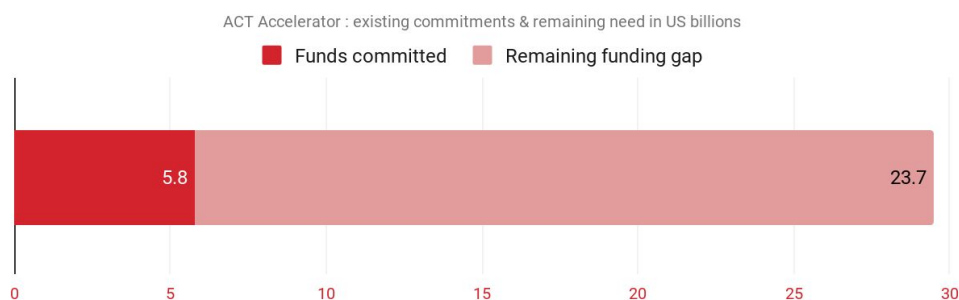
Australia recognised the importance of the ACT Accelerator early on, pledging to support Gavi's COVAX facility, which pools demand for vaccine doses and safeguards domestic supplies.

It also made an early contribution to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), specifically designed to help developing nations secure the vaccine for themselves.

The COVAX AMC recognises that this pandemic will not end until it comes under control in all parts of the world. Regardless of our efforts at home, COVID-19 will remain a threat to us all while it remains uncontrolled in any part of the world.

While Australia's early support of these mechanisms was critical, much more is needed both from Australia and from other developed nations to support the effort.

The ACT Accelerator estimates its total financial need in 2021 to be USD \$29 billion dollars — only a fraction of which has already been pledged.



The ACT Accelerator is still in urgent need of USD \$23.7 billion in additional support for 2021.
(Source: World Health Organisation 2020)

To guarantee that we can end the pandemic globally and secure the progress on global development made so far, Australia should reaffirm its support of the ACT Accelerator with additional funding in the 2021-22 Federal Budget.

Australia is in a position to leverage its early support of the ACT Accelerator by calling on other OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) nations to make their financial commitments to the ACT Accelerator.

Recommendation — Australia increases its support for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator with additional financial commitments to meet its fair-share contribution¹ of at least \$500 million and takes proactive measures to secure additional financial support for the ACT Accelerator from other donor nations.

2. Australian Aid should always be people-focused. Prospering people build prosperous economies.

A strong ODA budget must be underlined with human-focused principles with poverty alleviation and international development at its core. This is especially true in the Pacific, where millions of people still suffer from basic insecurities such as a lack of access to clean water, enough nutritious food, proper education and ample opportunities regardless of their gender or disabilities.

Economic growth, regional security and technological development throughout the region are critical to international development. However, these investments cannot reach their full potential when communities in developing nations still struggle with the most basic necessities.

COVID-19 aside, there are many urgent humanitarian issues facing the Pacific for which the Australian Government stands well-equipped to deliver impactful support. Addressing these fundamental problems, like the impact of COVID-19 on Pacific food systems² or the alarming increase of gender-based violence this year throughout our region³ is the only appropriate first step in delivering truly effective international assistance to the Pacific region.

In the Pacific alone, more than 6 million people are food insecure⁴. Almost one million children across the Pacific had their education disrupted in 2020⁵.

Meanwhile, a lack of clean water and sanitation services means that regions like the Pacific are especially vulnerable to diseases of poverty like polio — a disease which is 99.9% eradicated across the world.

These are just three examples of the persistent development issues still facing our region.

Global health and education organisations exist to address these complex programs. Organisations such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which works with developing nations to build and strengthen their education systems and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), an organisation dedicated to delivering education programming in emergency settings. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) leads the global fight against polio and has proven critical in keeping the developing world safe from COVID-19 as it rapidly deployed its surveillance and other infrastructure to track COVID-19 in the developing world.

In 2021, all of these organisations need urgent additional support to respond to the many secondary impacts of the pandemic. This increased need demonstrates the fact that COVID-19 has caused a humanitarian crisis on every level, beyond the immediate implications for global health.

