**The broader narrative for aid**

**What do you and your party see as the primary purpose of the Australian aid program?**

Australian aid is an important way in which Australia meets its responsibility as a good global citizen, in line with the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Australian aid promotes sustainable and inclusive growth, helping people and nations to lift themselves out of poverty. Aid also serves our national interest because reducing instability and conflict internationally promotes and protects safety and prosperity at home.

**What do you and your party see Australia’s role to be in contributing to peace and stability in Asia and the Pacific?**

Labor has a proud record of contributing to peace and stability in our region. Australia’s role in the region in response to conflict, natural disasters and emergencies should be swift and generous.

We should recall that Australia has played a role in brokering peace out of seemingly intractable conflict before, and should be ready to do so again.

The Hawke and Keating governments’ peace plan for Cambodia produced a durable and lasting peace in that country. Australia’s leadership and participation in the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is an outstanding example of our capacity and willingness to assist. So too is Australia’s response, over decades, to natural disasters in our region.

Labor supports strengthening the United Nations’ capacity in preventive diplomacy, peace building and peace keeping. Under UN auspices, Australia is able to participate effectively in international efforts to respond to the significant issues that arise from conflicts between and within states.

Labor also supports aid for state building, technical assistance and programs that promote good governance and strong civil societies in developing and post-conflict countries.
Labor seeks a positive role for Australia in the region, defending human rights, promoting peace and offering a helping hand regionally and in the wider world.

**Aid Volume and management**

ACFID believes that Australia should rebuild the aid budget to reach $5.5 billion in the life of the new Parliament (by 2018-19). What will you and your party do to reinvest in the Australian aid program?

Since coming to government in 2013, the Liberals have gutted Australia’s aid program. Labor has strongly opposed the Abbott-Turnbull Government’s cuts to aid and has spoken out against them at every stage. Australia’s aid program is now the weakest in history. Sadly, the Liberals’ cuts have been so deep that it is impossible to fix the aid program quickly.

A Shorten Labor Government is committed to rebuilding the aid program and will act immediately to protect overseas aid projects facing closure due to the most recent Liberal funding cuts. If elected, Labor will reverse the $224 million cut – to keep these projects going in 2016-17.

In recognition of the critical and growing development challenge associated with conflict and people movement, Labor will also provide $450 million, over three years, to support the important work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Labor will also increase funding by $40 million a year, from 2017-18, to help Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) deliver frontline services to some of the world’s poorest people and to increase transparency and effectiveness in the aid program.

Labor’s commitments are designed to start rebuilding Australia’s aid program.

The Abbott-Turnbull Government has walked away from the previous bipartisan commitment to reach the aid funding target of 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI).
Labor achieved aid funding at 0.35 per cent of GNI in 2012-13. This has declined to 0.23 per cent of GNI under the Liberals and is projected to decline to 0.17 per cent over the next decade.

Labor remains committed to reaching an aid funding target of at least 0.5 per cent of GNI over time.

**What steps would you and your party take to ensure an effective, transparent and predictable aid program?**

Labor will legislate for an independent evaluation of Australia’s aid program, as well as the measurement and reporting of aid effectiveness.

A Shorten Labor Government will restore accountability by reintroducing the annual Ministerial Budget Statement or “blue book” – axed by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop – detailing how overseas aid is being allocated by sector, country and region.

Labor believes that strong evidence-based and quantitative analysis is integral to the Australian aid program.

**International Commitments**

**What would you and your party do to ensure Australia fulfils its commitments under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, signed in 2015? How will you ensure Australia’s aid program is working towards the commitment to ‘leave no one behind’?**

A Shorten Labor Government will rise to the challenge set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs together form a comprehensive framework to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and address climate change. They are relevant not only to the delivery of Australian aid, but also to policy and programs at home.

Labor believes that there are several key areas within the SDG agenda where Australia can take a lead. Among these are improving development outcomes on preventable blindness;
disability inclusion; gender inequality and opportunities for women and girls; and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Labor will promote measurable targets and transparent public reporting against the SDGs. Labor will set priorities for the aid program and Australia’s contribution to the SDGs in consultation with the Australian aid sector.