¹ Fair share contribution to the ACT Accelerator is calculated as Australia's GDP as a percentage of the cumulative GDP of all G20 nations.

² Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) 2020, 5. *COVID-19 and food systems in Pacific island countries* (<https://aciarc.gov.au/publication/covid19/5-covid-19-and-food-systems-pacific-island-countries>)

³ UN Women 2020, *Across the Pacific, crisis centres respond to COVID-19 amid natural disasters* (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/feature-pacific-crisis-centres-respond-to-covid-19-amid-natural-disasters>)

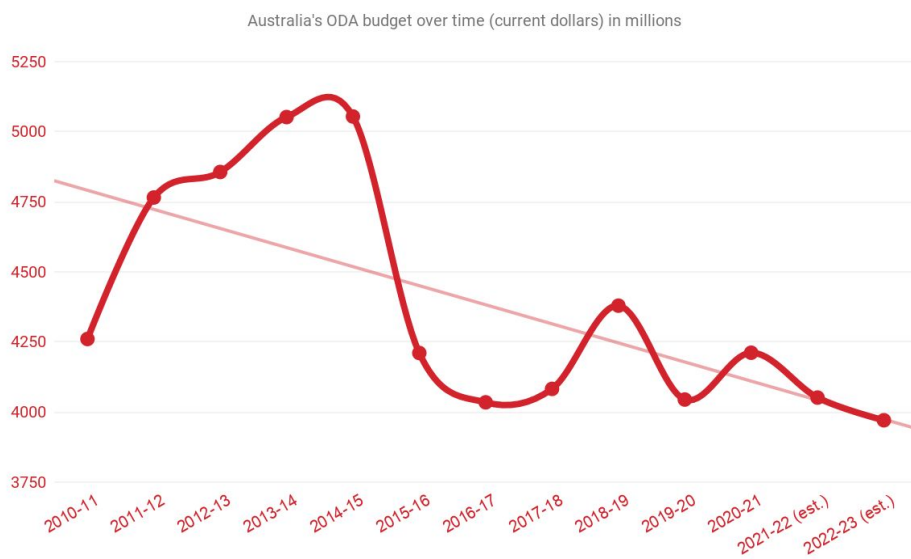
⁴ Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) 2020, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020*, (http://www.fao.org/3/ca9692en/online/ca9692en.html#chapter-1_1)

⁵ Education Cannot Wait (ECW) 2020, *Pacific Education Report*

Recommendation — The Australian Government continues its support for key multilateral health and education programs with new financial commitments to the Global Partnership for Education (\$70 million at the next replenishment), Education Cannot Wait (\$15 million over three years) and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (\$10 million in 2021 in addition to existing contributions).

3. Australian Aid should meet the ambition of the Australian people. Recent increases in aid spending will save lives — we must continue these increases toward the agreed international benchmark of 0.7% of GNI.

Despite additional aid packages this year, the 2020-21 Federal Budget marked seven consecutive years of real decline in Australia’s ODA budget. At \$4 billion exactly, Australia’s most recent ODA budget is more than more than \$1 billion less than in 2014-15 — representing a decrease of 20% over the past seven years.



While recent additional assistance packages inflate this year’s total ODA spend considerably, Australia’s ODA budget remains in real decline. (Source: Development Policy Centre 2021)

Unfortunately, as Australia gradually decreases its investments in ODA, we continue to learn more about the stubborn and far-reaching problems still faced by Pacific communities.

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (or Global Goals), established in 2015 and endorsed by Australia, set out the definitive parameters of poverty alleviation and human development across the world with a deadline to achieve these outcomes by 2030.

Unfortunately, there are still persistent barriers standing in the way of Pacific nations achieving the SDGs. An assessment by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network of Papua New Guinea’s progress reveals significant humanitarian problems which remain:



Papua New Guinea : Measuring progress against the Sustainable Development Goals reveals ‘major challenges’ that remain in the way of PNG meeting the Goals. (Source: UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2020)

However, this year Australia’s extensive and timely international response to COVID-19 has drastically increased its total ODA spend by more than a billion dollars to address the region’s most pressing crises. These steps taken by the Australian Government have undoubtedly saved lives and protected countless people’s wellbeing across our Pacific neighbourhood.