What would you and your party do to ensure Australia fulfils its commitments to ensure the world achieves its 2°C target and pursues 1.5°C (as per the Paris international climate change agreement), and effectively supports developing countries that will be hardest hit by the impacts of climate change?

Labor is committed to achieving a 45 per cent reduction in pollution by 2030 (on 2005 levels).

Labor has a clear plan to combat climate change by getting Australia’s pollution levels back under control. Our plan will ensure that Australian business and workers are in the best position possible to benefit from the huge investments and job opportunities that come from a renewable energy and clean technology future.

Labor’s Climate Change Action Plan provides a pathway for an orderly transition to a low pollution economy through six key elements:

- **Make Australia a Leading Renewable Energy Economy** by ensuring that 50 per cent of the nation’s electricity is sourced from renewable energy by 2030, providing the Clean Energy Finance Corporation with more certainty and more flexibility, with less red tape and more technology options, and developing new community power projects.

- **Cleaner Power Generation** ensuring that the transition in Australia’s electricity generation from old, heavy polluting coal fired power stations to modern, clean energy is an orderly transition, with concrete support for workers and communities.

- **Build Jobs and Industry** maximising the job opportunities from clean energy and clean technology, while also securing the future of critical Australian industries
through a Strategic Industries Taskforce. This will be supported by a Strategic Industries Reserve Fund of $300 million to support the transition of key industries through to 2020.

- **Cut Pollution** through an Emissions Trading Scheme, placing a legal cap on pollution from large polluters through a cap and offsets scheme, while supporting industry by ensuring access to international carbon offsets.

- **Capture Carbon on the Land** by reinvigorating the Carbon Farming Initiative to encourage carbon storage on the land and in agriculture, and taking decisive action to deal with broad scale land clearing.

- **Increased Energy Efficiency** doubling Australia’s national energy productivity by 2030 and implementing new emissions standards for motor vehicles to cut pollution on our roads.

### Humanitarian Response

**How should Australia respond to humanitarian emergencies in developing countries around the world?**

**How will you and your party commit to ensuring that Australia can continue to be an effective partner to countries experiencing humanitarian crises?**

Labor will commit an additional $450 million over three years to the UNHCR, making Australia the fifth largest donor globally to the agency and providing an enormous boost as the world faces the greatest refugee crisis of modern times.

Australia’s role in the region in response to humanitarian crises should be pre-emptive wherever possible, and swift and generous as crises occur.

Australian governments should be prepared to mobilise more than financial assistance to respond to crises. Labor will support appropriately skilled Australian agencies and volunteers and Australian Government emergency and post-emergency response teams to deploy.
Labor understands that working closely with agencies with a presence on the ground is the best way to mobilise resources. We will work closely with NGOs to support their efforts.

Labor will continue to strongly support the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre as a key element of the Australian Government’s disaster and emergency medical response to incidents of national and international significance.

**Fostering the role of civil society**

**What would you and your party do to foster a positive environment for civil society organisations to operate in Australia and internationally – as key actors alongside government and the private sector for poverty alleviation and sustainable development?**

Labor values the role that NGOs play in Australia and internationally. They are an important partner in meeting development challenges and in the fight against poverty.

Labor believes in the independence of church groups and other civil society organisations to advocate on behalf of the causes they support – the last Labor Government legislated to protect that independence, which has been under constant attack by the Liberals.

A Shorten Labor Government will invest an extra $30 million a year, from 2017-18 in the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to support the development activities of accredited NGOs to deliver frontline services to some of the world’s poorest people.

**Is there anything else about international development or your vision for Australia’s role in the world that you would like to tell us?**

A Shorten Labor Government will re-evaluate the role of international development within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) following the merger with the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).
Labor will ensure that the structure and culture of the Department reflects the importance of aid and development within Australian foreign policy, and that aid expertise is protected and prized within the Department.

Labor believes that international development and poverty alleviation are core to the Department’s mission, and that Australia’s diplomatic footprint should be used to advance Australia’s aid objectives.