These admirable investments made during a period of extreme economic stress and uncertainty revealed an Australian Aid agenda that met the Australian people’s ambition, pledging to support our neighbours even during challenging times.

This step-up is already having a positive impact and will go on to pay economic and development dividends for years to come. In Papua New Guinea, Australian Aid delivered in response to COVID-19 has contributed to health system strengthening, which has proven effective in maintaining control over the virus in the country, preventing any widespread outbreaks.

It is this level of enthusiastic and compassionate support that our region needs in order to finally eradicate poverty and safeguard the futures of everyone in our region with the help of Australian leadership.

Recommendation — The Australian Government and Opposition jointly agree to gradual and timely increases to the official development assistance budget with a view to achieving the internationally-agreed benchmark for ODA spending — 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI).

4. Australian Aid should protect both people and the planet. We must do more to address climate change and the many secondary impacts of our changing climate.

As COVID-19 gradually escalated in the early months of 2020, it rightly commanded the lion’s share of the world’s attention to respond and work toward solutions to save lives and stop the spread.

Unfortunately, this meant that the other fundamental risk currently facing our planet — climate change — did not receive the level of international attention which it is due. Climate change still threatens to wipe out decades of human development and put millions of lives at risk as food systems become more fragile⁶, Pacific islands suffer from encroaching oceans⁷ and fishing communities especially in our region start to fail⁸.

As things stand, global commitments to mitigating climate change are insufficient. The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) measures countries’ progress against their climate change commitments. According to

⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2019, *Climate change and food systems* (<https://www.oecd.org/agriculture/topics/climate-change-and-food-systems/>)

⁷ Piesse, M 2019, ‘Climate Change in the South Pacific: Are Rising Sea Levels the Greatest Threat?’, *Future Directions International* (<https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/climate-change-in-the-south-pacific-are-rising-sea-levels-the-greatest-threat/>)

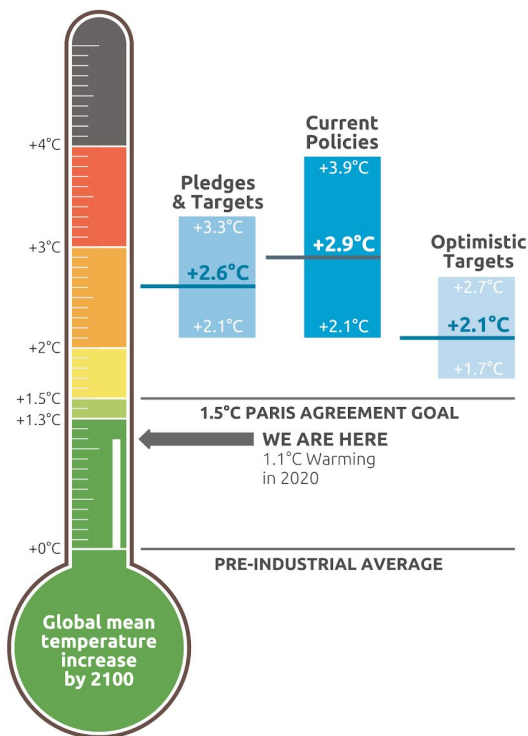
⁸ OECD 2019

CAT, the world is still significantly behind in fulfilling these commitments⁹. 2021 is our opportunity to get back on track to address rapid global warming and act now to preempt the worst impacts of climate change, disproportionately affecting the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

The next United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) in November 2021 will provide the perfect platform and opportunity for Australia to renew its effort to combat climate change by making strong new commitments to limiting emissions and capping global warming to 1.5 degree of pre-industrial levels.

That is why, in the lead up to COP26 in November 2021, Global Citizen is calling on the Australian Government, along with developed and developing nations, to make ambitious commitments to support the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

The Australian Government can do this by bolstering decarbonisation initiatives domestically and internationally supporting climate financing to work with developing nations to achieve their own ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.



The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) measures existing climate policies and estimates their impact on the environment over time. Current policies will see a roughly 2.9 degree increase in temperatures, far above the agreed limit of 1.5 degrees.

Source: Climate Action Tracker 2020

In addition to these policies, Australia should work to protect the health, integrity and biodiversity of our oceans which are relied upon so heavily both at home and throughout the Pacific to fuel economies¹⁰ and feed populations¹¹. This can occur with a renewed commitment to ocean health, reducing ocean pollution and working directly with Pacific nations to mitigate the worst of climate change’s impacts on Pacific nations.

Global Citizen welcomes the Government’s recent commitment to spend \$1.5 billion over the next five years (to 2025) to prevent and combat the effects of climate change in developing countries through

⁹ Climate Action Tracker (CAT) 2020, Global update: Paris Agreement Turning Point (<https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/global-update-paris-agreement-turning-point/>)

¹⁰ Gillet, R & Ikatonga Tauati M 2018, ‘Fisheries of the Pacific Islands : Regional and national information’, *Fao Fisheries And Aquaculture Technical Paper Series*, no. 625, p. 12 (<http://www.fao.org/3/i9297EN/i9297en.pdf>)

¹¹ OECD 2019

climate financing agreements. The Australian Government must ensure that these investments do not come at the cost of other development spending.

Recommendation — The Australian Government makes a strong showing at COP26 in November 2021 to reaffirm its commitment to 1.5 degrees in line with the Paris Agreement, commit to net zero GHG emissions by 2040, invest in nature-based and renewable energy solutions, improve ocean health, address the waste crisis and work with Indo-Pacific neighbours to mitigate and prepare for climate change.

5. Multilateral health and education programs are some of the most effective ways to deliver strong outcomes for the Pacific.

In 2020, the role of multilateral health and education organisations were more important than ever as COVID-19 called for global cooperation and agility to properly respond. No nation alone is properly equipped to meet this task, but multilateral organisations are best-placed to co-ordinate and deliver the timely and effective results needed in order to address the acute effects of COVID-19 on health, education, food security and the economy.

There is no doubt that Australia recognises this fact. In 2020, Australia stepped up to provide greater support to key multilateral development organisations. New contributions included a \$300 million commitment to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, along with an additional \$123 million commitment to Gavi's COVAX facility. Additionally, the Australian Government provided \$80 million for Gavi's COVAX AMC — specifically designed to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines reach developing nations in a timely and affordable manner.

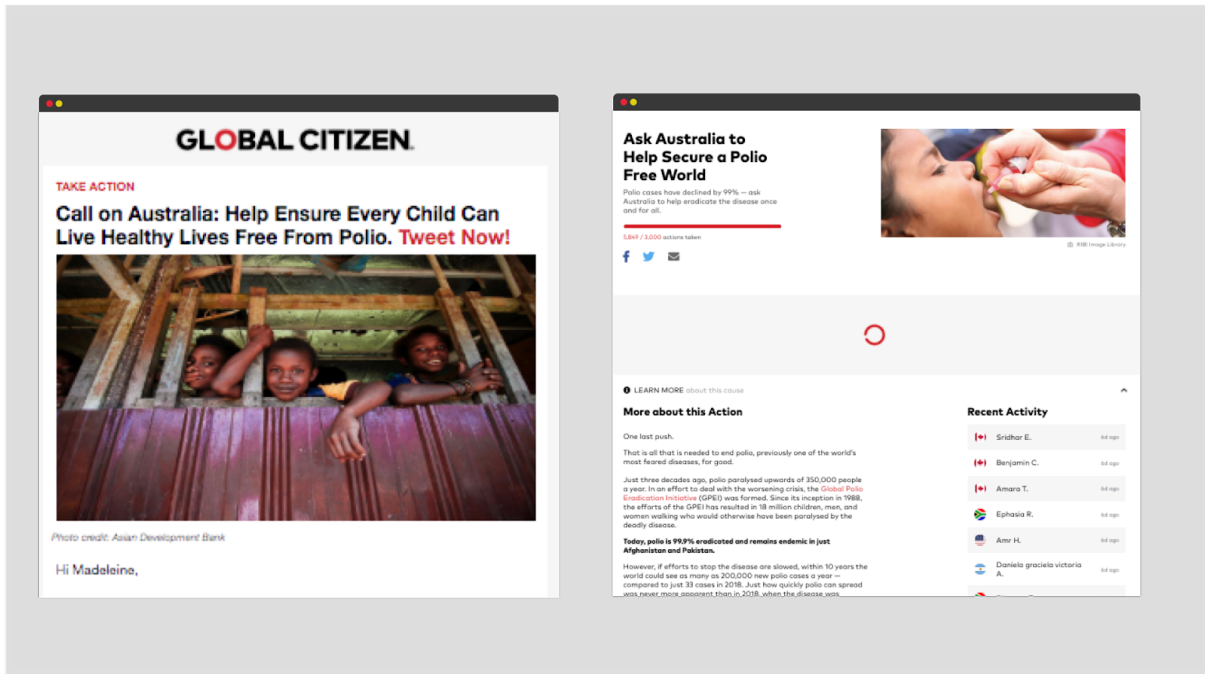
Additional investments in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and The Foundation For Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) among others all reaffirm Australia's commitment to global health and a robust global effort to fight COVID-19.

This level of elevated support is not unprecedented. Australia has a long and proud history of support for the most effective multilateral health and education programs across the world. Its commitment to the Global Partnership for Education amounts to more than \$570 million dollars over two decades¹², while its commitment to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which leads the fight to eradicate people across the world, extends back to its inception in 1988¹³.

Support for these multilateral initiatives also extends to the Australian public. In 2020 alone, members of Global Citizen took more than 43,000 direct actions in benefit of our campaigns to secure additional investments from Australia into multilateral health and education organisations.

¹² Australian Aid Tracker 2020, 'Australia's contributions to the GPE Fund', *Development Policy Centre*, (<http://devpolicy.org/aidtracker/commitments/global-partnership-for-education/>)

¹³ Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) 2019, 'Historical Contributions, 1985-2019', (<http://polioeradication.org/financing/donors/historical-contributions/>)



Thousands of Australian Global Citizens called on the Australian Government to increase their commitment to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a partnership led jointly by Rotary International, WHO, Gavi and UNICEF.

Moving forward, Australia must remain committed to supporting these organisations. This document has provided a number of recommendations which include ensuring robust and ongoing financial support of some of the most effective development organisations on the planet.

Recommendation — Australia continues its strong support of key multilateral development organisations who play a central role in achieving the Global Goals and assist and amplify the efforts national aid programs like Australian Aid to reach the most people and have the greatest impact.

6. Transparency and effective communication is at the heart of a well-supported aid program. We must commit to demonstrating the value of Australian Aid.

Effectively communicating the value of Australian Aid is critical to its success. In difficult times, the value and purpose of Australian Aid tends to be closely scrutinised. Australian Aid must be supported by strong and transparent reporting, which speaks directly to those aid programs' impact.

The recently published Aid Transparency Index report — an initiative jointly supported by the European Commission and UK Government — found that Australia must do more to maintain transparent and effective records of its aid spending with more timely updates in-line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data-reporting standard¹⁴. The report also recommends that the Australian Government provide more transparent budgetary documentation relating to aid allocations on a regular basis.

For these reasons, Australia should continue to work with civil society, the private sector, and the public to take proactive measures to communicate the Australian Aid program's effectiveness by showcasing the tangible benefits of our investments and why that investment matters to Australia's strategic interests. Australia should implement the Aid Transparency Index report's recommendations to bring Australian Aid into line with international benchmarks for aid transparency and reporting.

¹⁴ Publish What You Fund 2020, 'Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)', (<https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/the-index/2020/australia-dfat/>)

Recommendation — The Australian Government sets out a proactive framework for stakeholder engagement with the specific objective of sharing aid effectiveness information with key stakeholders, including community and development organisations and the private sector. The Government should also take steps to improve its aid reporting processes in line with the recommendations from the [2020 Aid Transparency Index report](#).